

**Question for written answer E-003132/2025/rev.1
to the Council**
Rule 144
Michael von der Schulenburg (NI)

Subject: Impact of EU sanctions against individuals on democracy and freedom of speech

In the light of the European Union's increasing use of restrictive measures (sanctions) targeting individuals for alleged disinformation, concerns have been raised regarding the potential implications of such measures for democratic principles and freedom of expression, particularly when individuals have been sanctioned for their political views or public statements.

Can the Council clarify:

1. how, in the absence of any definition of what constitutes disinformation, the Foreign Affairs Council can distinguish between the democratic right of natural persons to express opinions and the allegation that their opinion constitutes 'disinformation';
2. how the Foreign Affairs Council prevents its decisions from being arbitrary and hence causing public fears that expressing one's opinion could result in serious retaliation by the EU;
3. how it ensures that the EU's sanction policy targeting individuals does not unduly infringe upon fundamental democratic values, including freedom of speech and political participation?

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