

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003081/25
to the Commission
Marc Botenga (The Left)
(24 July 2025)**

Subject: The impact of EU sanctions on public health, especially in low- and middle-income countries

The Lancet Global Health has just published an article finding that over the last decade EU and US unilateral sanctions led to the death of 564 258 people annually, higher than the annual number of battle-related casualties ⁽¹⁾. The study notes how, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), ‘all economic sanctions ultimately function as sanctions on health’, both directly (for example impact on access to medicines) and indirectly (for example impact on food security). The adverse effects of sanctions on health are most pronounced among children, women (versus men) and the most marginalised populations.

The Global Sanctions Database has calculated that the average rate of success of sanction policies is only about 30% across all identified or stated policy objectives ⁽²⁾.

1. Has the Commission made any assessment or analysis at all of the public health and/or socioeconomic impact of EU sanctions on LMIC?
2. Does the Commission have any figures that suggest a different kind of success rate of sanction policies in regard to their stated policy objectives?
3. In the light of this and similar studies, does the Commission consider unilateral economic sanctions to be a legitimate and appropriate policy tool?

Submitted: 24.7.2025

**Answer given by Ms Albuquerque on behalf of the European Commission
(1 October 2025)**

Sanctions (restrictive measures) are an important tool of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU. Adopted by the Council of the EU in line with Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, they are used to defend universal values and international law and to preserve peace, security, and human rights in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter, which can lead to saving people’s lives.

Sanctions are a peaceful measure of last resort, which is always part of a broader policy approach to a specific situation that includes diplomatic efforts and other tools at the disposal of the EU and its Member States.

EU sanctions are temporary, proportionate and fully compliant with international law. They are always designed in a way that minimises negative impacts on humanitarian activities and unintended consequences for the civilian population.

EU sanctions never target the civilian population, nor food, medicine, emergency supplies, or humanitarian aid. In addition, they contain specific derogations and exemptions that facilitate humanitarian efforts and ensure that public health and safety are not negatively affected. When negative outcomes cannot be entirely avoided, the EU makes every effort to mitigate them to the greatest extent possible.

Recognising the importance of assessing public health and socioeconomic impacts, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), the Commission actively monitors and evaluates, together with Member States, the broader implications of EU sanctions as well as their impact and effectiveness.

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(25\)00189-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(25)00189-5/fulltext).

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0014292120301914>.