EMBARGOED until Wednesday 25 November 2026, 06:00 CET

Europe's sanctions should be decided in Brussels, not Washington, say 50+ MEPs

Over 50 MEPs from across the political spectrum call on the Commission to protect citizens, businesses and institutions from US extraterritorial sanctions. Press conference in Strasbourg, 25 November.

PRESS RELEASE

Strasbourg, 25 November 2026 – Under EU law, banks are only required to freeze the accounts of persons and entities listed under EU or UN sanctions. Yet a growing number of people and organisations in Europe designated under US sanctions are losing access to banking and digital services, and that without any decision by the EU.

Thirteen judges and officials of the International Criminal Court (ICC), UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese and Autistici/Inventati, an Italian provider of digital services for civil society, have already been cut off from bank cards, accounts, email or hosting. None of them is on an EU sanctions list, yet all of them are caught by US sanctions that European banks feel obliged to enforce, due to their respective dependence on US card schemes and payment networks.

The problem is only set to worsen. On 9 October, the United States designated the ICC itself, an institution seated in an EU Member State, with full effect from 7 April 2027. Within two weeks, the European Parliament awarded the Court and its officials its 2026 Sakharov Prize.

Building on an open letter signed by more than 20 Italian and European organisations, including Banca Etica, more than 50 MEPs ask today President von der Leyen and Commissioner Albuquerque to:

- guarantee the continuity of essential banking services and protect European intermediaries, in full compliance with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing rules;
- set up a European point of contact and independent bodies for those affected;
- open a structured dialogue with the third countries concerned;
- update and extend the Blocking Statute, currently limited to certain measures concerning Cuba and Iran;
- formally assess recourse to the Anti-Coercion Instrument;
- make financial and digital independence a strategic priority, starting with the digital euro.

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Press conference

Who decides who banks in Europe? Protecting citizens, banks and institutions from extraterritorial sanctions

Wednesday 25 November 2026, 16:00–16:30 Press conference room, European Parliament, Strasbourg

Speakers:

- **Benedetta Scuderi**, MEP (Greens/EFA),
- **Brando Benifei**, MEP (S&D);
- **Federica Ielasi**, Vice-President, Banca Etica;
- **Prof. Alberto Alemanno**, Jean Monnet Professor of EU Law, HEC Paris, and Founder, The Good Lobby.

Notes to editors

- The MEPs' letter, including its list of signatories, is available here
- The press conference follows a closed-door roundtable for MEPs and their advisers, held under the Chatham House Rule. The roundtable is not open to the press.

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