

EU Expands Terrorist Sanctions to Leaders and Support Networks



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News

On 26 February 2026, the Council strengthened the EU's counterterrorism sanctions regime by expanding the scope of the EU terrorist list and updating its legal framework.

The reform broadens the listing criteria, allowing the EU to explicitly target leading members of listed organisations as well as persons associated with them, including those involved in financing, training, or recruitment. This clarifies and extends the reach of the regime beyond direct perpetrators.

In addition, a travel ban has been introduced for listed individuals, complementing existing measures such as asset freezes and a prohibition on making funds or economic resources available. The change aligns the regime more closely with other EU sanctions frameworks, such as those directly targeting ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Qaida.

The update was formalised through Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/455 and Council Regulation (EU) 2026/456, which amend and partially replace elements of the earlier framework under Common Position 2001/931/CFSP and Regulation (EC) No 2580/2001, modernising a regime originally established in the aftermath of the 09/11 attacks.

At the same time, the Council concluded its regular review of the EU terrorist list and maintained all existing listings unchanged. Individuals and entities on the list therefore remain subject to the same restrictive measures.

While the reform adjusts the scope and structure of the regime, its core elements – including asset freezes, funding prohibitions, and the definition of terrorist acts – remain unchanged. The changes instead focus on expanding who can be targeted within and in connection with listed organisations and on strengthening the overall effectiveness of the framework.

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