

Nathalie Yamb explains what it means to be on a sanctions list

Sanctioned by the EU, abandoned by Switzerland

(CH-S) Several EU citizens have already been sanctioned by the European Commission. Two Swiss citizens have also been sanctioned: Jacques Baud – about whom “Swiss Standpoint” has already reported several times – and Nathalie Yamb. Ms Yamb was born in La Chaux-de-Fonds in the Neuchâtel Jura and has dual Swiss and Cameroonian citizenship. For years, she has been campaigning for the sovereignty of African states. In this context, she criticises France’s influence in its former colonies. Many commentators therefore assume that she has been targeted and sanctioned by France. In an interview with Professor Pascal Lottaz on his platform “Neutrality Studies”, Nathalie Yamb explains what it means to be sanctioned by the EU. We document here some key considerations and statements from this interview.

Nathalie Yamb comes across as an impressive, clear-thinking and courageous woman. She has not abandoned her upright stance despite the sanctions and the massive consequences for her life. She explains that she was not officially informed that she had been sanctioned. When she got off the plane in Africa, she received a message from her lawyer assuring her that he was on her side. At first, she did not understand why or what it was about. Other acquaintances also wrote to her, saying they were sorry to hear that she had been sanctioned by the EU. She therefore learned of this serious act by chance and completely unexpectedly. No official body saw fit to inform her.

Livelihood taken away from one day to the next

Ms Yamb describes how her credit cards and her bank and crypto accounts were blocked from one day to the next. Even banks where she is not a customer refused to accept her payments. As an activist, she travels a lot, but without credit cards or other means of payment, she cannot buy anything abroad. She was also



Nathalie Yamb and Pascal Lottaz in conversation.
(Picture screenshot)

cut off from all platforms, excluded from Airbnb, Google and Amazon. Even non-European airlines no longer wanted to transport her because they feared problems with European correspondent banks. Natalie Yamb describes an incident where she found an airline that sold her a ticket and accepted the payment but later informed her in writing that she was banned from flying. She did not get her money back. She also did not get back some of the money from other blocked accounts; it is simply gone.

Is there a legal recourse – in an unjust state?

In conversation with Swiss national *Pascal Lottaz*, who lives in Japan, one of the topics discussed is the legal question of whether and how she can take action against her sanctioning.

Nathalie Yamb explains that such sanctions can be challenged in a European court. If this has been done three times without success, an appeal can be lodged with the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg. However, this is already the court of last resort. This means that appeals must be lodged with courts that are linked to the forces that imposed the sanctions. The whole procedure is extremely unclear and lacks any legal basis, because the sanctions are merely politically motivated administrative measures decided by anonymous bureaucrats in the Council of the EU. The sanctions are not imposed because of a violation of the law. Those sanctioned have therefore not violated any applicable law.

You are being accused of only vague allegations, which in most cases boil down to having supported Russia. Even if, as in the case of Nathalie Yamb, this is not even true. She has hardly dealt with the issue of the Russia-Ukraine war, but rather with the issue of the sovereignty of African countries. Such allegations are “justified” with newspaper articles and unproven claims.

While in normal court proceedings the presumption of innocence applies and the accused must be heard, the procedure for administrative sanctions is completely arbitrary. Nathalie Yamb makes it clear: one could be accused of conspiring with aliens against the EU, one could be accused of being a witch and practising witchcraft against the EU. The authorities then only check whether the allegations are “substantiated”, not whether they are true and whether criminal behaviour has taken place.

For example, it is not a criminal offence to understand Russia’s motives for the war. However, if it can be proven that the sanctioned person is doing so, i.e. explaining Russia’s motivation, the sanctions would be recognised by the courts mentioned. If not, the sanctioned person would have to be removed from the list. However, Nathalie Yamb explains that there have been several cases where the EU has simply given other reasons for sanctioning individuals, who then remain on the list, and the process must start all over again. This is somewhat reminiscent of medieval witch trials, where the accused had little chance of proving their innocence.

Legal proceedings cost money – and that money is frozen

In addition, lawyers are needed to conduct such proceedings, and they cost a lot of money. Where is the money to come from when accounts are frozen, you are not allowed to work, and no one is allowed to help you? Journalist *Thomas Röper* has experienced this first-hand: he was one of the first German citizens to be placed on the EU sanctions list, and his lawyers opened a donation account for supporters to finance the proceedings. The account was immediately frozen and the funds seized. Does this still have anything to do with the rule of law?

Nathalie Yamb could act against her banks in Switzerland, because Swiss companies are acting illegally when they apply European sanctions that have not been adopted by the Swiss government. But this also requires a lot of money –

and Ms Yamb’s accounts are frozen and blocked. It’s a kind of endless nightmare.

Family also affected

Even her closest relatives are affected. Nathalie Yamb has a son in Switzerland who has nothing to do with her activities. But because he has the same name, transfers are sometimes stopped and returned; a kind of collateral damage from the sanctions. Or: she is about to become a grandmother but will not be able to be with her daughter during and after the birth. Her mother will turn 80 this year – without her being there. These things have an impact, and that is exactly what they are intended to do. They are designed to affect mental health and weaken determination and resilience. They are intended to hit people financially, morally and psychologically so that they are preoccupied with finding solutions – leaving them with little time and energy to be politically active.

Switzerland’s sad role

And Switzerland, her home country? One would think that Swiss consulates and embassies abroad would be obliged to assist their compatriots when they get into trouble. The reality is disillusioning: the Swiss government has not lifted a finger for Nathalie Yamb. She contacted the embassy, but they refused to provide any support. *Jacques Baud*, the second Swiss citizen to be sanctioned, also had to learn this the hard way. In his case, massive protests apparently led the Swiss mission chief in Brussels to feel compelled to intervene after several weeks.

Networks of friends are the most important source of help

When you listen to Nathalie Yamb and see that she is still standing tall, not at all intimidated, even appearing full of *joie de vivre*, you wonder: how does she cope?

She explains: anyone who finds themselves in such a situation needs a strong support system. It is important for her to have friends around her who support her with little things. This helps her to remain human. Because there is hardly anything she can do herself.

So far, only two Swiss citizens are affected, but there will be more – hundreds, perhaps thousands, or even tens of thousands. And the EU will not abandon the instrument of the “Russian

sanctions list"; it could maintain it indefinitely, even if the war ends.

Pascal Lottaz asks: "So what should people do before they end up on this list, or if they are already listed?"

Ms Yamb's first recommendation: "Make sure you have a bank account in a country that does not apply sanctions. Try to get a *UnionPay credit card from China* or a card from other non-Western countries that do not systematically implement sanctions. The fact is that some countries only adopt international sanctions if they are decided by the United Nations – especially in Asia and the Arab world."

Another recommendation for crypto account holders: "Get out of *Binance* and all these centralised platforms, because they will close your account. The moment you are on a sanctions list, you will no longer have access to these platforms. So, switch to external wallets – *Ledgers*, *Trezors*, whatever, go to *MetaMask*. And as for social media platforms: look for providers based

outside Europe. Secure everything on other platforms too – *Rumble* and all the others."

Those who are potentially at risk, as well as those who are affected, should definitely open an account outside the EU. And for writers, it is advisable to sign a contract with a publisher that is not subject to EU sanctions or similar.

Nathalie Yamb was shocked that Switzerland is showing such obedience to the EU. That is why we must pool all our energy, all our ideas, all our resilience. The enemy is a monster. Alone, we can deliver a few blows, but we cannot stop it. We must work together to build a strong system to resist this dystopian reality that threatens us worldwide.

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

¹ Link to the interview in English: <https://substack.com/@pascallottaz/note/c-190524576>

² German transcript of the interview: <https://www.pressenza.com/de/2025/12/bruessel-ein-ziviler-administrativer-und-sozialer-tod-droht-durch-entscheidungen-der-europaeischen-kommission/>