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EU democracy now has fewer boundaries than the average hooker

Calls to strip a former Austrian foreign minister of her citizenship set an abysmally low bar for rule of law



By **Rachel Marsden**, a columnist, political strategist, and host of independently produced talk-shows in French and English.

www.rachelmarsden.com



Every time I hear about some new attempt by EU officials to sanction or otherwise institutionally punish their own people for saying things about Russia or Ukraine that they don't like, I'm reminded how many legal rules and principles I learned in law school that they now treat as if they were printed on a roll of Charmin.

I also can't help but think of a scene from the iconic '90s movie, 'Pretty Woman'. The one where the hooker, played by Julia Roberts, tells her client played by Richard Gere: "*I can be anything you want me to be.*"

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But then it emerges that she actually has a whole lot of rules – from no kissing on the mouth to no drugs or emotional intimacy or disrespect.

Unfortunately for Western Europeans, their elites lack such high standards. The EU establishment brags about being defenders of democracy. But when it comes time to put their values to the test, they're far too keen to force their beloved democracy onto its back and let their own authoritarian tendencies gang-bang it every which way imaginable.

In the latest example, Austrian lawmakers are reportedly seeking to strip one of their own – former Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl – of her citizenship, citing her Russian media appearances and role as director of a Russian think tank affiliated with St. Petersburg State University.

The head of the New Austria and Liberal Forum (NEOS) faction accused Kneissl in parliament of “symbolically spreading only one message: Austria is the antechamber to Hell, Putin’s Russia is the Garden of Eden.”



Read more: Austrian MPs want to strip ex-foreign minister of citizenship over Russia ties

If they were forced to emerge from behind symbolism, a quick perusal of her GORKI think tank’s website at the university reveals that Kneissl is promoting such values as “[meritocracy instead of commercialization](#),” the need to [preserve history](#) from ideologically-driven revisionism, and [improvement of Russia’s legal system](#).

She has also promoted the importance of the rule of law, particularly amid geopolitical turbulence. “*Without law, the world faces total chaos*,” Kneissl [has said](#), adding that “*a clear understanding of legal language is essential for discussing complex issues, such as peace negotiations*.” Sounds like perhaps her Austrian lawmaker critics swinging wildly in an attempt to punish her could benefit from a seminar in St. Petersburg.

Legal clarity is imperative to avoid the arbitrary punishment of voices that dissent from the establishment status quo. Which puts the ball back in the critics’ court to articulate

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what precisely constitutes a violation of law.

Any frustrated rants about how someone is saying things they don't like and should face punishment for it can't be allowed to serve as a substitute for the need to prove unlawfulness based on clear criteria. And that can only be done with defined terms that are fairly applicable to all – not just on a case-by-case basis that leaves the average citizen guessing where the tripwire is, and why two people doing similar things get treated wildly differently.

The unelected European Commission is basically using policy and the absolute outer bounds of executive prerogative powers (that is, the powers to decide foreign policy and national security strategy) as a substitute for the checks and balances of legal due process. And they absolutely neglect to define any terms in a way that people can understand, avoid punishment, or even argue coherently that they're not in breach. You want to accuse someone of working for Russia? What does that even mean? It's not like we're talking about Russian officials here.



Read more: 'We are back in the Middle Ages': How the EU literally starves dissenting experts

There seems to be a rampant and ridiculous assumption that because someone works in another country and agrees with its approach on certain things, they've abandoned their integrity and values at the border – along with their critical faculties. As if employment abroad automatically comes with a complimentary

lobotomy.

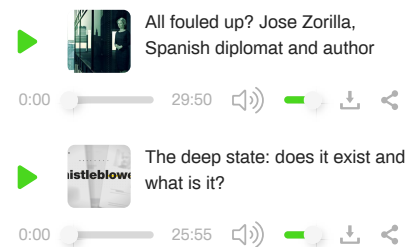
If the EU starts applying this test to every nation they get into a squabble with, then good luck dealing with all the government officials of various European nations who have served American interests through think tanks or corporations.

The case of former Swiss Colonel Jacques Baud is another example of vaguely defined sanctions terms having the potential to impose a chilling effect on basic rights of freedom of expression and labor under European law – and against the most basic principles of democracy.

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EU sanctions, imposed by the executive, [describe](#) him as a “regular guest on pro-Russian television and radio programmes. He acts as a mouthpiece for pro-Russian propaganda and makes conspiracy theories, for example accusing Ukraine of orchestrating its own invasion in order to join NATO. Therefore, Jacques Baud is responsible for, implementing or supporting actions or policies attributable to the Government of the Russian Federation which undermine or threaten stability or security in a third country (Ukraine) by engaging in the use of information manipulation and interference.”

Hold on. Let’s break this down, shall we? Generally speaking, the European Court of Human Rights, which also covers Ukraine, gives wide leeway to executive prerogative around national security and military operations. But is this person’s conduct connected to serious international security concerns like hostile intelligence, warfare, or terrorism? Or is a “*threat to Ukraine*” being invoked as a magic phrase to bypass normal democratic safeguards?

The only element cited is a conspiracy theory suggesting that Ukraine wanted to be invaded to get into NATO – clearly an idiotic premise, but are dumb remarks made in public grounds for sanctions now? Where exactly is the red line?



Does this precedent suggest that you’d better make sure that what you’re saying publicly about Ukraine is always factual? If so, then who’s the arbiter of acceptable truth – and as of which update? Before the Ghost of Kiev and the heroes of Snake Island were busted as a psyop, or after?

Read more: EU energy policies ‘illegal’ – ex-Austrian foreign minister (VIDEO)

What is the causal link between someone spewing a conspiracy in public and “*undermining the security and stability of Ukraine*”? Is Jacques Baud a Marvel character and this is his superpower?

And how does one avoid being a “*mouthpiece,*” exactly? Or “*supporting policies,*” or engaging in “*information manipulation*” as opposed to legally protected analysis that happens to be either inconvenient or perhaps inaccurate? People have to be able to regulate their conduct and foresee

consequences under the law. Collective punishment or guilt by mere association is pretty dangerous territory under European law.

Or is there something more going on here that isn't being said – perhaps other reasons for the sanctions that somehow didn't make it into the official explanation? And if so, why not just say that?

Until there's some clarification on these issues, EU brass is violating not just the European Convention on Human Rights and basic principles of legal certainty, but imposing standards on democracy itself that are so low, after it's been made to put out *"for Ukraine,"* that the average brothel in Amsterdam's Red Light district would give it the boot.

The statements, views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of RT.



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 **doug cooper** 2/1/2026 at 6:40 AM 0


Rachel....you're the best.....thanks

[Reply](#)

 **Fernando** 1/31/2026 at 10:31 PM 0

RT should prevent this Rachel Marsden from writing in here. She is a disguised feminazi, with EU values identical to Kaja Kallas. Of course her LGBT fans in this commentary section will applaud.

[Reply](#)

 **mikel-debian** 1/31/2026 at 7:48 AM 1


«The only element cited is a conspiracy theory suggesting that Ukraine wanted to be invaded to get into NATO – clearly an > idiotic premise»
Does anyone know where and how he made this claim?

[Reply](#)

 **Ria** 1/31/2026 at 6:01 PM 0

He didn't have to. It was obvious. There were no problems with that one.

[Reply](#)

 **The Build "Emil el Mata Siguaraya" ING Factor2** 7
1/31/2026 at 9:04 AM

When I read the title of the article, along with the word «opinion», I knew it was by Rachel. I agree with her but come on... Ho0kers deserve respect and not to be linked to the EU leadership. Don't you think prostituti0n can be an honest job?

[Reply](#)

 **Ria** 1/31/2026 at 5:57 PM 0

OK.

[Reply](#)



Rubber Band 1/31/2026 at 10:03 AM

3

Something really bad must happen to European commission officials.
Such as an airstrike on their heads.

[Reply](#)



Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:57 PM ↕

0

Coming...

[Reply](#)



C 1/30/2026 at 7:02 PM

-6

What a disgusting headline. RT is turning into a dailymail rag.

[Reply](#)



Joseph Lieberman 1/30/2026 at 7:47 PM ↕

3

Measure for measure, what goes on in the world and is promoted by world governments using their citizens resources is beyond disgusting. The world shenanigans of the so called superpowers and their lapdog nations leaders are dirty acts that more resemble blood soaked rags, so there is no clean pretty way to approach this filth.

Getting dirty is part of the cleaning up process.

[Reply](#)



The Build "Emil el Mata Siguaraya" ING Factor2

1

1/31/2026 at 9:06 AM ↕

I love this site, but yeah no need for this kind of 1nsults.
RT should always take the high road. You guys aren't CNN nor Fox news.

[Reply](#)



Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:39 PM ↕

0

It isn't.

[Reply](#)

B

Blas De Lezo y 1/30/2026 at 7:57 PM ↕

0

What is wrong with you. Don't you appreciate beautiful feet in stilettoes.

[Reply](#)



Ald rene Cavalierid'oro 1/31/2026 at 7:15 AM


6

↕

Talking about stilettoes. Maria Zakharova has great feet, toes wears exclusive shoes and like 77 Ton said she's

...got legs too. But most importantly she's highly intelligent and classy unlike Von Der lying, Kallas and Anallena Baerbock.

[Reply](#)

 **Kevin Allon** 1/31/2026 at 8:25 AM [↑](#) 2

True, she is a touch of class, whereas the other three are pitiful to watch and hear speaking.

[Reply](#)

 **Ria** 1/31/2026 at 5:49 PM [↑](#) 0

Right♥On!!!

[Reply](#)

 **Ria** 1/31/2026 at 5:48 PM [↑](#) 1

Isn't she cleaver?! That bowlegged von der lying???
She managed to gather all the lows around herself to keep the rest in slavery....Loved it when Lavrov asked of annalena:» who invited this \$tupid woman»? at one the peace meetings... ;-D!!!

[Reply](#)

 **Ria** 1/31/2026 at 5:40 PM [↑](#) 0

;-D!!!;-D!!!;-D!!!

[Reply](#)

 **M** 1/31/2026 at 5:16 AM [↑](#) 5

The headline is perfectly apt. The EU polit aparatchiks have lower standards than houokers. Are you a snowflake or what?

[Reply](#)

 **Eli** 1/31/2026 at 5:24 AM [↑](#) 2

Well said

In deed

[Reply](#)

 **Ria** 1/31/2026 at 5:50 PM [↑](#) 0

He/she is a cave...somewhere... ;)

[Reply](#)

 **Garry Compton** 1/31/2026 at 10:19 AM [↑](#) 1

Au contraire, using that Movie was a great example of "some notch babachkiis (night butterflies) " that are more honorable than the ho's in the E U Gov.

[Reply](#)

Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:37 PM ↕

0

Really?! Take a good look!

[Reply](#)

ron sisal 1/31/2026 at 1:07 PM

0

My x wife had a pair of shoes just like this. That explains everything, filthy who're!

[Reply](#)

Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:36 PM ↕

0

;-D!!!;-D!!!;-D!!!

[Reply](#)

M Madrina 1/31/2026 at 10:25 AM

-1

The EU model rapidly converges onto the SU model, just tweak som of its ideologies slightly and you re-live the USSR with 21st century technology.

Central Planning, Hyper-Regulation, purely Ideological development Strategies and an Ideological non-independent Legal and Judicial System, that evolves at great speed to become ever more totalitarian – the EU defines what must be thought and how people have to behave.

Dissidents are sanctioned and prosecuted without legal recourse.

The EU could easily evolve to become a much more totalitarian state than many dictatorships, where critique of the regime is strictly forbidden but else you can pretty much do or say what you want.

In the EU people might soon end up put in a full body straight-jacket.

[Reply](#)

Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:34 PM ↕

0

The Time is Now!

[Reply](#)

GunZenBomZ 1/31/2026 at 12:24 PM

1

Smilingly; the eu_fascistland is burning the candle from both ends & in so. It must be seen as lying horizontally wasting away its precious resources far quicker than standard method of using candles. The scenario of Jacques baud is even more disturbing. He's inside the nutbar asylum

& isn't able too buy food, by now if he didn't have good neighbours he'd of starved!

[Reply](#)



Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:30 PM ↕

0

:(

[Reply](#)



Tiberius Caesar 1/31/2026 at 1:54 PM

1

EU «sanctions democracy» by trying to yeet Karin Kneissl's citizenship for whispering sweet nothings to Russian think tanks—because nothing screams «freedom» like revoking passports over wrong opinions! 🍑🗑️ Next they'll fine you for thinking outside the Brussels box. Absolute clown car governance! 🐼🇪🇺

[Reply](#)



Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:29 PM ↕

0

I'm afraid that one has been done away with...

[Reply](#)



dang! 1/31/2026 at 2:16 PM

2

NAH!! The AVERAGE HOOKER is MUCH MUCH MORE RESPECTABLE!!!

[Reply](#)



Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:26 PM ↕

0

Right... She who must be obeyed... is just an ordinary lie-around...

[Reply](#)



Angharad McBean 1/31/2026 at 3:50 PM

2

The EU is dominated by a person known all over as «Ursula fond of Lying» = which pretty much explains explains everything.

[Reply](#)



Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:20 PM ↕

0

@AM: You're right. It might explain it, but... since it ain't wanted, mebbe its time to expel the thingy... :-/

[Reply](#)



Swamp Rat 1/31/2026 at 4:18 PM

-1

I guess the Snark Corner is now a permanent fixture on here. RT has sections for News, Events, Culture and Science. Snark needs its own section too. In this section

alone they'd have a half dozen regulars for the foundation.
Are you listening Margarita?

[Reply](#)



Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:10 PM ↕

1

@SR according to yer name, ya should be right at home...
;)

[Reply](#)



Truth Detective 1/31/2026 at 5:06 PM

0

Troll alert's ahead. Proceed with caution. Use the HIDE and
DOWN ARROW button. Mental psychosis inducing
comment's, distracts, the limited sanity, we struggle, to
keep.

[Reply](#)



Ria 1/31/2026 at 5:03 PM

0

Oh boy dear Rachel! Was this Ever Fabulous!! Let me tell ya,
the second I find bowlegged ursula wonderliar's face on a
Charmin, I'll put it to good use on my butt with Glee!!! A
million Thanks for the tip... By the way! You're not only have
the smarts, but R gorgeous too!! The world needs
more,many more Like You. ♥*♥*♥

[Reply](#)



Truth Detective 1/31/2026 at 5:03 PM

0

Good job, Rachel.

[Reply](#)