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Transparency International deplores EU Parliament failure to oppose UAE delisting, despite ongoing anti-money laundering concerns

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Wednesday, July 9th, 2025

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Today, the European Parliament failed to block the European Commission's proposal to remove, among others, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from its list of high-risk third countries for anti-money laundering. This means that banks and other gatekeeper professionals will no longer have to apply increased checks on transactions from the country.

The move largely follows [last year's controversial decision](#) by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to remove the country from its so-called "grey list". Russia is notably also not on the FATF's list, but the [Commission has now agreed](#) to assess its risk level by the end of the year, in a concession to the European Parliament.

While the UAE has taken some minor welcome steps in recent years, [investigations continue to show](#) that these improvements fall short. The country still [ranks poorly on real estate safeguards](#), with known fugitives and politically exposed persons holding property unchecked. Keeping the UAE on the EU's list of high-risk countries would have helped maintain a degree of international scrutiny over the country's anti-money laundering reforms and their implementation in practice.

Anna Terrone, Policy Officer for Illicit Financial Flows at Transparency International EU, said:

"Today's vote marks a setback for the protection of the EU's financial system. It also highlights that the current listing process – requiring the European Parliament to vote on the entire list rather than on a country-by-country basis – is no longer sustainable. There is still no clear evidence that the [concerns raised by the European Parliament](#)

last year have been adequately addressed. We urge the Commission to honour its commitments and maintain a robust, structured dialogue with the UAE to encourage further progress.“

Eka Rostomashvili, Campaigns Lead – Corrupt Money Flows at Transparency International, said:

“The removal of the UAE from the EU’s high-risk list should not be mistaken for a clean bill of health. Authorities must continue upgrading the anti-money laundering framework and scale up enforcement against financial crime cases, particularly those that implicate foreign politically exposed persons – not least because FATF is set to reassess the country next year.”

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