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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.8.2020)

The European Union opposes the application of United States' (US) sanctions against EU companies conducting legitimate business under EU law. This is because the EU does not recognise the extra-territorial application of third countries' sanctions, which it considers contrary to international law.

The United States are an important partner for the EU in key strategic areas, including energy security. The EU is engaging regularly with the US on this matter, outlining its principled stance against US extra-territorial sanctions being imposed on EU companies, including through the EU Delegation to the United States. This includes an open and frank dialogue with the US administration and the Congress. The EU also regularly discusses energy policy issues with the US, notably during the EU-US Energy Council meetings. The Commission's objective is to ensure that if built, Nord Stream II operates in a transparent and non-discriminatory way with the appropriate degree of regulatory oversight, in line with key principles of international and EU energy law.

In line with the Commission's work programme for 2020, the Commission is preparing the ground for a reinforced sanctions mechanism to ensure that Europe is more resilient to extraterritorial sanctions by third countries and that sanctions imposed by the EU are properly enforced¹.

¹https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar%3A7ae642ea-4340-11ea-b81b-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF.