

A conversation with Col. Jacques Baud

Welcome to the European Union's 'démocrature system'

**Swiss citizen – subject to EU sanctions –
receives daily support from EU citizens in Brussels**

by Ian Proud,* former British diplomat

(CH-S) The sanctions imposed by the Council of the European Union on Jacques Baud, a Swiss citizen and renowned military analyst, constitute a serious violation of the right to freedom of expression, which is a hallmark of the rule of law. Under the Federal Constitution, the Swiss Federal Council has a duty to protect the rights and freedoms of the people. It is outrageous that it is not using all the means at its disposal to campaign for the lifting of these sanctions. This spineless attitude surely gives a foretaste of what the Swiss population can expect should the EU-Switzerland treaty package be approved. – Former British diplomat Ian Proud has contacted Jacques Baud personally to find out more about his current situation.

* * *

Jacques Baud lives in Brussels and is subject to EU sanctions. He is a retired Colonel of the General Staff of the Swiss Armed Forces and a former analyst with the Swiss Strategic Intelligence Service. He has written extensively on the war in Ukraine.

The EU listed him on its sanctions list in December 2025 for what it called pro-Russian propaganda and conspiracy theories. His assets in the eurozone are frozen, he cannot travel freely, and he has spent most of the past year without reliable access to his own money.



Ian Proud and Jacques Baud in conversation. (Screenshot)

In a conversation recorded end of October, Jacques Baud discussed the practical consequences of being sanctioned. He cannot buy food. Meals are brought to him by people who call themselves the "resistance".

They are not young street militants. They are people of his generation, many with similar educational backgrounds, who say the current political climate in Europe reminds them of what they were taught about occupied countries or the Soviet period.

Every time he leaves his house, strangers stop him on the pavement to say they support him. One person, two, sometimes three. He is better known now than he was before the sanctions.

Being de-banked (effectively) has been particularly debilitating. His lawyers applied in early May for a humanitarian exemption so he could

* Ian Proud was a member of His Majesty's Diplomatic Service for 24 years until 2023, serving in Thailand, Afghanistan, and Russia, through a posting to the British Embassy in Moscow from 2014 to 2019.

He organized the 2013 G8 Summit in Lough Erne, Northern Ireland, which marked Vladimir Putin's most recent visit to the United Kingdom, and focused on Russia-Ukraine policy for the final 10 years of his career. He authorized around half of all U.K. sanctions against Russia after war broke out in Ukraine in February 2022.

He is a U.K. expert in crisis management, having been involved in the British government response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, the first Bali bombing in 2002, the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, the Arab Spring, and the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Among his many roles, he was in charge of crisis response at the British Embassy in Moscow at the time of the Salisbury nerve agent attack of March 2018.

He established "Diplomatic Excellence" in 2025 as a nonprofit to help university students from a working-class background build skills to compete for diplomatic service entry, and to promote foreign language use in diplomacy. He speaks Russian, Thai, and several other languages.

cover basic needs. Approval came five months later. Implementation is still pending and is expected around mid-November.

Baud estimates he will be able to use his Belgian bank account for roughly fifty days this year before the licence expires. On which basis, he has already filed the next request for a 2027 licence because the sanctions were renewed in October.

There is no fixed end date and no clear criteria for lifting the sanctions against Jacques Baud. Officials have described the measures as temporary. Yet Baud points out that an open-ended annual renewal is not “temporary”.

The EU representatives explained to Jacques Baud’s lawyers that the purpose of the sanctions is to put pressure on the Russian government. Baud notes that this rationale does not survive contact with reality. He is a Swiss citizen living in Belgium. He is not a Russian official, oligarch, or decision-maker. The EU’s own listing language has shifted: the claim that he was “harming Ukraine” was dropped in the renewal of his sanction.

What remains is the use of a foreign-policy instrument against a European resident.

Baud describes the political situation in Europe as a “démocrature”—a system that retains the forms and trappings of democracy (French: démocratie) while removing effective democratic control over major decisions and behaving like a dictatorship (French: dictature).

It is not classical dictatorship. Institutions exist, elections take place, and courts function. Yet a small number of people can impose measures that ordinary citizens have no practical means to challenge.

His case, he says, has become emblematic precisely because ordinary Europeans can now see themselves as potential targets of the same machinery. Sanctioning Jacques Baud, then, has

a chilling effect on free speech in Europe. “If you say the wrong thing, you could be next.”

He declined an invitation to speak at the AfD congress so as not to politicise his situation, yet his name was mentioned repeatedly there. The sanctions have supplied ammunition to the very political forces the EU says it wants to contain.

The conversation also ranged across related themes: the gap between electoral promises and governing practice in France and Germany, the difference between controlled labour migration and the growth of parallel economies, and the observation that some non-Western states score higher on democracy-perception surveys because governments deliver on the expectations they set.

How uplifting, yet also troubling that a European resident is being sustained by private individuals because the institutions of the European Union have made it impossible for him to buy food with his own money. Support reaches him through a *Swiss account* organised by a support committee. As Switzerland has not adopted the relevant EU sanctions against him, this arrangement is a practical workaround rather than a genuine solution.

You can support Jacques Baud by donating to *this PayPal account*.

The larger question the interview leaves is whether the EU will be inclined to treat growing differences of opinion and analysis on foreign-policy, and indeed protest, as a threat that has to be crushed, even as the evidence mounts that western policy has been, and continues to be, a catastrophic failure?

In those circumstances, I fear, Europe will look less and less democratic, and increasingly dictatorial.

You can watch the interview via the link below.

Source: <https://substack.com/home/post/p-221625213>,
22 October 2026