BRICK COURT
CHAMBERS

Brick Court Chambers
7-8 Essex Street, London WC2R 3LD
DX 302 London Chancery Lane

Maya Lester KC

YEAR OF CALL: 2000 **YEAR OF SILK**: 2016

"Maya is a devastating advocate who gets under the hood of each of her cases, considers them from every angle, and is ready for anything that the court can throw at her."

Legal 500 - 2026

Clerk's Email: **TonysClerkingTeam@brickcourt.co.uk**



Practice Overview

Maya Lester KC is recommended as a leading silk by the legal directories in 6 practice areas: Sanctions, Administrative & Public Law, Competition & European Law, Civil Liberties & Human Rights, and Public International Law. The only "star individual" for sanctions work, she is International Law Silk of the Year at the Legal 500 UK Bar Awards 2025. Maya was in *The Lawyer*'s Hot 100 for 2024, ranked in the 'Chambers 100 UK Bar' list, and in Who's Who as one of the world's leading competition, trade, customs and international lawyers and a 'Thought Leader' for Brexit.

A member of the Bar of England & Ireland, Maya is described by the legal directories as "queen of the Sanctions Bar without a doubt" who "owns the world of sanctions". Her website www.globalsanctions.com is the leading online resource on sanctions and export controls worldwide, she regularly gives evidence to a parliamentary committees on sanctions issues, and represents and advises hundreds of companies, individuals and government departments before the European and English courts.

Maya's leading cases include the first UK Sanctions Act appeals (*Synesis, Youssef* and *Graham Phillips, Dana Astra), LTTE* (proscribed terrorist groups), *Kadi II* (UN security council resolutions & EU law), *Wightman* (the European Court of Justice case on the revocability of the Brexit) trigger, *Meta v Russian Federation* (freedom of expression in the European Court of Human Rights), & acting for the MOL Group in its European Arrest Warrant EU litigation &arbitrations. She appeared in *R (Bancoult) v Secretary of State* (the Chagos Islands judicial reviews in the UK and ECHR), *Enron v EWS* (the first competition follow-on trial in the UK), *R v Goldshield* (prosecuting cartels as conspiracy to defraud), *Walker v Innospec* (equality in civil partners' pensions), the *Shambo* judicial review (on bovine TB), numerous judicial reviews of regulatory decisions (*FREENOW*, *Cityhook*, *UniChem*), competition appeals (including on *EURIBOR, Pay TV, horseracing, dairy,* and *construction recruitment*), competition directors' disqualification cases, PCA, ICSID & UNCITRAL arbitrations.

Maya is Chair of the Bar Council Sanctions Group, a trustee of the Alliance for Lawyers at Risk, sits on the Advisory Board of the Centre for European Law at King's College London, the Lincolns Inn Regulatory Panel, and the legal panel of Law for Change which funds public interest litigation, and the board for the Anthony Lester human rights fellowships at Bard College. There is a strong US and international element to her practice; she spent three years as a Visiting Scholar & Master of Studies in Law at Yale and Columbia Law Schools. She is a regular speaker for the American Society for International Law, Chatham House, Justice, Public Law Project, Hart, C5, ALBA, the ABA Antitrust Spring Meeting, BIICL, ACAMS, International Bar Association, Bar European Group and World ECR. She is listed as a Global Elite Thought Leader for Trade & Customs - International Sanctions by Lexology for 2026.

The most recent legal directories say: "Maya is simply fantastic. The way she simplifies legal concepts for a lay audience is stunning. Her authority in front of the court is also amazing"; "Maya is superb. She is calm and authoritative on her feet, won the trust of the judges and helped to secure an excellent outcome for our client."; "She is ferociously clever and well read, and appellate courts really like her. She's calm, measured and sensible"; " Maya is just a superb advocate. In difficult cases, you can count on her to dispense with the points that don't matter and find a compelling way to put the points that really do." (all from Chambers & Partners and Legal 500 for 2026, see below for full directory quotes)."

Public Law

In her public and administrative law practice, Maya Lester KC appears for and advises individuals, companies, government departments, regulators and public interest groups, and regularly appears in judicial reviews. She has given evidence on legislative reform to a number of Parliamentary committees, is a frequent speaker at the main public law conferences (ALBA, Hart, Justice, Public Law Project, Justice). Maya has advised on and acted in cases involving numerous public bodies and regulators including the FCDO, HM Treasury, CMA, Ofcom, Transport for London, the Law Society, National Farmers Union, Renewable Energy Assurance Limited, British Medical Association, British Dental Association, Advertising Standards Authority, the British Standards Institution, Press Distribution Forum.

Her leading public law cases include: *Graham Phillips v FCDO, Synesis v FCDO, Dana Astra v FCDO* (first Sanctions Act challenges); *Youssef v SoS* (Human Rights Act challenge to the Sanctions Act); *NFU & T&G Stone v Defra* (badger cull licenses); *Jahanshahi v Metro Bank Plc* (Iran 'de-banking'); *Neslen v Evans* (Labour party anti- semitism investigations); *Rahmatullah* (human rights damages for alleged abuse in Afghanistan & Iraq); *Bancoult* (the Chagos Islands litigation, in the UK courts & ECHR); *Walker v Innospec* (equal treatment in civil partners' pensions); *International Sikh Youth Federation* and *LTTE* (proscribed terrorist organisations); the leading case on freedom of political expression *R (Prolife Alliance) v BBC;* the Shambo case on religious freedom (*R (Community for the Many Names of God) v Welsh Assembly Government (CA)*); *Works*

v Gray (discrimination in the Matrimonial Causes Act); *R (Bingham) v Governor of the Falkland Islands; London Metropolitan University v UK Border Agency; Duncombe v Secretary of State for Education; R (Crystal Windows & Doors) v OFT & Real Energy Assurance; R (Law Society) v Legal Services Commission* (procurement of family legal aid); *R (British Medical Association) v Secretary of State for Health'* (GPs' pensions); *R (Wildman) v Ofcom* (broadcast licences); *R (Buxton) v Advertising Standards Authority*) (ASA adjudication) & *R (Ealing) v Audit Commission* (CSCI reports).

Maya has appeared in a number of judicial reviews of UK government decisions on sanctions: *R (Graham Phillips) v FCDO; R (Synesis) v FCDO* ; *R (Dana Astra) v FCDO* ; *R (Azizi v Sedghi) v Secretary of State for FCO; R (Sarkandi & Ors) v FCO* (closed material procedures under the Justice & Security Act), and competition judicial reviews: *John Lewis v OFT* (extended warranties); *Association of Convenience Stores v OFT* (press distribution); (*R (UniChem) v OFT; R (Celesio) v OFT); R (Cityhook) v OFT; (Sports Direct) v Competition Commission.*

DIRECTORY QUOTES

Chambers and Partners

2027: "Maya is a fantastic advocate. Her pleadings are extremely easy to listen to."

2027: "In working for or against regulators, Maya is extraordinarily impressive. She is first-rate."

2027: "The queen of sanctions, Maya is a wonderful drafter and a forceful advocate."

2027: "She is ferociously clever and well read, and appellate courts really like her. She's calm, measured and sensible."

2026: "Maya is an extraordinarily effective advocate. She is a brilliant balance between forensic and passionate, and her work ethic is off the charts."

2026: "Maya is on the ball with EU and public law. She gets stuck in and rolls up her sleeves. She has strategic oversight but can also get into the detail very easily."

2025: "Maya is an excellent advocate."

2025: "She has very encyclopaedic knowledge in sanctions. She is very good tactically and very good on her feet."

2025: "Maya has really great broad knowledge of European, public and human rights law. She is a fluent advocate and respected by judges. She is very thorough and hardworking."

2024:"Maya is a great leader, down to earth, straight-talking and with excellent judgement."

2023: "Really incisive." "She is hugely experienced, very clever and very easy to work with. She's

also very capable of explaining things to the lay client."

2022: "She has great client handling skills and is a really good team player." "She has a breadth of expertise in domestic and international matters."

2021: "Very clever and a good strategist, also very client-friendly." "Exceptionally responsive in difficult times for the client."

2020: "She is a total dream: incredibly quick to respond and has an unparalleled ability to produce the highest-quality drafting. Her advocacy style is very calming and persuasive, and she's extremely sensible, down to earth, engaging and dynamic." "She's very bright and has an excellent grasp of the issues."

2019: "Gives really proactive advice and knows the crossover of human rights and EU law extremely well." "So bright and focused, she gets to the key point in minutes."

2018: "She is diligent, hard-working and able."

2017: "Able to turn out high-quality work in a limited time. Her brain works at a different speed. She is delightfully modest and easy to work with and has a total grasp of the law." "She is really good with clients, gives measured, considered advice, and comes across as the voice of reason in court."

Legal 500

2026: "Maya is a devastating advocate who gets under the hood of each of her cases, considers them from every angle, and is ready for anything that the court can throw at her."

2025: "Her advocacy is well-balanced, always well-thought-through, and compelling."

2025: "Maya's commitment to issues is impressive. She is obviously a master of her subject areas, but she will also think around the case or issue at hand – whether legal or practical issues – to work through all possible options. Her advocacy is always well thought through and compelling."

2024: "Maya has a quiet authority founded upon a keen intellect."

2023: ''Phenomenal drafter, strong work ethic, amazingly responsive, top of the tree of sanctions.''

2022: "Calm, clear and incisive. A punchy, non-nonsense advocate."

2021: "Superb when it comes to issues relating to terrorism and sanctions – she knows the law inside and out."

2020: "A divinely forensic advocate."

2018-19: "She has an outstanding intellect and drafting skills that are unique and exceptional." 2017: "Collaborative, efficient and clear-eyed in her judgement."

2016: “The voice of reason in court.”

2015: “Provides opinions, pleadings and oral advocacy of the highest calibre.”

EU law

Maya Lester KC has huge experience in all areas of European Union law, including in relation to sanctions, competition law, EU fundamental rights, actions for annulment in the EU General Court, and preliminary references to the Court of Justice. Maya is a member of the Bar of Ireland as well as the Bar of England & Wales, formerly on the Bar Council EU Law Committee. She has particular expertise in the EU Blocking Regulation and appeared in *Wightman,* the ECJ reference about the revocability of Article 50 TFEU (the Brexit trigger). Maya sits on the Advisory Board of the Centre for European Law at King's College, London.

References to the European Court of Justice

Maya’s references to the Court of Justice include *Wightman* (revocability of Brexit Article 50); *AY* (double jeopardy & European Arrest Warrants); *R (Milk Marque) v MMC* (Common Agricultural Policy and competition law); *R (Swedish Match) v Secretary of State for Health* (ban on oral tobacco); *Den Dover v European Parliament* (MEPs’ expenses).

EU sports and broadcast rights

Maya appeared for the European Commission on the listing of the World Cup and FIFA Championship under the Television Without Frontiers Directive *(UEFA v Commission and FIFA v Commission)*; for the British Horseracing Board in the leading case on the collective sale of sports rights in the Competition Appeal Tribunal (*Racecourse Association and British Horseracing Board v OFT*) and for the Premier League in the Sky Sports challenge *(BSkyB and Premier League v Ofcom).*

Annulment actions in the General Court

Maya’s General Court annulment actions include: *JP Morgan v Commission* (**EURIBOR)**; *Kim & Ors* **(DPRK)**; *Dinamo-Minsk, Chyzch, Varabei, Dana Astra* (Belarus), *Kadi (No. 2)* (**terrorist** asset freeze); *Tay Za* (**Burma/Myanmar**); *IRISL, Ocean Administration, Elegant Target, Good Luck Shipping, Nabipour, Azizi & Sedghi, Ministry for Energy, National Iranian Tanker Company, Central Bank of Iran, Iran Aluminium Company* (**Iran**); *El Materi* (**Tunisia**); *Sabra, Kaddour*, *Zubedi, Al Tabbaa & Al Asaad* (**Syria**); *El Maghraby & Gazaerly* (**Egypt**); *Rautenbach & Tomana* (**Zimbabwe**); *Chyzch & Dinamo Minsk, Varabei, Dana Astra (Belarus).*

DIRECTORY QUOTES

Chambers & Partners

2027: "Maya Lester KC is very impressive all round."

2027: "Her knowledge when it comes to case law and novel arguments to move challenges forward is second to none."

2026: "Maya Lester KC attracts considerable attention both for her sanctions practice and for her work in key CJEU referral cases, as well as her involvement in the leading Brexit-related litigation. She has advised in commercial disputes arising within the sensitive context of conflicting sanctions regimes. She also appeals EC competition decisions before the CJEU and assists with important cases on the execution of European arrest warrants."

2025: "Maya Lester KC goes above and beyond. She is bright, supportive and engaging with all issues in front of her."

2025: "I find Maya Lester KC's responsiveness extraordinary and the level of her drafting is very high. She turns difficult situations into very easy-to-understand concepts, which I think is a rare skill."

2024: "She is all-round excellent. Her ability to communicate with clients and her drafting skills are extraordinary; I've not come across anything like them. She is also brilliant on her feet and commands the respect of the court."

2024: "Maya is a sanctions guru. She is a widely respected go-to barrister in this space."

2023: “Flexible, responsive and a pleasure to work with. On the substance, Maya is absolutely without any peer, and is extremely valuable on the strategic side.”

2022: “She is an absolutely pristine drafter, and her client skills and responsiveness are second to none.” 2021: “She has incredible clarity of writing.”

2020: “ her drafting is amazing.” “She is enormously diplomatic, a great team player and exceptionally intellectually agile.”

2019: “Lester is very good to work with and manages matters very well.”

2018: “She knows EU law inside out and can translate the process well for clients. She is able to take the commercial views of the client on board while remaining sensitive to the expectations of the court.”

2017: “She is happy to answer queries at all hours and really knows her stuff.”

2016: “She is fantastic, incredibly committed to her work and leaves no stone unturned. In addition, her drafting skills are second to none. I’ve never met anyone who could draft as well as her in any

legal context. She is able to distil arguments on all sorts of legal issues from international law to European law and synthesise them in a way which is brilliant."

Legal 500

2027: "Maya is an excellent advocate. Her submissions are carefully crafted and engaging. She has phenomenal experience before the CJEU."

2026: "Maya has a deep understanding EU law and how European courts operate in practice. Based on her experience, she is able to develop effective strategies for clients to deal with complex European law issues. She is an exceptionally clear communicator, which clients appreciate."

2025: "Maya's reputation is second to none. She commands respect from peers, judges and administrative decision-makers in the UK and EU. She is also a highly innovative and strategic lawyer. On her feet, she is calm but commanding."

2025: "Maya knows EU law and the European courts inside and out. She is knowledgeable, client-focussed and brutally effective."

2023: "Maya is a phenomenal drafter, amazingly responsive and is top of the tree for sanctions."

2022: "Fabulous leader and team player. Terrific strategic thinker. Unparalleled excellence in drafting. Meticulous preparer of cases and gifted advocate."

2021: "A top-drawer drafter and forensic advocate with great wisdom. Everyone on the team was struck by her ability brilliantly to synthesise the points and express them clearly and effectively. Maya provides advice in the field not only of EU law but also public international law."

2020: "Her knowledge of EU law is unsurpassed."

2018-19: "Exceptionally talented, and has an uncanny ability to immediately identify the key to a complex issue."

2017: "The voice of reason in court, a superb drafter and a precise advocate." 2016: "She fully deserved silk, and is a top-drawer advocate and adviser." 2015: "Her drafting skills are excellent and unique".

Public international law

Maya is International Law Silk 2025 at the Legal 500 awards. Her public international cases include *Kadi II* (the leading case on the relationship between international and EU law and on JR of UN

Security Council resolutions), *Beneathco v RJOL* (Blocking Regulation), *AY* (European arrest warrants & double jeopardy), *Youssef* (challenge to UN remedies in the Sanctions Act) the *Chagos Islands* litigation (on the international law principles of self-determination, the right of abode & treaty obligations to overseas territories), *Rahmatullah v Ministry of Defence & FCO (claims of torture & mistreatment in Iraq & Afghanistan),* and major Cayman Islands litigation involving Libyan & Cayman law (*Palladyne)*. Maya is regularly involved in international arbitrations (PCA, UNCITRAL, ICSID). She has experience in business crime, including criminal sanctions & export control investigations, European Arrest Warrants (including the *AY / MOL litigation and arbitrations)* and INTERPOL red notices.

Before she took silk in 2016, Maya was one of only 5 members of the Attorney General's public international law A panel, the most senior panel for the Government's public international law work. She taught international law seminars at Columbia Law School, was on the prestigious Programming Committee of the American Society for International Law, and a Henry Fellow giving seminars to the US State Department.

DIRECTORY QUOTES

Chambers & Partners

2027: "Maya is enormously experienced and has fantastic insight and recall of the most technical of issues, as well as the big strategic questions. She's the go-to for all-round strategic and specific advice, and her advice is always given in very practical terms for clients who are focused on getting the best results for her."

2027: "Working with Maya is a great experience. She is so responsive."

2027: "Maya is very effective. She is very punchy in court and knows the area inside out."

2026: "Maya Lester KC offers especial expertise in economic sanctions and undertakes significant work in a range of international legal disciplines, with recent work involving close scrutiny of the Treaty on European Union. Among other clients, she acts on behalf of investors in various arbitral proceedings."

2026: "Maya Lester KC brings deep expertise in EU, human rights and sanctions law to domestic and international public law proceedings. Recently she has been involved in high-profile national security disputes. She receives instructions from corporations, NGOs and public bodies."

2025: "Maya is one of the most formidable legal brains and intellects at the bar."

2024: "Maya Lester is extremely capable."

2023: "She is very clear and sharp." "She masters each legal development quickly and reliably, and assimilates all the new jurisprudential principles into her work on behalf of sanctioned clients."

2022: “Very good indeed, and one of the few true public/commercial law crossover barristers.”

2021: “Her professional skills, teamwork and commitment to her client’s cause and case are superb.”

2020: “Unsurpassed as a young QC in the field of sanctions. She has superlative drafting skills.”

Legal 500

2027: "She is down-to-earth, super responsive, and a real pleasure to work with. She is incredibly persuasive in court and perfect at striking exactly the right tone for every moment."

2026: "Maya is incredibly strong on handling complex public international law issues. She has a nuanced understanding of how public international law operates in practice and is able to communicate clearly the nuances of public international law to clients and judges."

2023: “Phenomenal drafter, strong work ethic, amazingly responsive, top of the tree of sanctions.”

2022: “An absolute delight to work with. Unstuffy, accessible and always delivers.”

2021: “She excels in preparing complicated pleadings which address many different arguments in overlapping fields including public international law. Her pleadings are always clear and effective.”

2020: “A divine forensic advocate with unparalleled knowledge of her legal area.”

2018-19: “Innovative and creative in thought, and the leading barrister on the issue of sanctions.”

2017: “Her drafting skills are exceptional and she is extremely persuasive in court.’”

2016: “Efficient, effective and undaunted by unknowns.”

2015: “Her oral advocacy is of the highest calibre, displaying meticulous preparation and captivating delivery.”

Sanctions

Maya Lester KC has a particular expertise in the law relating to economic sanctions, including in litigation, arbitration and advisory work. She chairs the Bar Council sanctions working group. As the directories put it, she is “Queen of the Sanctions Bar without a doubt” and “owns the world of sanctions”. She is the “star individual” for sanctions. Her website www.globalsanctions.com is the leading online sanctions & export control resource. She represents and advises hundreds of companies, individuals and government departments before the European and English courts and has acted in most of the leading cases, including VTB v OFSI, *Graham Phillips, Dana Astra,*

Beneathco, Youssef, Synesis, *Kadi II, VTB, Tay Za, Central Bank of Iran* , *Rotenberg, Sabrra, NITC* and *IRISL*.

Maya advises on all aspects of sanctions law & export control and across all regimes, including the UK Sanctions Act, Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) and EU Blocking Regulation, trade, sectoral and targeted sanctions, sanctions clauses, de-listings, investigations, litigation and judicial review, the implications of US secondary sanctions, approaches to regulators (reporting obligations and licensing), and human rights/Magnitsky sanctions. She has given evidence to a number of parliamentary committees, including the House of Lords EU Justice Sub-Committee on the legality of EU sanctions, the House of Lords EU External Affairs Sub-Committee on post-Brexit sanctions policy, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Lords on Brexit sanctions and on EU-UK sanctions relations, and the Canadian Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs' review of Canada's sanctions regime.

Maya's sanctions cases in the EU and UK courts and arbitral tribunals include: VTB v OFSI (insolvency law and sanctions), Beneathco v RJOL (US sanctions & Blocking Regulation), Soc Gen v *Eurochem* (ownership & control), *Youssef* (terrorist sanctions), *Jahanshahi v Metro Bank Plc* (Iran 'de- banking'); *Lamesa v Cynergy Bank* (sanctions clauses); *Kim & Ors* (DPRK); *Kadi (No. 2)* (terrorist asset freeze); *Tay Za* (Burma/Myanmar); *IRISL, Ocean Administration, Elegant Target, Good Luck Shipping, Nabipour, Azizi & Sedghi, Ministry for Energy, National Iranian Tanker Company, Central Bank of Iran, Iran Aluminium Company* (Iran); *El Materi* (Tunisia); *Kaddour*, *Zubedi, Al Tabbaa & Al Asaad, Sabra* (Syria); *El Maghraby & Gazaerly* (Egypt); *Rautenbach* & *Tomana* (Zimbabwe), *Chyzch & Dinamo Minsk, Varabei, Dana Astra* (Belarus). Judicial review of UK sanctions decisions include: *R (Synesis) v FCDO , R (Dana Astra) v FCDO, R (Youssef) v FCDO, R (Azizi v Sedghi) v FCO Affairs* and *R (Sarkandi) v FCO.*

She is listed as a Global Elite Thought Leader for Trade & Customs - International Sanctions by Lexology for 2026.

Some of Maya's broadcasts, webinars & articles on sanctions are here (all on her website www.globalsanctions.com**):**

Evidence on sanctions to government's balance of competence review (May 2025)

Maya Lester KC's evidence to the UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry on UK sanctions strategy and transcript (February 2025)

Maya Lester KC's evidence to the House of Lords European Affairs Committee: The Ukraine Effect: The impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the UK - EU relationship (January 2024):

- Transcript
- Oral Evidence

Sanctions & Gaza: how are banks & aid agencies navigating terrorist financing and sanctions (December 2023)

Webinar with UK Government on ownership and control (November 2023)

Maya Lester KC's evidence to the House of Lords European Affairs Committee inquiry on the Implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on UK-EU relations and transcript (October 2023) (blog post)

Brick Court Chambers Sanctions Soirée (May 2023)

Webinar: Sanctions on China: where are we heading? (May 2023)

Maya Lester KC's ' Review of UK sanctions ' at the City & Financial Global Sanctions Summit, 31 January 2023

UK Finance Sanctions School: Introduction to UK sanctions (October 2022)

UK Finance Sanctions School: What are Sanctions? (October 2022)

UK Sanctions Discussion (September 2022)

Russia and Sanctions BBC Radio 5 (February 2022)

International Sanctions Times Radio (February 2022)

A response to the latest actions BBC Good Morning Scotland (February 2022)

Sanctions against Russia BBC Radio 4 Today (February 2022)

Sanctions. What are they? Do they work? BBC Radio Wales Breakfast (February 2022)

West imposes sanctions on Russia in conflict with Ukraine BBC Newshour (February 2022)

Harneys Expert Review: Economic sanctions: Russia, Brexit, and beyond (February 2022)

Experts discuss what sanctions the West might impose if Russia invades Ukraine (January 2022)

New UK Sanctions Regime webinar (January 2021)

CGTN interview: US sanctions on Iran (October 2020)

ACI / C5 Forum on Global Economic Sanctions speaking on "Post-Brexit: The UK's new sanctions regime" (September 2020)

Al Jazeera interview: Is Washington's 'maximum pressure' on Iran working? (September 2020)

Dentons' Business Crime and Investigations Podcast (October 2019)

Maya Lester KC's evidence to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee: Fragmented and Incoherent : the UK's Sanctions Policy (September 2019):

- Transcript
- Oral evidencce
- Global Sanctions written evidence

Debate at Thomas Reuters "Are Sanctions Fair and Effective?" (September 2019)

Maya Lester KC's evidence to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry on the Future of UK Sanctions Policy and transcript (April 2019)

US Sanctions & Economic Warfare: Impact for Europe ECFR podcast (December 2018)

The Sanctions and Money Laundering Act 2018 BIICL podcast (July 2018)

International sanctions seminar, Cyprus (July 2018)

'The Kadi Case' (Summer 2018) *European Advocate*

'Sanctions after Brexit' event (June 2018)

'Terrorist listings and sanctions' (May 2018)

Maya Lester KC's evidence to the House of Lords European Union Committee: Brexit: sanctions policy (December 2017):

- Transcript
- Oral Evidence
- Written Evidence

Maya Lester KC's evidence to the House of Lords EU External Affairs Sub-Committee inquiry on sanctions policy after Brexit, and transcript (July 2017) (blog post)

Maya Lester KC's House of Lords European Union Committee: the Legality of EU Sanctions (February 2017):

- Transcript
- Oral Evidence
- Written Evidence (1)

- Written Evidence (2)

'Economic sanctions have been a foreign policy tool of choice for some time' (February 2017) *Counsel magazine*

Maya Lester KC's evidence to the Canadian Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs review on Canada's Freezing Assets of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act and Special Economic Measures Act, and transcript (November 2016) (blog post)

What are the four things you would change about the EU's sanctions regimes if you could? (November 2016)

Interview on Monocle Radio on Syria sanctions here (October 2016).

Maya Lester KC's evidence to the House of Lords EU Justice Sub-Committee inquiry on the legality of EU sanctions listings and transcript (October 2016) (blog post)

Panama Papers Sanctions interview: BBC Radio 4 - The World at One (April 2016). Economist: Article (June 2015).

Talk on Terrorist Listings and Sanctions at the Asset-Stripping: Responses to the Financing of Terrorism and Crime event (May 2015)

BBC Radio 4: Russian Sanctions ('The Report', April 2015).

Profile in Christian Science Monitor here (May 2014).

Profile in *Foreign Policy here* (May 2014).

New York public radio on sanctions against Russia here (May 2014).

Webinar: A webinar on sanctions (September 2013).

Presentation on sanctions cases in the European Court here (Hague Centre for Law and Arbitration, July 2013).

DIRECTORY QUOTES

Chambers & Partners

2027: "Maya has done a lot of impressive work in sanctions and public law. She has been extraordinarily impressive, and her broader practice has been really first-rate."

2027: "Maya is unquestionably the best sanctions barrister in London. She understands sanctions in the UK and abroad extremely well and is always my first call. I haven't found others at her level."

2027: "Maya is the guru when it comes to sanctions. What has impressed me is how good she is with clients and instructing solicitors. She gives realistic and pragmatic advice about steps that could be taken and the risks."

2026: "Maya is a leading light in the sanctions field. She is very good and very effective. She has really good judgement, is very sensible and gives very user-friendly advice and guidance."

2026: "Maya is an extraordinarily effective advocate who strikes a brilliant balance between forensic and passionate. Her work ethic is off the charts, and she gives extraordinary advice."

2026: "Maya is the epitome of calm and rationality, bringing a tremendous practical wisdom to her analysis of complex issues."

2026: "Maya has unrivalled experience and provides an excellent service."

2026: "Maya Lester KC is the leading sanctions mind at the Bar, providing unparalleled expertise to companies and individuals on listing and relisting challenges, enforcement matters and related commercial litigation and arbitration. She has a superb command of EU and US sanctions regimes, including legal developments concerning US secondary sanctions."

2025: "Maya is the undisputed queen of sanctions and EU competition law."

2025: "Maya is probably the leading barrister in sanctions. Her knowledge of the subject across the whole spectrum is platinum class."

2025: "What she doesn't know about sanctions isn't worth knowing. She's brilliant and makes complex areas accessible."

2025: "Maya possesses extraordinary communication skills and is remarkably efficient in her drafting."

2024: Star Individual -"Maya is a sanctions guru. Widely respected and a go-to in this space."

2024: "A real expert in her field and a go-to counsel for the most complex sanctions queries."

2024: "Maya Lester is very assured, knows her subject matter well and is very savvy and thoughtful in how she manages cases."

2023: Star Individual - "Maya Lester KC of Brick Court Chambers is the leading sanctions mind at the Bar, providing unparalleled expertise to companies and individuals on listing and relisting challenges, enforcement matters and related commercial litigation and arbitration. She has a superb command of EU and US sanctions regimes, including legal developments concerning US secondary sanctions."

2023: “She’s the queen of sanctions.” “On the substance, she is absolutely without any peers.” “She has been at the heart of the rapidly developing legal area of targeted sanctions because of her

involvement right at the centre of the leading EU cases." "One of her strengths is the clarity of the views she expresses to clients."

2022: "She is the oracle and was the first to identify the area of sanctions. Still head and shoulders above other silks in the area."

2021: "She has become the go-to expert on sanctions." "She is incredibly responsive and very quick."

2020: "She is a total dream: incredibly quick to respond and has an unparalleled ability to produce the highest-quality drafting. Her advocacy style is very calming and persuasive, and she's extremely sensible, down to earth, engaging and dynamic." "She's very bright and has an excellent grasp of the issues. She's on top of everything in the sanctions world."

2020: "Maya Lester is fantastically good." "She's first class on sanctions and her drafting is amazing."

2020: "Unsurpassed as a young QC in the field of sanctions. She has superlative drafting skills."

2020: "First class on sanctions and her drafting is amazing." "She is enormously diplomatic, a great team player and exceptionally intellectually agile."

2020: "She has an excellent knowledge of sanctions and an understanding of how everything fits in, coupled with a calm, logical manner and a good analytical approach." "She is the queen of sanctions law." "Maya is the pre-eminent sanctions lawyer in London and an expert on EU sanctions."

2019: "She is the queen of sanctions law." "She is first-class, incredibly user-friendly and amazing on paper; she has incredible drafting skills and she is great in court." "She was very responsive, very insightful and kept a calm, level head."

2018: "A first-class barrister who is highly responsive and authoritative, and who has an unsurpassed knowledge of the law."

2017: "Queen of the Sanctions Bar without a doubt. She is just phenomenal." "Beyond responsive. First- class."

Legal 500

2027: "Maya excelled at breaking down very complex topics into streamlined questions for the court to decide. Her outstanding reputation for sanctions expertise is well-deserved!"

2026: "Maya is hands down the go-to barrister on sanctions matters. She has great insights from her long career and experience of working both for and against the government. She has a good eye for detail but always has excellent grasp of the bigger picture."

2025: 'Maya is a first rate barrister. She combines a razor sharp intellect with a measured style of advocacy but can also apply forensic force when needed. She is also a wonderfully collegiate person and a real team player.'

2024: "Maya Lester is very assured, knows her subject matter well and is very savvy and thoughtful in how she manages cases."

2024: "A real expert in her field and a go-to counsel for the most complex sanctions queries."

2024: "Maya is a sanctions guru. She is a widely respected go-to barrister in this space."

2022: "She is the oracle and was the first to identify the area of sanctions. Still head and shoulders above other silks in the area."

2021: “Superb when it comes to issues relating to terrorism and sanctions – she knows the law inside and out.”

2017: “Fantastic knowledge of terrorism and sanctions laws.”

Who’s Who Legal

Maya is listed in Who’s Who Legal 2020 as a national leader for international trade & commodities, a global leader for trade & customs, and as one of the world’s leading trade and customs lawyers since 2017.

2021: “Maya Lester QC earns widespread recommendations for her capable handling of competition, state aid and sanctions disputes”.

2020: Maya Lester QC “possesses ‘unparalleled drafting skills’ and is ‘able to synthesise multiple legal arguments into simple, consolidated pleadings’. Clients further praise her as a ‘strong and capable lawyer’ who ‘works hard to obtain all relevant facts’.” (Trade & Customs: Leading Individual for International Sanctions)

2020: “Maya Lester QC is “an incredibly impressive barrister” with “an unsurpassed knowledge of sanctions law”. Her “clarity of thought is exemplary”, say commentators who add: “Her drafting speed and skill is incredible, and her oratory is first class.”

2019: “Maya Lester QC is “the queen of sanctions”, effuse sources who say she is “very knowledgeable on UK sanctions law” and “always impresses”.”

2019: “Maya Lester QC is a well-established figure in the field with respondents highlighting her impressive ability on sanctions-related matters.”

2015: “Maya Lester is known for her ‘ability to cut to the heart of a case immediately’. She has particular expertise in the law relating to economic sanctions.”

Civil liberties and human rights

Maya Lester KC was a founding member of the Human Rights Lawyers Association, is a Trustee of the Alliance for Lawyers at Risk, and undertakes regular human rights work, including pro bono / public interest litigation. She is on the legal panel of Law for Change which funds public interest litigation, co-runs the Anthony Lester human rights fellowships at Bard College and is on the panel awarding the Sir Henry Brooke Rule of Law awards.

Her leading cases in this area include: *Youssef* (HRA challenge to the Sanctions Act), *Meta v RussianFederation* (EctHR); *NeslenvEvans* (Labourpartyanti-semitism investigations); *Rahmatullah* (human rights damages for alleged abuse in Afghanistan & Iraq); *Bancoult* (the Chagos Islands litigation, in the UK courts & ECHR); *Walker v Innospec* (equal treatment in civil partners' pensions); *Works v Gray* (discrimination in the Matrimonial Causes Act); *International Sikh Youth Federation* and *LTTE* (proscribed terrorist organisations); the leading case on freedom of political expression *R (Prolife Alliance) v BBC;* the Shambo case (*R (Community for the Many Names of God) v Welsh Assembly Government (CA)*).Her European Court of Human Rights cases include *Meta v Russian Federation, Georgia v Russian Federation* ; *Yukos v Russian Federation*; *Mattilla v Finland; Bancoult v United Kingdom* and *Chagos Islanders v United Kingdom*.

DIRECTORY QUOTES

Chambers & Partners

2027: "She is the expert in sanctions, has been on all the leading sanctions cases and has been for years."

2027: "Maya is simply fantastic. The way she simplifies legal concepts for a lay audience is stunning. Her authority in front of the court is also amazing."

2027: "She was very effective, very punchy in court and knows the area inside out. She may be the leading sanctions barrister."

2027: "Maya is superb. She is calm and authoritative on her feet, won the trust of the judges and helped to secure an excellent outcome for our client."

2026: "Maya Lester KC routinely acts for both private and public respondents and applicants in human rights cases. She has vast experience of appearing before domestic and EU courts, and is particularly knowledgeable on the subject of EU sanctions. She fields further expertise in matters involving torture, religious freedom and freedom of speech."

2025: "She is incredibly knowledgeable and I like working with her."

2025: "Maya has encyclopaedic knowledge."

2025: "Maya is one of the most formidable legal brains and intellects at the bar."

2024: "It was a very difficult brief but Maya grasped it very quickly and was phenomenal in court. She has the attention of the court in a way only few have. Someone I would love to work with again."

2023: "She is a strong practitioner who presents intellectual dexterity and commanding advocacy." "Maya is thoughtful and creative, and has a great manner with clients."

2022: "Maya has a very easy manner in court."

2021: "A real powerhouse, she is forever coming up with new angles and ideas."

2021: "The best drafter I have ever come across. Steely advocate and is divine to work with."

2020: "Maya Lester is fantastically good." "Her drafting is amazing."

2020: "An excellent barrister, who is undoubtedly the leading barrister in the difficult and developing area of sanctions."

2019: "A very good and extremely clever barrister."

2018: "Maya Lester is utterly approachable, unflappable and a consummate performer in court." "She is meticulously prepared."

2018-19: "Gives measured and considered advice and comes across as the voice of reason in court."

2017: "Her brain works at a different speed, and she's delightfully modest and easy to work with."

2017: "Fantastic knowledge of terrorism and sanctions laws."

2016: "An erudite human rights junior who is well versed in high-profile judicial review cases and national security matters. Advises a diverse list of clients including individuals and large businesses."

2016: "An excellent lawyer, who is diligent and creative."

2015: "An amazing team player with a calmness under pressure that is much admired."

Legal 500

2027: "Maya has unrivaled experience in UK and EU sanctions, notably in the context of court challenges to designations that have a strong human rights element. She speaks with the authority and wisdom of a true master of the field, but remains as approachable and friendly as anyone in it."

2025: "Maya's commitment to issues is impressive. She is obviously a master of her subject areas, but she will also think around the case or issue at hand – whether legal or practical issues – to work

through all possible options. Her advocacy is always well thought through and compelling."

2024: "Maya has a quiet authority founded upon a keen intellect."

2023: 2023: "Maya is a noted expert in sanctions. She is extremely responsive and user-friendly. She has worked on some of the most high-profile domestic and EU sanctions cases."

2022: "Fabulous leader and team player. Terrific strategic thinker. Unparallelled excellence in drafting. Meticulous preparer of cases and gifted advocate."

2021: "Unusual in really credibly marrying top level expertise in both competition law and public law." 2020: "An excellent team leader and motivator."

2018-19: "An excellent, clear, concise, precise and effective advocate." 2017: "A busy silk with a fast-growing practice."

2016: "She fully deserved silk, and is a top-drawer advocate and adviser."

2015: "Her drafting skills are excellent and unique."

Competition

Maya Lester has extensive experience in all areas of UK and EU competition litigation and advisory work. Her practice includes competition investigations, appeals, and judicial reviews, competition directors' disqualification, follow-on damages actions, mergers, abuse of dominance, cartels, EU actions for annulment and preliminary references. Who's Who Legal has recommended her every year since 2015 as one of the world's leading competition lawyers.

She is a regular speaker at competition events including the ABA Antitrust Spring meeting & MLex conference, and has been on the organising committee of the Fordham Competition Law Institute Annual Conference on International Antitrust Law and Policy.

Standalone and follow-on competition claims

Maya appeared in the first ever follow-on damages trial in the UK, *Enron v EWS*, and in several since including *Emerald v BA* (Air Cargo) and *National Grid v Alstom & Ors.* She appeared in the standalone actions *Foundem* and *Streetmap v Google* (abuse of dominance), *JJH/ValueLicensing v Microsoft* (abuse of dominance), *British Horseracing Board v AtTheRaces* (abuse of dominance and excessive pricing), and in the leading case on prosecution of cartels for conspiracy to defraud *R v Goldshield* (heard in the House of Lords with *Norris v USA*) and *Kodak v Glencore & Ors.*

Appeals from competition regulatory decisions

Maya has appeared in major competition appeals in the High Court, Court of Appeal and Competition Appeal Tribunal and EU courts, including: *Alstom* (French Blocking Statute), *(BSkyB and Premier League v Ofcom (* Pay TV*));* EURIBOR (*JP Morgan v Commission* in the EU General Court, *HSBC v Commission* in the ECJ); telecoms *(Carphone Warehouse v Ofcom* (Carrier Preselection); *BT v Ofcom* (080 termination charges); *Tesco v OFT* (dairy cartel); *(Racecourse Association v OFT* (collective selling); *Hays v OFT* (construction recruitment forum penalty appeals).

OFT / CMA and European Commission investigations

Private schools' fees; Orders and Rules of Horseracing; cigarette pricing; construction industry cover pricing; dairy investigation; EURIBOR

Competition judicial reviews

Maya has appeared in numerous competition judicial reviews in the High Court and Court of Appeal, including *Ryanair v Competition Commission; John Lewis v OFT* (extended warranties); *Association of Convenience Stores v OFT* (press distribution); *R (UniChem) v OFT* ; *R (Celesio) v OFT; R (Cityhook) v OFT; R (Sports Direct) v Competition Commission.*

DIRECTORY QUOTES

Chambers & Partners

2027: "Maya is brilliant: she is efficient, clear and very effective."

2027: "Maya was excellent in her advice to the client."

2026: "Maya Lester KC acts for key financial services clients seeking to overturn EC cartel decisions. She also defends follow-on damages claims, as well as acting for claimants in standalone and collective action claims. Lester also has a number of clients in the pharmaceutical, energy and technology industries."

2025: "Maya is fantastic in this field. She never lets a case out of her sight and has that stellar quality of being able to move the dial in a case."

2025: "Maya is a great advocate. She's really great on her feet, and when difficult questions come up she finds the right thing to say."

2025: "She provides excellent attention to detail and analysis."

2024: "Maya is brilliant, she is a really good lawyer in writing and orally."

2024: "Clients love Maya and find her calm and measured approach very reassuring."

2024: "Maya is excellent in every respect - she is user-friendly, provides superb analysis, is quietly

forceful and highly effective in court."

2023: "Absolutely first class. She is the master of her brief and is legally completely up to date with all developments. She provides very sound, reasoned and objective advice."

2022: "Decisive, with a superb grasp of the detail and wider strategic objectives." "Her written work is really a thing of beauty; her drafting is sublime." "Maya is very enthusiastic, very committed and hard-working. She is client-friendly and collaborative. She is very practical and rolls up her sleeves."

2021: "Maya is absolutely incredible to work with."

2020: "A total dream of a lawyer, who has an unparalleled ability to produce the highest quality drafting. Her advocacy style is very calming and persuasive." "She was able to drop everything and turn around a piece of advice very quickly."

2019: "She is calm, experienced and a lawyer with excellent drafting skills."

2018: "She offers wise and measured counsel, drafts beautifully and is great on her feet."

2017: "She is particularly good on complex cases, and very positive and definitive on points of law."

2016: "A very bright and diligent junior." "She's good with clients, gives measured and considered advice, and comes across as the voice of reason in court."

2016: "A hugely gifted public and competition law expert who receives consistent praise for both her advocacy skills and her thoughtful and creative approach to cases. Over the years she has acted in a number of headline cases, including the dairy cartel affair and the Premier League Pay-TV affair.

2016: "She is very measured and persuasive on her feet, managing to clearly cut through a case to its core issues." "A real team player who rolls up her sleeves."

Legal 500

2027: "Maya is just a superb advocate. In difficult cases, you can count on her to dispense with the points that don't matter and find a compelling way to put the points that really do."

2026: "Maya is a go-to for complex matters where client handling is particularly important. She is brilliant at understanding what is needed and working to give clients confidence in the strategy and how it helps meet their goals."

2023: "A highly impressive silk, Maya possesses superb intellect and gets to the heart of a matter quickly in both drafting and shaping her submissions."

2022: "A fabulous leader and team player. She is a terrific strategic thinker, has unparalleled

excellence in drafting. She is a meticulous preparer of cases and a gifted advocate."

2021: "Unusual in really credibly marrying top level expertise in both competition law and public law." 2020: "An excellent team leader and motivator."

2018-19: "An excellent, clear, concise, precise and effective advocate." 2017: "A busy silk with a fast-growing practice."

2016: "She fully deserved silk, and is a top-drawer advocate and adviser." 2015: "Her drafting skills are excellent and unique."

Who's Who Legal

2023: Maya Lester KC earns plaudits for “confronting the difficult questions head on”, with sources adding, “She gives pragmatic advice”.

2021: “Maya Lester QC earns widespread recommendations for her capable handling of competition, state aid and sanctions disputes”.

Maya is listed in the 2020 edition of Who's Who Legal as a global and national leader in competition, which states she is “considered a go-to silk for competition and international trade disputes”, is “highly experienced in the area, but also clear in her advice”, with drafting skills that are “second to none”.

2015 - 2021: Listed as one of the world's leading competition lawyers

Agriculture, fishing and food

Maya Lester KC is a regular adviser to the National Farmers Union and other individuals & entities on agricultural matters, in particular those with a public, EU, PIL or competition angle.

She has appeared in a large number of cases involving animal health, environmental law and agriculture including: *NFU & T&G Stone v Defra* (badger cull licenses); judicial review of the decision to slaughter Shambo the temple bullock (*R (Community for the Many Names of God) v Welsh Assembly Government* (CA); the European Emissions Trading Scheme (*R (Cemex v Secretary of State for the Environment*); the Renewable Energy Assurance Scheme (*Crystal v REAL*) and Rural Payments Agency; foot and mouth disease (*R (Kindersley) v Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food* and *Pride & Ors v Institute of Animal Health, Merial Ltd & Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs* (escape of foot & mouth disease) . She has advised regularly on cases involving bovine TB, foot & mouth disease, and badger culling.

Terrorism and national security

Maya regularly advises on and appears in cases relating to terrorism and national security, in the UK and EU courts and tribunals. Her leading cases in this field include: *Youssef* (terrorist sanctions listings), *Rahmatullah* (alleged mistreatment in Afghanistan & Iraq), *Kadi 2* (terrorist asset freezing, EU measures implementing UNSC resolutions), *International Sikh Youth Federation* and *LTTE* (terrorism prescribed organisations). Much of her practice involves business crime, including criminal sanctions & export control, European Arrest Warrants (including the *AY / MOL litigation and arbitrations)* and INTERPOL red notices.

Click here to see Maya Lester QC on Newsnight discussing Interpol (November 2018)

Publications & podcasts

Maya's website globalsanctions.com is the leading online sanctions & export control resource worldwide. Maya's articles, webinars & legislative evidence are on globalsanctions.com.

Book chapters: Foreword in *Sanctions in Europe* (World ECR) *EU Competition Law: Procedures and Remedies* (Gray, Lester, Darbon, Facenna, Holmes, Oxford University Press) Co-author; *Human Rights Practice* (eds Simor & Emmerson, Sweet & Maxwell) Editorial Assistant and Updater on Article 10 of the ECHR); *Law of the European Union* (eds Vaughan and Robertson, Oxford University Press) Contributing Author; *Competition Litigation (UK Practice and Procedure*) (OUP), Contributing Author.

Articles include: 'Court of Justice says UK's Article 50 notice of intention to leave EU can be unilaterally revoked (Wightman and Others v Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union)' [December 2018] *LexisNexis* 'General Court rejects challenge to EU decision opening Brexit negotiations as inadmissible (Shindler v Council of the European Union)' [November 2018] *LexisNexis; 'The Kadi Case'* [Summer 2018] *European Advocate; 'Economic sanctions have been a foreign policy tool of choice for some time'* [*Counsel,* February 2017]; 'Brussels lists, Luxembourg de-lists? Sanctions de-designation cases in the European Court' [May 2013] *World Expert Control Review*; 'Targeted sanctions and sanctions targeted: Iranian banks in the European Court ' [May 2013] *Butterworths Journal of International Banking and Financial Law*; 'Judicial review of sanctions decisions: "The wrong point in the wrong court with the wrong defendant"?' [2013] *Judicial Review* 206; 'Prosecuting Cartels for Conspiracy to Defraud' [2008] *Competition Law Journal* ; 'Judicial Review in the UK of Competition and State Aid Decisions' [2007] *European Common Market Law* (co-author); 'UniChem v OFT' [2005] *Competition Law Journal* ; 'Puzzling over Abuse of Right' [2004] *European Current Law*; 'Human Rights - The International Dimension' [2004] *The Lawyer*; 'The Chapter I Prohibition' [2002] *Competition Law Review*; 'The Bar European Group in Budapest' [2001] *European Advocate*.

Podcast Rosinus on Air, Criminal Compliance Podcast, "Overview of UK sanctions compared with EU and US sanctions" with Maya Lester KC and Michael O'Kane, 10 February 2025

Podcast Harneys: Expert Review, "Economic sanctions: Russia, Brexit, and beyond" with Maya Lester KC, 31 January 2022

Podcast Brick Court Chambers, "Stepping outside the law" with Maya Lester KC and Lord David Anderson of Ipswich KBE KC, 25 March 2021

Podcast RUSI's Suspicious Transaction Report Podcasts, "The Other Side of Sanctions" with Maya Lester KC and Michael O'Kane, 29 June 2020

Podcast BIICL (British Institute of International and Comparative Law), "The Sanctions and Money Laundering Act 2018" with Maya Lester KC, July 2018

International Underwriting Association, Global Sanctions Update. Chair: Christopher Jones. Speakers: Maya Lester KC and Michael O'Kane

Fordham International Law Journal Symposium 2025, panel on "The Limits of Sanctions" (from 06:40:00). Chair: Professor Andrew Kent. Speakers: Maya Lester KC, Dr Nathanael Tilahun and Andrew C. Adams, 21 February 2025

City & Financial Global, Economic Sanctions Summit keynote speech by Maya Lester KC, 29 January 2024

Brick Court Chambers, Sanctions Soirée with Maya Lester KC (description of event), 11 May 2023

UK Finance, Sanctions School webinar series with Maya Lester KC in Episode 1 "What are Sanctions?" and Episode 3 "Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018", 5 October 2022.

Collyer Bristow, Financial Services webinar: Whistleblowing, sanctions regimes and launching a digital currency with Maya Lester QC on UK, EU & US sanctions (16:42-34:21 minutes and Q&A), 7 July 2021

Volterra Fietta, Virtual Seminar: the UK and EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime" with Maya Lester QC and Michael O'Kane, 25 March 2021

Brick Court Chambers, Webinar: New UK Sanctions Regime with Maya Lester QC, 25 January 2021

Global Sanctions Forum, Lessons Learnt from Recent Enforcement Cases, Maya Lester QC, 22 October 2020

C5, Conference Webinar: on the UK's new sanctions regime post-Brexit and points of divergence with the EU Maya Lester QC, 17 June 2020

Thomson Reuters Legal Europe, The Legal Debates: Sanctions are fair and effective. Speakers: Maya Lester QC, The Rt Hon. the Lord Darling of Roulanish, Alistair Campbell and Ben Emmerson QC, 4 September 2019

Brick Court Chambers, Harneys, Debevoise, International Sanctions Seminar, Maya Lester QC on the "EU sanctions perspective", July 2018 (blog post)

Brick Court Chambers, Sanctions after Brexit with Maya Lester QC, 21 June 2018 (blog post)

Hague Centre for Law and Arbitration, Symposium on Unilateral Sanctions and International Law, Presentation on sanctions cases in the EU Court by Maya Lester, 19 July 2013

Maya Lester KC, Sanctions Law: Horizon Scanning for 2026

Maya Lester KC, Sanctions Law: Key Trends in 2025

Maya Lester KC Interview with City & Financial Global, 03 March 2026

Maya Lester KC Interview with City & Financial Global, 12 January 2024

Maya Lester QC on BBC Radio 4 Today, BBC Radio Wales Breakfast, BBC Newshour, BBC Scotland, BBC Radio 5 Live and Times Radio, 22 and 23 February 2022

Maya Lester QC Interview on CGTN on US sanctions on Iran, 22 October 2020

Maya Lester QC Interview on Al-Jazeera, "Is Trump's Maximum Pressure Campaign Working?", 21 September 2020

Maya Lester QC, Foreword to "Sanctions in Europe", World ECR Books, 3 February 2020

Maya Lester QC, "The Kadi Case", with David Vaughan CBE KC, July 2018

Maya Lester QC, "The Sanctions & Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018", WorldECR 70, June 2018

Maya Lester QC, "Economic sanctions have been a foreign policy tool of choice for some time", Counsel magazine, February 2017

Maya Lester QC Interview with C5, "What are the four things you would change about the EU's sanctions regimes if you could?", 4 November 2016

Maya Lester QC Interview on Monocle Radio on EU Syria Sanctions, 28 October 2016

Maya Lester QC Interview on The Report, "Are Russian sanctions dangerous for Britain?" (BBC Radio 4), 9 April 2015

Maya Lester QC Profile in Christian Science Monitor, 8 May 2014

Maya Lester QC Profile in Foreign Policy, 2 May 2014

Maya Lester QC Interview on New York public radio on Russia sanctions, 6 May 2014

Qualifications

U.K: James Allen's Girls' School; Clare College, Cambridge University (BA in History, First Class in Pts I & II); Diploma in Law at City University (Distinction, 1st place); Bar Vocational Course (Inns of Court School of Law); called to Bar at Lincoln's Inn (2000); Pupillage at Brick Court Chambers; QC (Lincoln's Inn) 2016.

U.S.A: Master of Studies in Law and Visiting Scholar (Yale Law School, Paul Mellon Fellowship); Visiting Scholar (Columbia Law School); Researcher at the Open Society Institute (New York); Summer Associate at Williams & Connolly (Washington DC); Judicial Extern to Judge Thelton Henderson (Federal District Court, San Francisco); Visiting Scholar at Columbia Law School (New York); Seminars at Yale, Columbia and NYU on targeted sanctions (2011-2012); Henry Fellowship at the US State Department, 2012.

European and International experience: Stagiaire at the European Court of Justice (Advocate General Francis Jacobs); International Law Intern at the Supreme Court of Israel; Part-time tutor in European Law, City University (London). Training for judges, lawyers and prosecutors on human rights and European law for the Slynn Foundation, Interrights, the Council of Europe and the Turkish Chief of Staff (including in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Serbia, Poland and Turkey); Speaker at the Anglo-Finnish Competition Law Trust (in Finland and Estonia), the University of Amsterdam, the Italian Antitrust Association, the European University Institute.

Awards: Clare College Foundation Scholarship; Clare College History Award; Paul Mellon Fellowship to Yale Law School; Lincoln's Inn Hardwicke Entrance Award; Lincoln's Inn Mansfield Scholarship; Winner of 2000 Lincolns Inn Robert Wright Mooting Competition; Worshipful Company of Arbitrators Prize; Pegasus Scholarship from the Inns of Court; Bingham Centre Fellowship; Henry Fellowship at US State Department. Global Elite Thought Leader for Trade & Customs - International Sanctions by Lexology for 2026.

Appointments: Bar Council AML & Sanctions working group Chair; Advisory Board for the Centre

for European Law, Kings College London; Board of Anthony Lester human rights fellowships at Bard College; Lincolns Inn Regulatory Panel; Trustee of the Alliance for Lawyers at Risk; former Bar Council European Law Committee &; editorial board World Export Control Review.

Directory Quotes

Maya Lester KC is recommended as a leading silk by the legal directories in six practice areas: Sanctions, Administrative & Public Law, Competition & European Law, Civil Liberties & Human Rights, Public International Law and Sanctions. She is the only “star’ individual for sanctions and ranked in the 'Chambers 100 UK Bar', a list of the top 100 barristers, and Who’s Who rank her among the world's leading competition, sanctions and trade and customs lawyers and as a 'Thought Leader' for Brexit 2018 and International Law Silk of the Year at the Legal 500 UK Bar Awards 2025.

Chambers & Partners

2027: "Maya has done a lot of impressive work in sanctions and public law. She has been extraordinarily impressive, and her broader practice has been really first-rate." (Sanctions)

2027: "Maya is unquestionably the best sanctions barrister in London. She understands sanctions in the UK and abroad extremely well and is always my first call. I haven't found others at her level." (Sanctions)

2027: "Maya is the guru when it comes to sanctions. What has impressed me is how good she is with clients and instructing solicitors. She gives realistic and pragmatic advice about steps that could be taken and the risks." (Sanctions)

2027: "She is the expert in sanctions, has been on all the leading sanctions cases and has been for years." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights)

2027: "Maya is simply fantastic. The way she simplifies legal concepts for a lay audience is stunning. Her authority in front of the court is also amazing." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights)

2027: "She was very effective, very punchy in court and knows the area inside out. She may be the leading sanctions barrister." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights0

2027: "Maya is superb. She is calm and authoritative on her feet, won the trust of the judges and helped to secure an excellent outcome for our client." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights)

2027: "Maya Lester KC is very impressive all round." (EU Law)

2027: "Her knowledge when it comes to case law and novel arguments to move challenges forward is second to none." (EU Law)

2027: "Maya is a fantastic advocate. Her pleadings are extremely easy to listen to." (Administrative and Public Law)

2027: "In working for or against regulators, Maya is extraordinarily impressive. She is first-rate." (Administrative and Public Law)

2027: "The queen of sanctions, Maya is a wonderful drafter and a forceful advocate." (Administrative and Public Law)

2027: "She is ferociously clever and well read, and appellate courts really like her. She's calm, measured and sensible." (Administrative and Public Law)

2027: "Maya is brilliant: she is efficient, clear and very effective." (Competition)

2027: "Maya was excellent in her advice to the client." (Competition)

2027: "Maya is enormously experienced and has fantastic insight and recall of the most technical of issues, as well as the big strategic questions. She's the go-to for all-round strategic and specific advice, and her advice is always given in very practical terms for clients who are focused on getting the best results for her." (Public International Law)

2027: "Working with Maya is a great experience. She is so responsive."(Public International Law)

2027: "Maya is very effective. She is very punchy in court and knows the area inside out."(Public International Law)

2026: "Maya is the most knowledgeable barrister in the country on sanctions-related matters. She is very down to earth. She is a fighter." Sanctions

2026: "Maya is a leading light in the sanctions field. She is very good and very effective. She has really good judgement, is very sensible and gives very user-friendly advice and guidance."Sanctions

2026: "Maya is an extraordinarily effective advocate who strikes a brilliant balance between forensic and passionate. Her work ethic is off the charts, and she gives extraordinary advice." Sanctions

2026: "Maya has unrivalled experience and provides an excellent service." Sanctions

2026: "Maya is the epitome of calm and rationality, bringing a tremendous practical wisdom to her analysis of complex issues." Sanctions

2026: "Maya is a fighter and knows the law inside out." Public International Law

2026: "Maya is an extraordinarily effective advocate who strikes a brilliant balance between being forensic and passionate." Public International Law

2026: "She is the most knowledgeable barrister in this country on European, public law and sanction related matters. She is very down to earth; a fighter who knows the law inside-out." European Law

2026: "She's made more appearances before the European court than any other counsel. She is the epitome of calm and rational, and brings tremendous practical wisdom to complex issues." European Law

2026: "Maya is a true expert on EU law and on navigating the EU courts." European Law

2026: "I think she's excellent, she's very good with clients, very commercial and non-fussy. She gives practical advice and cuts through detail." European Law

2026: "Maya is the sanctions supremo at the Bar. She is an extraordinarily effective advocate, she is a brilliant balance between forensic and passionate, and her work ethic is off the charts." European Law

2026: "She has really good judgement, is very sensible and gives very user-friendly advice and guidance." Competition Law

2026: "She's a terrific person to work with, and she's a competent and excellent advocate." Competition Law

2026: "Maya has a brilliant balance between forensic and passionate and her work ethic is off the charts." Civil Liberties & Human Rights

2026: "Maya's advocacy skills are excellent." Civil Liberties & Human Rights

2026: "When it comes to sanctions, Maya Lester is in a class above the rest." Civil Liberties & Human Rights

2026: "Maya Lester is the Sanctions Supremo at the UK Bar." Civil Liberties & Human Rights

2026: "Maya is the doyenne of sanctions." Civil Liberties & Human Rights

2026: "Maya is an extraordinarily effective advocate. She is a brilliant balance between forensic and passionate, and her work ethic is off the charts." Administrative & Public Law

2026: "Maya is on the ball with EU and public law. She gets stuck in and rolls up her sleeves. She has strategic oversight but can also get into the detail very easily." Administrative & Public Law

2026: "Maya Lester KC is the leading sanctions mind at the Bar, providing unparalleled expertise to companies and individuals on listing and relisting challenges, enforcement matters and related commercial litigation and arbitration. She has a superb command of EU and US sanctions regimes, including legal developments concerning US secondary sanctions." (Sanctions)

2026: "Maya Lester KC offers especial expertise in economic sanctions and undertakes significant work in a range of international legal disciplines, with recent work involving close scrutiny of the Treaty on European Union. Among other clients, she acts on behalf of investors in various arbitral proceedings." (Sanctions)

2026: "Maya Lester KC attracts considerable attention both for her sanctions practice and for her work in key CJEU referral cases, as well as her involvement in the leading Brexit-related litigation. She has advised in commercial disputes arising within the sensitive context of conflicting sanctions regimes. She also appeals EC competition decisions before the CJEU and assists with important cases on the execution of European arrest warrants." (Sanctions)

2026: "Maya Lester KC acts for key financial services clients seeking to overturn EC cartel decisions. She also defends follow-on damages claims, as well as acting for claimants in standalone and collective action claims. Lester also has a number of clients in the pharmaceutical, energy and technology industries." (Administrative & Public Law)

2026: "Maya Lester KC brings deep expertise in EU, human rights and sanctions law to domestic and international public law proceedings. Recently she has been involved in high-profile national security disputes. She receives instructions from corporations, NGOs and public bodies." (Administrative & Public Law)

2026: "Maya Lester KC routinely acts for both private and public respondents and applicants in human rights cases. She has vast experience of appearing before domestic and EU courts, and is particularly knowledgeable on the subject of EU sanctions. She fields further expertise in matters involving torture, religious freedom and freedom of speech." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2025: "Maya is fantastic in this field. She never lets a case out of her sight and has that stellar quality of being able to move the dial in a case." (Competition)

2025: "Maya is a great advocate. She's really great on her feet, and when difficult questions come up she finds the right thing to say." (Competition)

2025: "She provides excellent attention to detail and analysis." (Competition)

2025: "She is incredibly knowledgeable and I like working with her." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2025: "Maya has encyclopaedic knowledge." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2025: "Maya is one of the most formidable legal brains and intellects at the bar." (Public International Law)

2025: "Maya is an excellent advocate." (Administrative & Public Law)

2025: "She has very encyclopaedic knowledge in sanctions. She is very good tactically and very good on her feet." (Administrative & Public Law)

2025: "Maya has really great broad knowledge of European, public and human rights law. She is a fluent advocate and respected by judges. She is very thorough and hardworking." (Administrative & Public Law)

2025: "Maya Lester KC goes above and beyond. She is bright, supportive and engaging with all issues in front of her." (EU Law)

2025: "I find Maya Lester KC's responsiveness extraordinary and the level of her drafting is very high. She turns difficult situations into very easy-to-understand concepts, which I think is a rare skill." (EU Law)

2025: "Maya is the undisputed queen of sanctions and EU competition law." (Sanctions)

2025: "Maya is probably the leading barrister in sanctions. Her knowledge of the subject across the whole spectrum is platinum class." (Sanctions)

2025: "What she doesn't know about sanctions isn't worth knowing. She's brilliant and makes complex areas accessible." (Sanctions)

2025: "Maya possesses extraordinary communication skills and is remarkably efficient in her drafting." (Sanctions)

2024: "It was a very difficult brief but Maya grasped it very quickly and was phenomenal in court. She has the attention of the court in a way only few have. Someone I would love to work with again." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2024: "Maya Lester is very assured, knows her subject matter well and is very savvy and thoughtful in how she manages cases." (Sanctions)

2024: "A real expert in her field and a go-to counsel for the most complex sanctions queries." (Sanctions)

2024: "Maya is a sanctions guru. She is a widely respected go-to barrister in this space." (Sanctions; EU Law)

2024: "She is all-round excellent. Her ability to communicate with clients and her drafting skills are extraordinary; I've not come across anything like them. She is also brilliant on her feet and commands the respect of the court." (EU Law)

2024: "Maya Lester is extremely capable." (Public International Law)

2024: "Maya is a great leader, down to earth, straight-talking and with excellent judgement." (Administrative & Public Law)

2024: "Clients love Maya and find her calm and measured approach very reassuring." (Competition Law)

2024: "Maya is excellent in every respect - she is user-friendly, provides superb analysis, is quietly forceful and highly effective in court." (Competition Law)

2024: "Maya is brilliant, she is a really good lawyer in writing and orally." (Competition Law)

2023: "Flexible, responsive and a pleasure to work with. On the substance, Maya is absolutely without any peer, and is extremely valuable on the strategic side."

2023: "Absolutely first class. She is the master of her brief and is legally completely up to date with all developments. She provides very sound, reasoned and objective advice."

2023: "She is hugely experienced, very clever and very easy to work with. She's also very capable of explaining things to the lay client."

2023: "One of her strengths is the clarity of the views she expresses to clients."

2023: "She's the queen of sanctions." "Really incisive."

2023: "On the substance, she is absolutely without any peers."

2023: "She has been at the heart of the rapidly developing legal area of targeted sanctions because of her involvement right at the centre of the leading EU cases."

2023: "She is a strong practitioner who presents intellectual dexterity and commanding advocacy."

2023: "Maya is thoughtful and creative, and has a great manner with clients."

2023: "She is very clear and sharp."

2023: "She masters each legal development quickly and reliably, and assimilates all the new jurisprudential principles into her work on behalf of sanctioned clients."

2022: "She is the oracle and was the first to identify the area of sanctions. Still head and shoulders above other silks in the area." (Sanctions)

2022: "She has great client handling skills and is a really good team player." "She has a breadth of expertise in domestic and international matters." (Administrative & Public Law)

2022: "Maya has a very easy manner in court." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2022: "Very good indeed, and one of the few true public/commercial law crossover barristers." (Public International Law)

2022: "She is an absolutely pristine drafter, and her client skills and responsiveness are second to none." (European Law)

2022: "Decisive, with a superb grasp of the detail and wider strategic objectives." "Her written work

is really a thing of beauty; her drafting is sublime." "Maya is very enthusiastic, very committed and hard- working. She is client-friendly and collaborative. She is very practical and rolls up her sleeves." (Competition Law)

2021: "She has become the go-to expert on sanctions." "She is incredibly responsive and very quick."(Sanctions)

2021: "Very clever and a good strategist, also very client-friendly." "Exceptionally responsive in difficult times for the client." (Administrative & Public Law)

2021: "A real powerhouse, she is forever coming up with new angles and ideas." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2021: "Her professional skills, teamwork and commitment to her client's cause and case are superb." (Public International Law)

2021: "She has incredible clarity of writing." (European Law)

2021: "Maya is absolutely incredible to work with." (Competiton Law)

2020: "She is a total dream: incredibly quick to respond and has an unparalleled ability to produce the highest-quality drafting. Her advocacy style is very calming and persuasive, and she's extremely sensible, down to earth, engaging and dynamic." "She's very bright and has an excellent grasp of the issues. She's on top of everything in the sanctions world." (Administrative & Public Law)

2020: "Maya Lester is fantastically good." "She's first class on sanctions and her drafting is amazing." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2020: "A total dream of a lawyer, who has an unparalleled ability to produce the highest quality drafting. Her advocacy style is very calming and persuasive." "She was able to drop everything and turn around a piece of advice very quickly." (Competition Law - UK & Global)

2020: "First class on sanctions and her drafting is amazing." "She is enormously diplomatic, a great team player and exceptionally intellectually agile." (European Law)

2020: "Unsurpassed as a young QC in the field of sanctions. She has superlative drafting skills." (Public International Law - UK & Global)

2020: "She has an excellent knowledge of sanctions and an understanding of how everything fits in, coupled with a calm, logical manner and a good analytical approach." "She is the queen of sanctions law." "Maya is the pre-eminent sanctions lawyer in London and an expert on EU sanctions." (Sanctions)

2019: "Gives really proactive advice and knows the crossover of human rights and EU law

extremely well." "So bright and focused, she gets to the key point in minutes." (Administrative & Public Law)

2019: "A very good and extremely clever barrister." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2019: "She is calm, experienced and a lawyer with excellent drafting skills." (Competition Law - UK & Global)

2019: "Lester is very good to work with and manages matters very well." (European Law)

2019: "She is the queen of sanctions law." "She is first-class, incredibly user-friendly and amazing on paper; she has incredible drafting skills and she is great in court." "She was very responsive, very insightful and kept a calm, level head." (Sanctions)

2018: "She is diligent, hard-working and able." (Administrative & Public Law)

2018: "Maya Lester is utterly approachable, unflappable and a consummate performer in court." "She is meticulously prepared." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2018: "She offers wise and measured counsel, drafts beautifully and is great on her feet." (Competition Law)

2018: "She knows EU law inside out and can translate the process well for clients. She is able to take the commercial views of the client on board while remaining sensitive to the expectations of the court." (European Law)

2018: "A first-class barrister who is highly responsive and authoritative, and who has an unsurpassed knowledge of the law." (Sanctions)

2017: "Able to turn out high-quality work in a limited time. Her brain works at a different speed. She is delightfully modest and easy to work with and has a total grasp of the law." "She is really good with clients, gives measured, considered advice, and comes across as the voice of reason in court." (Administrative & Public Law)

2017: "Her brain works at a different speed, and she's delightfully modest and easy to work with." "She's one of the leading lights for sanctions." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2017: "She is particularly good on complex cases, and very positive and definitive on points of law." (Competition Law)

2017: "She is happy to answer queries at all hours and really knows her stuff." (European Law)

2017: "Queen of the Sanctions Bar without a doubt. She is just phenomenal." "Beyond responsive. First- class." (Sanctions)

2016: "An excellent junior with a particular speciality in sanctions work, one of the leading experts in

that field." "Owns the world of sanctions." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights)

2016: "An erudite human rights junior who is well versed in high-profile judicial review cases and national security matters. Advises a diverse list of clients including individuals and large businesses." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights)

2016: "A very bright and diligent junior." "She's good with clients, gives measured and considered advice, and comes across as the voice of reason in court." (Competition Law)

2016: "A hugely gifted public and competition law expert who receives consistent praise for both her advocacy skills and her thoughtful and creative approach to cases. Over the years she has acted in a number of headline cases, including the dairy cartel affair and the Premier League Pay-TV affair. (Chambers Global, Competition Law Band 1)

2016: "She is very measured and persuasive on her feet, managing to clearly cut through a case to its core issues." "A real team player who rolls up her sleeves." (Chambers Global, Competition Law Band 1)

2016: "She is fantastic, incredibly committed to her work and leaves no stone unturned. In addition, her drafting skills are second to none. I've never met anyone who could draft as well as her in any legal context. She is able to distil arguments on all sorts of legal issues from international law to European law and synthesise them in a way which is brilliant." (European Law)

Legal 500

2027: "Maya has unrivaled experience in UK and EU sanctions, notably in the context of court challenges to designations that have a strong human rights element. She speaks with the authority and wisdom of a true master of the field, but remains as approachable and friendly as anyone in it." (Administrative Law and Human Rights)

2027: "Maya has unrivaled experience in UK and EU sanctions, notably in the context of court challenges to designations that have a strong human rights element. She speaks with the authority and wisdom of a true master of the field, but remains as approachable and friendly as anyone in it." (Competition)

2027: "Maya is an excellent advocate. Her submissions are carefully crafted and engaging. She has phenomenal experience before the CJEU." (European Union Relations)

2027: "She is down-to-earth, super responsive, and a real pleasure to work with. She is incredibly persuasive in court and perfect at striking exactly the right tone for every moment." (Public International Law)

2027: "Maya excelled at breaking down very complex topics into streamlined questions for the court to decide. Her outstanding reputation for sanctions expertise is well-deserved!" (Sanctions)

2026: "Maya is hands down the go-to barrister on sanctions matters. She has great insights from her long career and experience of working both for and against the government. She has a good eye for detail but always has excellent grasp of the bigger picture." (Sanctions)

2026: "Maya is a go-to for complex matters where client handling is particularly important. She is brilliant at understanding what is needed and working to give clients confidence in the strategy and how it helps meet their goals." (Competition)

2026: "Maya has a deep understanding EU law and how European courts operate in practice. Based on her experience, she is able to develop effective strategies for clients to deal with complex European law issues. She is an exceptionally clear communicator, which clients appreciate." (European Union Relations)

2026: "Maya is a devastating advocate who gets under the hood of each of her cases, considers them from every angle, and is ready for anything that the court can throw at her." (Administrative Law and Human Rights)

2026: "Maya is incredibly strong on handling complex public international law issues. She has a nuanced understanding of how public international law operates in practice and is able to communicate clearly the nuances of public international law to clients and judges." (Public International Law)

2025: "Her advocacy is well-balanced, always well-thought-through, and compelling."

2025: "Maya is a first rate barrister. She combines a razor sharp intellect with a measured style of advocacy but can also apply forensic force when needed. She is also a wonderfully collegiate person and a real team player."

2025: "Maya knows EU law and the European courts inside and out. She is knowledgable, client-focussed and brutally effective."

2025: "Maya's commitment to issues is impressive. She is obviously a master of her subject areas, but she will also think around the case or issue at hand – whether legal or practical issues – to work through all possible options. Her advocacy is always well thought through and compelling."

2025: "Maya's reputation is second to none. She commands respect from peers, judges and administrative decision-makers in the UK and EU. She is also a highly innovative and strategic lawyer. On her feet, she is calm but commanding."

2024: "Maya has a quiet authority founded upon a keen intellect."

2023: "A highly impressive silk, Maya possesses superb intellect and gets to the heart of a matter quickly in both drafting and shaping her submissions." (Competition)

2023: "Maya is a phenomenal drafter, amazingly responsive and is top of the tree for sanctions."

(EU Law and Public International Law)

2023: "Maya is a noted expert in sanctions. She is extremely responsive and user-friendly. She has worked on some of the most high-profile domestic and EU sanctions cases." (Administrative Law & Human Rights)

2022: "An absolute delight to work with. Unstuffy, accessible and always delivers." (Public International Law)

2022: "A fabulous leader and team player. She is a terrific strategic thinker, has unparalleled excellence in drafting. She is a meticulous preparer of cases and a gifted advocate." (Competition, EU Law, Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2022: "Calm, clear and incisive. A punchy, non-nonsense advocate." (Administrative and Public Law)

2021: "Unusual in really credibly marrying top level expertise in both competition law and public law." (Competition)

2021: "A top-drawer drafter and forensic advocate with great wisdom. Everyone on the team was struck by her ability brilliantly to synthesise the points and express them clearly and effectively. Maya provides advice in the field not only of EU law but also public international law." (EU Law)

2021: "She excels in preparing complicated pleadings which address many different arguments in overlapping fields including public international law. Her pleadings are always clear and effective." (Public International Law)

2021: "The best drafter I have ever come across. Steely advocate and is divine to work with." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2021: "Superb when it comes to issues relating to terrorism and sanctions – she knows the law inside and out." (Administrative and Public Law)

2020: "A divinely forensic advocate." (Administrative and Public Law)

2020: "An excellent barrister, who is undoubtedly the leading barrister in the difficult and developing area of sanctions." (Civil Liberties & Human Rights)

2020: "An excellent team leader and motivator." (Competition) 2020: "Her knowledge of EU law is unsurpassed." (EU Law)

2018-19: "She has an outstanding intellect and drafting skills that are unique and exceptional." (Administrative and Public Law)

2018-19: "Gives measured and considered advice and comes across as the voice of reason in court." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights)

2018-19: "An excellent, clear, concise, precise and effective advocate." (Competition)

2018-19: "Exceptionally talented, and has an uncanny ability to immediately identify the key to a complex issue." (EU Law)

2018-19: "Innovative and creative in thought, and the leading barrister on the issue of sanctions." (Public International Law)

2017: "Collaborative, efficient and clear-eyed in her judgement." (Administrative and Public Law)
2017: "Fantastic knowledge of terrorism and sanctions laws." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights)
2017: "A busy silk with a fast-growing practice." (Competition)

2017: "The voice of reason in court, a superb drafter and a precise advocate." (EU Law)

2017: "Her drafting skills are exceptional and she is extremely persuasive in court." (Public International Law)

2016: "The voice of reason in court." (Administrative and Public Law)

2016: "An excellent lawyer, who is diligent and creative." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights) 2016: "She fully deserved silk, and is a top-drawer advocate and adviser." (EU & Competition) 2016: "Efficient, effective and undaunted by unknowns." (Public International Law)

2015: "Provides opinions, pleadings and oral advocacy of the highest calibre." (Administrative and Public Law, Tier 1)

2015: "An amazing team player with a calmness under pressure that is much admired." (Civil Liberties and Human Rights)

2015: "Her drafting skills are excellent and unique." (EU & Competition)

2015: "Her oral advocacy is of the highest calibre, displaying meticulous preparation and captivating delivery." (Public International Law)

Who's Who Legal

2022: Maya Lester KC is “widely regarded as the queen of UK sanctions” by peers, and has a wealth of experience in trade and compliance issues.(Trade & Customs - International Sanctions, Global Elite Thought Leader)

2021: “At Brick Court Chambers Maya Lester QC is ‘the leading lawyer of sanctions’ who is ‘highly sought after’ as ‘one of the most experienced litigators in this field in the UK”. (Trade & Customs: Leading Individual)

2021: “Maya Lester QC earns widespread recommendations for her capable handling of competition, state aid and sanctions disputes”.

2021: Respondents celebrate Maya Lester QC for her “unsurpassed knowledge of sanctions” and her “unparalleled drafting skills”. (Competition Law, and International Trade and Commodities)

2020: Maya Lester QC “possesses ‘unparalleled drafting skills’ and is ‘able to synthesise multiple legal arguments into simple, consolidated pleadings’. Clients further praise her as a ‘strong and capable lawyer’ who ‘works hard to obtain all relevant facts’.” (Trade & Customs: Leading Individual for International Sanctions)

2020: Maya Lester QC is “the queen of sanctions”, effuse sources who say she is “very knowledgeable on UK sanctions law” and “always impresses”. (Trade & Customs - International Sanctions)

2020: Maya Lester QC is “highly experienced in the area, but also clear in her advice”, with drafting skills that are “second to none”. (Competition - Listed as a Global and National Leader)

2020: "Maya Lester QC at Brick Court Chambers is “an incredibly impressive barrister” with “an unsurpassed knowledge of sanctions law”. Her “clarity of thought is exemplary”, say commentators who add: “Her drafting speed and skill is incredible, and her oratory is first class.”" She is classed as one of the “most highly regarded silks” in international trade and commodities. (International Trade & Commodities - Listed as a National Leader)

2020: "Maya Lester QC impresses market sources who consider her a go-to name at the Bar for trade compliance, sanctions and export control matters.” (Trade and Customs - Listed as a Global Leader)

2015-2020: Listed as one of the world's leading competition lawyers.

2019: "Maya Lester QC is a well-established figure in the field with respondents highlighting her impressive ability on sanctions-related matters." (International Trade & Commodities)

2019: "Maya Lester QC is “the queen of sanctions”, effuse sources who say she is “very knowledgeable on UK sanctions law” and “always impresses”." (Trade and Customs, International Sanctions) Listed as one of the world's leading trade and customs lawyers since 2017.

2018: Listed as a 'thought leader' for Brexit.

2016: “The newest silk at the set, Maya Lester QC, is extensively experienced in competition investigations and appeals. Before taking silk, instructing solicitors regarded her 'as a standout senior junior', regularly praising her 'attention to detail and assiduous nature'”.

2015: “Maya Lester is known for her 'ability to cut to the heart of a case immediately'. She has particular expertise in the law relating to economic sanctions.”