

To: Ms Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

cc: HRVP Kaja Kallas, Commissioner Šefčovič, COREPER II ambassadors

20 July 2026

Subject: Urgent call for a Commission proposal to restrict trade with the illegal Israeli settlements under Article 207 TFEU

Madam President,

We are writing to you following the last Foreign Affairs Council, after which High Representative/Vice-President Kallas shared that a ban on EU trade with Israel's illegal settlements was the option that received the broadest support among Member States, and that COREPER would be tasked with bringing this forward. The Commission should now come with a legislative proposal for a trade measure to that effect under the Common Commercial Policy (Article 207 TFEU).

The Council Legal Service has confirmed that Article 207 TFEU can serve as the legal basis for such a measure, a conclusion shared by more than [100 legal scholars](#) and by [dozens of NGOs and trade unions](#). Likewise, former EU trade commissioners and former ministers have [called](#) upon the EU leadership to use its existing trade policy powers to end trade with the settlements. Prominent [Israeli personalities](#) have also urged the EU to take this step.

This month marks two years since the International Court of Justice made clear that states must prevent trade and investment relations that sustain Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. As the guardian of the EU treaties, which requires observance of international law in the EU's external action (Articles 3(5), 21 TEU), the Commission should propose an appropriate Regulation without further delay. Partial measures, such as raising tariffs or enhancing the current differentiation policy, do not meet the obligations laid out by the ICJ and would extend the EU's non-compliance with international law.

Civil society groups have prepared a detailed [proposal](#) setting out how a regulation banning trade with Israel's illegal settlements could be adopted, implemented and enforced in practice. We further note that the Commission's failure to act could be invoked before the EU Court of Justice, as it effectively deprives the co-legislators of the possibility to rectify that.

While the European Union continues to hesitate, the UK government has [expressed](#) clear intention to prohibit not only trade in goods but also export and import of services to and from settlements. Within the EU, several Member States (Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium) have adopted or are moving to adopt different national measures, underscoring the need for common EU action.

We therefore urge the Commission to bring forward the necessary Regulation and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

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