



## Treaty on the European Union

### Article 3:

In its relations with the wider world, the Union [ ] shall contribute to peace, security, [ ] the protection of human rights, [ ] as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter.

EU Staff for Peace  
Brussels, 22 May 2025

Dear Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission,  
Dear Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament,  
Dear António Costa, President of the European Council,

A year has passed since, in May 2024, we sent you a letter expressing our concern about the dire situation in Gaza and urging you to take concrete action. Since then, over two thousand EU staff have endorsed our initiative by signing the letter – an indication of the growing frustration felt among many civil servants working in EU institutions in the face of worsening humanitarian conditions in Gaza.

While we appreciate the European Commission's reply received five months later, in October 2024, as well as the EU's decision this week – a year later – to address one of our demands by initiating a review of Israel's compliance with its obligations under international law, as outlined in the EU-Israel Association Agreement, we regret to note that this long-awaited decision comes devastatingly late for thousands killed in Gaza.

Overall, we note that the actions outlined in your reply to us have proven inadequate to alleviate the situation on the ground or to uphold international norms and the rule of law in accordance with the EU's principles and the EU guidelines on the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law.

In our letter to you, we stated that the death toll in Gaza was one in 100 inhabitants. Today, the most conservative estimates place that figure at around one in 40. This, however, does not account for the many under the rubble, in mass graves, or dismembered by bombings. According to the United Nations, around two-thirds of the casualties are women and children, with the most represented age group among the dead being five to nine-year-olds. Every single hospital in Gaza has now been attacked while schools and ad-hoc shelters are still the frequent targets of airstrikes. The situation has been aggravated by the reinstated blockade, which has already caused dozens of children to die from starvation, and by recent orders to seize the entirety of the Gaza Strip by force. At this moment, harrowing details continue to emerge about the execution and mass burial of fifteen aid workers by Israeli forces. In the face of this man-made humanitarian crisis and the persistent violations of international norms, the response of EU institutions has too often been limited to statements of concern, with little or no meaningful action taken.

As EU staff, working in good faith to uphold the values and principles enshrined in the Treaties, we once again call for more concrete action from the European Commission, the HR/VP, and the European institutions in their entirety.

Limitations on arms exports, as you state in your reply to our letter, remain a matter of national competence. However, the EU Guidelines on Promoting Compliance with International Humanitarian Law consider restrictions on arms exports as a “means of action at the disposal of the EU in its relations with third countries”. In this regard, we note that Article 2(2)(c) of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP requires Member States to “deny an export licence if there is a clear risk that the military technology or equipment to be exported might be used in the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law”. We find the persistent violation of said article by several Member States amid the silence of EU institutions a cause for concern for the EU’s reputation as a consistent supporter of international and human rights norms.

We remain equally concerned by the apparent double standard in the EU’s cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC). As stated in Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP on the ICC, preventing the impunity of perpetrators of international crimes is fundamental in upholding the rule of law and preserving peace. Accordingly, in the Action Plan to follow-up on that Decision, Member States committed to avoiding non-essential contacts with individuals subject to an arrest warrant issued by the ICC. In this regard, we regret that when several EU leaders entertained the possibility of hosting visits from ICC fugitive Benjamin Netanyahu, such prospects were not promptly condemned by the HR/VP, but were instead largely ignored.

In this context, on behalf of over two thousand EU staff who have endorsed our initiative, we cannot in good conscience agree that the EU institutions have, as you state in your response, “not spared any effort to provide a balanced response in all interventions and exchanges on the conflict to stop the tragic loss of life”.

In fact, the EU institutions have failed to bring the European Union’s political, diplomatic and economic influence to bear in order to ameliorate the situation in Gaza. This inaction, too, has contributed to the environment of unaccountability that resulted in the full-scale invasion of the Gaza Strip taking place at this moment.

Lastly, we note that the EU is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, and that these values are embedded in the Treaties. As EU civil servants loyal to the Union and its Treaties, our sole interest and motive in writing to you lie in upholding the EU’s policies in accordance with those Treaties.

With this in mind, we would like to once again request a meeting with your office to discuss these concerns in detail.

We remain confident that our words and concerns will be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

EU Staff for Peace