



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

B - NEIGHBOURHOOD SOUTH
The Acting Director

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NGO Monitor
Prof. Gerald M. Steinberg
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Dear Prof. Steinberg,

Thank you for your letter addressed to President von der Leyen, and for your continued interest in EU funding for Palestinians.

The EU strongly opposes any incitement to violence or hatred, which is incompatible with advancing peace. Our commitment to the fight against terrorism has never been stronger. As such, all contracts involving EU funding must ensure the full respect of applicable EU legislation, including accountability, transparency and sound financial management, and aims at protecting the integrity and proper functioning of the EU funds. In this regard, allegations of the EU supporting incitement or terror are unfounded and unacceptable and we strongly object to any such suggestion.

The EU has stringent rules to screen and vet the beneficiaries of EU funds. Strict monitoring and control mechanisms make sure that all individuals involved in EU funded actions exclusively pursue the objectives and activities approved for EU funding. To this end, all recipients of EU funding are required to ensure that EU funds are not made available, either directly or indirectly, to entities, individuals or groups, which have been designated under EU restrictive measures, or to their representatives. This includes ensuring that there is no detection of subcontractors, natural persons, participants in workshops and/or trainings or recipients of financial support subject to EU restrictive measures. Tender procedures and calls for proposals contain clear exclusion criteria that prevent any person or entity guilty of terrorism financing or terror related offences (including inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences) from receiving EU funds. Furthermore, specific clauses have been introduced in individual grant agreements, obliging every beneficiary managing EU funds to refrain from engaging in incitement to violence or hatred.

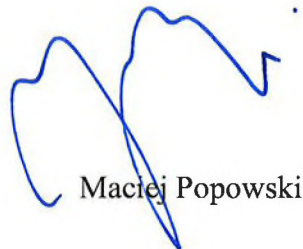
These rules make the participation of entities, individuals or groups affiliated linked or supporting terrorist organisations incompatible with any EU funding. If there is clear evidence that any organisation has made an inappropriate use of EU funds, the European Commission will take the appropriate measures such as recovery of the funds, exclusion of the entity from future EU financing, prosecution, etc.

The Commission has received recently a number of requests for clarification on the matter. I can assure you that we took immediate action, including asking the EU Head of Delegation to Israel and EU Representative to the West Bank and Gaza Strip to look deeply into the matter. This internal review process is ongoing. If there is any concern, the European Commission would act immediately. Let me also reiterate that there is no terrorism financing from EU funds. If it ever happens, despite all safeguards in place, it will not be tolerated and will have to be rectified.

The EU will continue to stand by international law and support Civil Society Organisations that defend international law and promote human rights and democratic values. Civil society has an essential role to play in advocating for and strengthening good governance and sustainable development, in the region and around the world.

I hope this reply goes towards reassuring you that the Commission is doing its utmost to protecting the integrity and proper functioning of the EU funds.

Yours sincerely,



Maciej Popowski

Cc: Olga Deutsch (NGO Monitor)