



**Letter of European trade unions  
calling for a trade ban with Israeli settlements  
in accordance with fundamental obligations under international law**

Brussels, June 25<sup>th</sup> 2019

To: Ms. Federica Mogherini - High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,  
European External Action Service – Israel desk,  
Ministers of EU and European Member States,

Dear Madame the High Representative,

We, as European Trade Unions, request the policy makers of the European Union and European States to immediately recognize and comply with their fundamental legal obligations resulting from the Duties of Non-recognition and Non-assistance related to Israeli settlements and their economic activity.

We take note of the overwhelming consensus of legal experts<sup>1</sup> that the EU as a whole and all of its Member States individually have the obligation to withhold from trading with settlements as part of their duties of non-recognition and non-assistance. These duties apply because Israeli settlements violate the highest norms of international law, among others by obstructing the Palestinian right to self-determination, by the acquisition of territory by the use of force, and by the violation of fundamental norms of humanitarian law.

We take note that prohibiting settlement trade does not constitute a trade sanction and is not in violation of the exclusive competence for Common Commercial Policy of the European Commission. This measure is taken in response to specific international legal obligations that are customary and self-executing: they do not require United Nations Security Council authorization and they apply immediately to individual states.

We regret that the European Commission is not complying with its obligations under international law by accepting trade with settlements and we call upon the EC to fulfil its legal obligation immediately. As a result, we confirm that individual member states should comply with their own obligations under international law and prohibit trade with settlements.

The trade union movement, acting in the spirit of international working class solidarity, and in defence of fundamental human rights, has consistently called for a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The fundamental values of trade union internationalism mandates us to take concrete and effective action to facilitate the implementation of UN resolutions, international legal obligations, and a just and equitable peace for all.

It is in this spirit that we send out this call to the EU policy makers and European states to take effective action to bring an **end to European complicity** with human rights abuses associated with illegal Israeli settlements and to **introduce a ban on economic activities with illegal Israeli settlements**.

**Signatories:**

ACV/CSC Brussels (Belgium),  
La Centrale Générale FGTB (Belgium),

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mondoweiss.net/2015/12/european-trading-settlements/>, [https://brill.com/abstract/journals/ihls/3/2/article-p344\\_6.xml](https://brill.com/abstract/journals/ihls/3/2/article-p344_6.xml)

Unison (UK),  
Unite the Union (UK),  
University and Colleague Union (UK),  
ACOD Cultuur (Belgium),  
ACOD Public services trade union - East Flanders (Belgium),  
CNE (Belgium),  
Union syndicale Solidaires (France),  
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU),  
NIPSA (The Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance),  
Forsa (Ireland),  
Mandate Trade Union (Ireland),  
Communications Workers Union (Ireland),  
UNISON Northern Ireland,  
Derry Trades Union Council (N. Ireland),  
Belfast Trade Union Council (N. Ireland),  
Fagforbundet (Norway),  
EL og IT Forbundet - The Electrician and IT workers union (Norway),  
Fagforbundet teLOgene (Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees - Department of Theologians),  
Norsk Transportarbeiderforbund (Norwegian Transport Workers' Union),  
Norwegian Union of Railway Workers,  
Industry Energy Trade Union (Norway),  
Norwegian Civil Service Union (NTL Norsk Tjenestemannslag),  
Efling trade union (Iceland),  
General Workers' Union (Malta),  
Confederacion Intersindical Galega – CIG (Galicia),  
Intersindical Valenciana, (Valencia),  
STEI – Intersindical de les Illes Balears,  
Confederacion General del Trabajo de España – CGT (Spain),  
Basque Workers' Solidarity – ELA (Basque Country),  
LAB - Langile Abertzaleen Batzordeak, (Basque Country),  
IAC - Intersindical Alternativa de Catalunya,  
CUT - Colectivo Unitario de Trabajadores, Aragón