



EU STAFF FOR PEACE

STATE OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE EU 2026

The “State of Peace and Justice in the EU” is a contribution of the staff association “EU Staff for Peace” to the public debate around the safeguard of the role of EU as a global actor promoting Peace and International Justice. As committed civil servants of EU Institutions, following the spirit of its treaties and founding fathers and mothers, we see Peace Building as a key mandate for the European Union, established in its founding treaty, along with Human Rights protection and enforcement of International Law.

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For a Europe of Peace, Justice and Human Solidarity

Since October 2023, we have come together as **EU Staff for Peace**, an informal association of staff members, former and retired staff, and people of good will connected to the institutions of the European Union. We speak out of our beliefs and in our personal capacity, from different places, professions, generations and national backgrounds, yet with one shared voice and one shared conviction: **we continue to believe in the European project which was founded as a project of peace, to defend and affirm universal human rights after the tragedies of World War II.**

We believe in Europe not simply as a union of governments, markets or institutions, but as a **union of people**. We believe in the political and moral force that arises when human beings choose cooperation over domination, solidarity over fear, rule of law over oppression, nonviolence over brutality, and a shared future over any supremacist narrative. At a time when nationalism is resurging, democratic institutions are being attacked, multilateralism is being weakened, and war is once again presented as inevitable, we consider it our moral duty to affirm our faith in the promise of the European project and in the values enshrined in the Treaties of the European Union.

Coming from diverse roles, cultures and nationalities, we are united by a common belief: **peacebuilding, human rights protection, and international law enforcement are a core mandate of the European Union, founding values established in the European treaties, at the heart of EU’s identity and action.**

We know that a European Union which operates in accordance with the rule of law, international solidarity and defence of human rights, building bridges with states doing the same and cutting relations with foreign powers going in the opposite direction, is a Union who strives and prospers also as an economic and innovative power.

Europe's greatest power: peace building

The European Union was born out of the recognition that war had devastated this continent too many times, and that peace could no longer rely on balances of terror or the victory of one nation over another. It had to be built differently: through shared institutions, mutual dependence, democratic compromise, reconciliation, and the practical organisation of solidarity.

This was the profound political intuition of the founding generation. On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman declared:

“World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.”

Those words are no less relevant today. If anything, they are more urgent. The dangers that threaten humanity have grown: brutal wars, mass displacement, the climate crisis, the erosion of enforcement of international law, deepening inequality, rising authoritarianism, the use of technologies to normalize hate speech, and the risk of nuclear catastrophe at the highest level in the human history, as estimated by the “Doomsday Clock” of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. The Mediterranean is warming faster than most seas. Armed conflict is spreading across regions already destabilised by injustice and ecological breakdown. Nuclear powers are bombing and invading countries like Ukraine, Palestine, Lebanon and Venezuela. The illusion that security can be achieved through force alone is proving both morally bankrupt and strategically false.

And yet we refuse despair.

We believe that peace and justice are still possible, because it is in our European DNA. We believe that history is not doomed to repeat its worst chapters. We believe that the most important power Europe has ever developed is **not the power of weapons, but the power of respectful politics and true diplomacy**, the power of democratic processes to act in the interest of the common good, the power to hold diplomatic relations based on the respect of mutual interests and backed by the reliance on the system of international law.

Europe has shown to the world the power to turn former enemies into allies; the power to replace revenge with an institutional system of balanced forces; the power to reconcile peoples after atrocities; the power to build peace through equal enforcement of law, justice, diplomacy, interdependence, social rights and democratic participation. It is this power that helped banish war between European states. It is this power that helped Europe emerge from the Cold War without descending into generalised continental conflict. It is this power that allowed Germany reunification to take place peacefully. It is this power that made possible a historically unprecedented degree of integration across languages, cultures and national identities. It is this power that has enabled millions of people fleeing war, dictatorship and persecution to find refuge, rights and new lives in Europe, contributing to our societies and economies. This is Europe's true strength. Not domination, but cooperation. Not imperial ambition, but civic union. Not the threat of annihilation, but the patient construction of peace because that is the only way human rights for all can be preserved and respected.

Speaking the truth when facing a genocide

Our faith in Europe is not nostalgic. It is not based on an idealised past. It is based on the 80-years history of the European Union, on the belief that the European Union still possesses immense untapped political, economic, legal and moral power — and that this power can still be used to defend life and build peace, starting from the power of every European citizen and civil servant to speak the truth, supporting EU leaders in doing the right thing.

To speak the truth, we must say that **in Palestine, an ongoing genocide is committed before our eyes**. In saying this, the voice of our conscience speaks along with the voices of **European Commissioner Teresa Ribera, holocaust survivors** like Stephen Kapos (survivor of the Budapest ghetto) and Aryeh Neier (co-founder of Human Rights Watch), **Israeli scholars** like Omer Bartov, Raz Segal, Martin Shaw, Shmuel Lederman and Amos Goldberg, **Israeli historians** like Lee Mordechai, Ilan Pappé and Avi Shlaim, **Israeli authors** like Gideon Levy and David Grossman, **Israeli NGOs** like Physicians for Human Rights and B'Tselem, and **many respected individuals and organisations** like **Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, the Union Juive française pour la paix, the “Independent International Commission of Inquiry of the United Nations on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem”, the “United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories”**.

In 2026, the call for the EU Institutions to act and to take a clear stand is made even more urgent by unprecedented events. **Humanitarian and solidarity initiatives involving European citizens**, including the Freedom Flotilla, were intercepted and their participants arrested in circumstances widely denounced as contrary to international law, with subsequent reports of ill-treatment in detention. **European citizens and public figures expressing solidarity with Palestinian civilians** have faced sanctions and other restrictive measures. **Judges of the International Criminal Court** have themselves been subjected to sanctions and intimidation for carrying out their judicial mandate. **Civilian infrastructures and humanitarian projects in Palestine, including projects funded by European taxpayers**, have continued to be damaged or destroyed during Israeli military operations. The ruthless military campaigns of the Israeli government have also received accusations of ecocide, due to the heavy bombing, the use of chemical weapons, the strategic use of wildfire and the deliberate killing of land managers and eco-activists, the shooting on herds and flocks as well as the uprooting of ancient trees and landscape features.

At the same time, **European citizens have reacted with democratic and nonviolent means**, including European Citizens' Initiatives [against double standards](#) and calling for the [suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement](#), where Article 2 holds respect for human rights and democratic principles as an essential element — a condition that cannot credibly be regarded as fulfilled while arrest warrants for war crimes and crimes against humanity are issued against the head and representatives of the Israeli government. Thousands are waiting for urgent medical evacuation some of which die while waiting as the borders keep being closed. These are not abstract controversies. They are concrete developments that directly concern the rule of law, democratic accountability, and **the credibility of Europe's commitment to its own values**.

One roadmap for action

We believe that European Union has the potential and the power to stop this genocide if the unity for a common political initiative will be found by member states. To move the first step in this direction, we welcome the initiative of [European former Ministers, Prime ministers, presidents of the European Commission and Parliament, ambassadors and senior officials](#), including **Romano PRODI**, former President of the European Commission; **Joaquín ALMUNIA**, former Vice-President of the European Commission; **Enrique BARÓN CRESPO**, former President of the European Parliament; **Josep BORRELL**, former President of the European Parliament & EU High Representative/VP; **Pat COX**, former President of the European Parliament; **Mogens LYKKETOFT**, former President of the UN General Assembly; **Poul NIELSON**, former European Commissioner; **Margot WALLSTRÖM**, former First Vice-President of the European Commission.

These leaders described a feasible path that could be taken to protect Europe and Palestine, in an open letter of June 10th 2026, that deserves to be quoted:

"The heinous attacks of 7 October 2023 by Hamas and other armed groups against Israeli citizens and those of other nationalities cannot justify the Israeli Government's actions in decimating Gaza and systematically violating basic principles of international humanitarian and human rights law. Israel's military attacks in Gaza have killed at least 73,000 people including over 21,500 children since October 2023. Over 900 Palestinians have been killed since the October 2025 'ceasefire'. (...) the EU must suspend Israel's preferential trade access under the EU-Israel Association Agreement, thereby impacting one third of Israel's total trade in goods with the world. This requires leadership from the European Commission and the European External Action Service who, in line with past practice, should propose that these measures be enacted through a qualified majority vote by EU Member States. In the meantime, the EU must act immediately to prevent all exports from illegal settlements in the West Bank entering the EU. In parallel the list of sanctioned Israeli Ministers, officials, individuals and entities associated with settlements and subject to visa bans and asset freezes should be extended. The EU should also suspend Israel's participation in EU research and other programmes where Israeli public and private entities are in breach of international law and halt trade in military and dual use goods. For the EU to take these steps, the small number of EU Member States that have consistently blocked action against the Israeli Government should align with the majority opinion and allow the measures to be adopted. In short, the EU must stop turning a blind eye to the present-day horrors the Israeli Government is inflicting on Palestinians in clear breach of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. Failure to act now will only further weaken the EU's global standing and influence at a time when a strong and united Union is needed to defend the multilateral order as well as European values and interests".

Our duties as EU Civil Servants and European citizens

As staff members and former staff connected to the European institutions, we are aware that **institutions alone do not create history. People do. Civil servants do not make policies in their own name, but they remain moral actors and citizens of advanced democracies, following their conscience and participating to the challenges of their times.** We therefore consider it part of our responsibility, in our personal capacity, to provide our contribution, share our thoughts, express our concerns, trying to promote dialogue inside and outside our workplace on the peace and justice that we want to see in the world where we and all children want to live.

We do so in loyalty to the European Union highest promise.

We do so because we believe that the Union deserves to live up to the Nobel Peace Prize awarded in 2012 to this ambitious and successful project of peace.

We do so because our conscience is pushing us to resist against genocide, ecocide, infanticide that should never be allowed or accepted as inevitable.

We do so because we refuse to accept that militarisation, indifference, bullying and resignation are the only political languages currently available.

We choose to speak the language of peace, cooperation, non-discriminatory human rights and multilateralism because hope, too, is a civic duty in times of war and uncertainties.

This is the live legacy left to EU citizens by the founding fathers of the European Union, this is the moral compass compelling us to openly join the voices of the [72% of European Citizens worried about active conflicts](#), with [the war in Palestine as their top concern](#).

In doing so, we speak in our private capacity, as an informal group of concerned EU civil servants, without any official role or implication for European institutions, just as human beings feeling the historical, moral and social responsibility to act against an ongoing genocide.

Hope does not mean denying danger. It means recognising that another path remains possible. Europe can still lead that transformation, finding again a way out of wars.

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