

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000174/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Estrella Galán (The Left), Jaume Asens Llodrà (Verts/ALE), Vicent Marzà Ibáñez (Verts/ALE)
(16 January 2025)

Subject: EU response to US threats of sanctions in conjunction with the Spanish Government's measures to deny port of call to ships carrying arms to Israel

In December 2024, the US Federal Maritime Commission initiated an investigation ⁽¹⁾ with a view to imposing sanctions on Spanish vessels and denying them entry into US ports. This is in response to measures adopted by the Spanish Government to prevent its ports being used by ships carrying arms that could be used by Israel in the 'plausible genocide' against Palestinians in Gaza.

In taking the measures (which have so far been limited to denying port of call to three ships which were carrying arms to Israel), the Spanish Government has exercised its sovereignty ⁽²⁾ (complying with international law and in line with the International Court of Justice rulings of 26 January, 28 March, 24 May and 19 June 2024). Not only that, it is also complying with its obligations under Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP, Council Regulation (EU) 2020/1998 and Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. In light of this:

1. Does the VP/HR intend to officially convey her support for these measures to her American counterpart, as well as reject the United States' threats to, and interference in, the sovereignty of a Member State?
2. Does the VP/HR intend to adopt, at EU level, similar measures preventing complicity with Israel's crimes in Palestine, as well as recommend that Member States do the same?

Submitted: 16.1.2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(19 March 2025)

The Transatlantic relationship has been a cornerstone of peace, security, and economic growth. The EU follows the situation closely. The EU remains steadfast in promoting its interests, prioritising security, stability, and prosperity for its citizens.

As a matter of principle, the EU has been consistent in condemning extra-territorial application of third-country legislation (sanctions) attempting to regulate the activities of natural and legal persons under the jurisdiction of the Member States. The EU considers such application of third country's legislation as being in violation of international law.

The mandate of the High Representative/Vice-President dictates that the incumbent can only propose measures for the Council's consideration. Adopting measures or recommending the adoption of measures by Member States is not within the scope of her mandate.

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/12/06/2024-28709/investigation-into-conditions-affecting-shipping-in-the-foreign-trade-and-denial-of-entry-of-vessels>

² <https://elpais.com/espana/2024-12-20/espana-apela-a-su-soberania-para-responder-a-la-amenaza-de-sanciones-por-vetar-la-escala-de-buques-con-armas-para-israel.html>