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E-002018/2026
Answer given by Ms Šuica
on behalf of the European Commission
(10.8.2026)

The Commission takes note of reports concerning an incident involving the vessel Sea-Watch 5 on 11 May 2026. The EU Delegation in Libya raised the matter with the Libyan authorities and is seeking clarification regarding the circumstances of the incident. The Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) consistently raise the existing concerns with the Libyan authorities. The Commission recalls that all parties involved in search and rescue operations must fully respect international law, including international maritime law and human rights obligations.

The Commission monitors EU-funded programmes to ensure compliance with human rights obligations. Capacity-building, equipment and training provided under these programmes are used exclusively for their intended purposes and include trainings on human rights and international maritime law. The Commission receives regular reports from implementing partners, conducts verification and monitoring, and relies on annual risk assessments by EU Delegations, including assessments of human rights risks, as per the applicable rules. It has also strengthened its human rights-based approach guidance and formalised internal procedures for handling alleged abuses linked to EU-funded programmes. Since 2024, the Commission maintains a regular technical dialogue with the Libyan authorities on compliance with international law and human-rights and specific incidents. Equipment provided by Member States through bilateral cooperation falls outside the Commission’s responsibility.

Respect for international and human rights law, including the principle of *non-refoulement*, is central to the EU's engagement in Libya. EU support aims to save lives at sea, combat migrant smuggling and trafficking, and strengthen migration governance in line with international law. The Commission considers that continued engagement is necessary to improve protection standards, strengthen accountability and address human rights concerns.