(English version)

Question for written answer E-002019/26
to the Commission

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(13 May 2026)

Subject: Another shooting attack by Libyan militias on the humanitarian vessel Sea-Watch 5

On 11 May 2026, a Libyan patrol boat opened fire on the humanitarian vessel Sea-Watch 5, which had just rescued 90 people during an operation in the Mediterranean.

This incident is part of a long series of acts in violation of international law and the law of the sea perpetrated by the Libyan coast guard.

From 2016 to 2025, over 70 incidents of maritime violence were recorded, with increasingly frequent shootings by Libyan patrol boats targeting vessels carrying civilians. Most of these Libyan boats were reportedly provided by Italian authorities under the Italy-Libya memorandum of understanding. This agreement also provides for the transfer of equipment and other forms of financial and logistical assistance, including training.

These national schemes are often coordinated with and supplemented by EU funding, totalling around EUR 65 million for border management activities between 2015 and 2021, with an extension planned until 2027.

Considering the UN report published on 17 February 2026, which highlights human rights violations and abuses committed by Libyan authorities and entities, could the Commission clarify:

1. Whether it considers such acts to be contrary to international law?

2. Whether it intends therefore to propose the suspension of the aforementioned funding, by activating, for instance, the internal procedure for handling human rights complaints in relation to EU-funded projects?

Submitted: 13.5.2026

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission

(10 August 2026)

The EU continues to closely monitor the human rights situation in Libya, including the treatment of migrants and refugees. The Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) consistently raise the existing concerns with the Libyan authorities.

The EU continues to support a comprehensive, rights-based approach to migration management, in full respect of international standards and obligations.

The EU takes note of the latest UN reports on the human rights situation in Libya and continues to support a comprehensive, rights-based approach to migration management, in full respect of international standards and obligations.

EU-funded programmes provide capacity-building and training to improve operational procedures and reinforce respect for human rights and international standards.

Between 2015 and 2021, the EU contributed with EUR 59 million to border management activities, including over EUR 16 million for protection and health-related activities implemented by the International Organisation for Migration.

In the same period, an additional EUR 237.3 million was provided for the protection of migrants and refugees. This EU project was extended until December 2025.

All EU assistance is subject to continuous monitoring through regular partner reporting, Commission monitoring visits, independent evaluations and, since 2019, a Third-Party Monitoring Framework.

Since 2024, the Commission maintains a regular technical dialogue with the Libyan authorities nationwide, in which compliance with international law and human-rights standards is consistently raised and specific incidents are discussed with the aim of establishing a national framework that properly investigate such incidents.