

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002521/26
to the Commission**

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(17 June 2026)

Subject: Circumvention of the EU-Israel Association Agreement and illegal imports from settlements in the occupied territories

The 'Importing Occupation' investigation by the NGO Global Echo documents how approximately 20% of Israeli agricultural exports destined for the EU actually originate from Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. Through the use of fictitious addresses and triangulations, these goods are fraudulently labelled as 'Made in Israel' to improperly benefit from the zero-duty regime provided by the 2000 EU-Israel Association Agreement, which categorically excludes the settlements.

This systematic circumvention not only constitutes customs fraud detrimental to the EU's own resources but also undermines the restrictive measures adopted by the Council against extremist settlers, allowing their economic supply chains undisturbed access to the single market. It furthermore violates the right of European consumers to transparent information regarding the true origin of products.

Therefore:

1. Does the Commission intend to task the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) with launching a thorough investigation into the extent of this customs fraud to protect the Union's finances?
2. What binding traceability mechanisms does it intend to implement to ensure that the beneficiaries of such preferential exports are not individuals or entities already targeted by EU sanctions?
3. Will it consider the precautionary suspension of preferential tariff regimes for the agri-food product categories at highest risk of circumvention (such as dates and citrus fruits) pending a comprehensive audit?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

Submitted: 17.6.2026

Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission

(15 September 2026)

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) is an independent investigative body. The Commission cannot task OLAF with an investigation.

Under its Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime ⁽¹⁾ the EU adopted sanctions against several extremist Israeli individuals and entities, responsible for rights abuses against Palestinians in the West Bank.

The listed persons and entities face an asset freeze, and designated individuals face an EU travel ban. Making funds or economic resources available, directly or indirectly, to listed parties is banned. Member States enforce EU sanctions.

The EU does not recognise Israeli illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as part of Israel. Trade with such settlements is not covered by EU-Israel Association Agreement ⁽²⁾. So, products from the settlements do not benefit from any preferential treatment.

The Agreement only offers preferential treatment based on valid proof of origin under applicable rules of origin. Previous Commission replies to parliamentary written questions ⁽³⁾ specified the operation of that agreement's proof of origin rules.

As per 'Technical Arrangement' ⁽⁴⁾, Member States' customs authorities are responsible for refusing preferences for goods originating from non-eligible locations.

¹ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Brando Benifei (S&D).

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/12/04/eu-global-human-rights-sanctions-regime-listings-prolonged-for-a-year/>.

⁽²⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/agree_international/2000/384/oj/eng.

⁽³⁾ See for example Commission reply to written parliamentary Question E-000112/2026.

⁽⁴⁾ https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/eu-israel-technical-arrangement_en.

Following the European Council's request in June 2026, the Commission presented Member States with options to further restrict trade with the illegal settlements including options for ensuring that preferential treatment is not granted to products originating in the illegal settlements.

The Commission is committed to strengthening enforcement and limit circumvention risks for products from the illegal settlements. Member States discussed these options on 13 July 2026, in line with the June European Council conclusions.
