

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002682/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Özlem Demirel (The Left)
(29 June 2026)

Subject: Rescue ship 'Ocean Viking' shot at by so-called Libyan coastguard

On 24 August 2025, the so-called Libyan coastguard opened fire on the civil rescue ship 'Ocean Viking'. The so-called Libyan coastguard claimed to have merely fired warning shots and accused the non-governmental organisation of collaborating with traffickers. In a meeting with the EU Ambassador, representatives from the Libyan Tripoli Government claimed that the shooting was compliant with the rules in place. The incident was discussed in the framework of the memorandum of understanding between Italy and the Libyan Tripoli Government on the supply and deployment of ships. The Libyan Tripoli Government stated that an investigation had been launched and, at the insistence of EU representatives, indicated that it would announce the results 'soon'.

1. When and how were these 'soon' to be announced results of the Libyan Tripoli Government's investigation into this incident communicated to the EU, and what do they indicate?
2. How is the EU monitoring compliance with the human rights obligations laid out in the memorandum of understanding between Italy and the Libyan Tripoli Government, and what penalties does the agreement provide for in the event of non-compliance?
3. What 'technical meetings' have taken place with representatives of the Libyan Tripoli Government and the so-called Libyan coastguard to discuss the shots fired at 'Ocean Viking', what was the outcome of these meetings and to what extent has the frequency of 'technical meetings' increased in comparison to the first three quarters of 2025?

Submitted: 29.6.2026

Answer given by Ms Šuica on behalf of the European Commission
(3 September 2026)

The EU has not yet received formally the final findings of internal investigations concerning the incident referred to by the Honourable Member.

The competent national authorities remain in contact with the flag state of the vessel concerning any legal outcomes and possible implications.

The memorandum of understanding between Italy and the Libyan Tripoli Government ⁽¹⁾ is a bilateral arrangement between Italy and the Libyan authorities.

The Commission is not a party to that memorandum and therefore it is neither responsible for monitoring compliance with its provisions nor for any enforcement or penalty mechanisms it may contain.

More generally, in the context of the EU's engagement with Libya, the Commission services and the European External Action Service regularly raise issues relating to human rights and international law with the Libyan authorities.

EU support is provided in line with the applicable legal framework and is subject to appropriate monitoring arrangements and safeguards.

The incident was discussed during the EU's regular technical exchanges with the Libyan authorities, the latest of which took place in early July 2026.

The EU reiterated the importance of conducting maritime operations in full compliance with international law and requested information on the investigation and any follow-up. Additional technical exchanges are held in Tripoli on the basis of operational needs and policy priorities.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.asgi.it/en/news/italy-libya-agreement-the-memorandum-text/>.