

EN
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Answer given by Ms Šuica
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.2.2025)

The EU has consistently been a leading supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which has been providing life-saving services in Gaza and across the region in line with the mandate adopted by the UN General Assembly. The European Council reaffirmed repeatedly that these services were essential¹. Furthermore, the European Council has condemned any attempt to abrogate the 1967 agreement between Israel and UNRWA or to otherwise attempt to obstruct its capacity to operate its mandate².

Following the very serious allegations against several UNRWA staff regarding their possible involvement in the 7 October 2023 terrorist attacks, the Commission reviewed its funding decision for UNRWA. The Commission engaged with UNRWA's Commissioner General and welcomed his commitment to tackle the serious issues at stake, including through the adoption of an action plan to implement the recommendations of the UN Independent Review Group³ (IRG), and the swift follow up on the UN Office of Internal Oversight Service report on the allegations against UNRWA's staff⁴. Upon fulfilment by UNRWA of the conditions agreed for the 2024 EU funding, the Commission disbursed in three tranches a total of EUR 82 million, the last of which in October 2024. Additionally, the Commission disbursed a top-up of EUR 10 million on 20 December 2024⁵, in view of progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the IRG and of the EU audit.

The EU remains committed to supporting the Agency, providing both financial and political backing to enable UNRWA to fulfil its mandate, in particular in light of the recent ceasefire, which the EU has warmly welcomed. In this regard, the EU will continue calling for full and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid to the Gaza strip and that aid can be effectively distributed to those in need, including by UN agencies and notably UNRWA⁶.

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/70880/euco-conclusions-2122032024.pdf>;

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/2pebccz2/20241017-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/2pebccz2/20241017-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>

³ <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/colonna-report-and-action-plan>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-investigation-statement-05aug24/>

⁵ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-disburses-additional-eu10-million-payment-unrwa-2024-12-20_en

⁶ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/01/18/israelpalestine-statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-welcoming-the-ceasefire-and-hostage-deal-in-gaza/>