

Question for oral answer O-000033/2014

to the Commission

Rule 115

Paul Murphy, Martina Anderson, Cornelis de Jong, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides,

Patrick Le Hyaric, Willy Meyer, Sabine Wils, Mikael Gustafsson

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

Nicole Kiil-Nielsen

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Emer Costello, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Ivo Vajgl

Subject: Corporate complicity in illegal Israeli settlements

Some private European businesses contribute to human rights abuses associated with illegal Israeli settlements, for example by providing equipment used in house demolitions and by participating in the construction and operation of infrastructure for illegal Israeli settlements.

In March 2013, the UN Human Rights Council adopted the report of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on illegal Israeli settlements. Concluding that businesses have ‘enabled, facilitated and profited from the construction and growth of the settlements,’ the mission urges governments ‘to take appropriate measures’ to ensure that businesses do not contribute to human rights abuses associated with illegal Israeli settlements.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights urges States to provide information to help businesses avoid contributing to human rights abuses arising from conflict and to provide ‘adequate assistance to business enterprises to assess and address the heightened risks of abuses’ in conflict areas.

The EU Heads of Mission Jerusalem Report 2012 urged the EU and Member States to ‘prevent, discourage and raise awareness about problematic implications of financial transactions, including foreign direct investments, from within the EU in support of settlement activities, infrastructure and services’.

The EEAS has stated that ‘the EU believes that the Guiding Principles on business and human rights need to be applied globally and calls on European companies to implement the Guiding Principles in all circumstances, including in Israel and occupied Palestinian territory’¹.

1. What human rights assessment has the Commission/EEAS made regarding the role of European businesses operating in connection with illegal Israeli settlements?
2. What steps will the Commission take to ensure that the EU and its Member States implement the Guiding Principles with regard to illegal Israeli settlements, and to discourage European businesses from contributing to human rights abuses associated with illegal Israeli settlements?

Tabled: 6.2.2014

Forwarded: 10.2.2014

¹ http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un_geneva/documents/eu_statments/human_right/20130611_id_sr_opt.pdf

Deadline for reply: 17.2.2014