

Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis
Executive Vice President &
EU Commissioner for Trade
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

15th December 2020

Re : Commission proposal to ban trade with, and support for, illegal settlements in territories deemed occupied under international law.

Dear Executive Vice President,

We write to you with regard to the issue of produce entering the European Union from, and trade with, illegal settlements in territories deemed occupied by other states.

As you are aware, trade is a an EU competence under Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and as such, decisions regarding the rules applied to goods entering into the European Single Market and Customs Union are made jointly by the Council of the European Union and European Parliament.

We, a group of MEPs representing most of the European Parliament's political groups, believe that trade with, and economic support for, illegal settlements in territories deemed occupied under international law should be banned by the Union.

Illegal settlements should not be supported economically if the European Union is to hold true to its values of respecting human rights, respecting international law and above all else, protecting the most vulnerable in society.

The European Parliament, the High Representative for Foreign Relations, and many Member State governments have rightly criticised the actions of numerous foreign states in occupying adjoining territories illegally.

While the Union is unable to force those states to relinquish these territories, we can use our soft power as a global trading bloc to exert influence, and yes, economic pressure, on those States flouting international law.

Commissioner, while some member states, for example Ireland, have sought their own solutions, we believe that the Union must act as one on this issue to show solidarity with these territories and to leverage our influence as a global trading bloc.

We are therefore calling on you to send a WTO-compatible proposal to the European Parliament and Council that would ban trade with, and support for, illegal settlements in occupied territories under international law.

Quite rightly, our Union is having a conversation on how we sanction Member States that flout basic Rule of Law requirements. As well as looking internally, we should also look externally and ensure that our trade policies reflect our values.

Yours sincerely,



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