

Open Letter

to the Presidents of the so-called "Working Group" of the European Parliament concerning the EU-funding of the Palestinian Authority

Mitglied des
Europäischen Parlaments

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End the complicit of the European Parliament!

Brussels, 19.02.2004

Dear Ms Theato,
dear Mr Wynn,
dear Mr Laschet,

it is a well known fact that the EU-funding for the Palestinian Authority was channelled to a black budget. It is also well known, that the Palestinian Authority has financed a murderous anti-Semitic terrorist war against Israel. Israel provided the European Commission with proof of this use of EU-funding in May 2002. Since then, the Commission denies to have any knowledge of this specific use of the money and the Conference of Presidents successfully stalled an inquiry committee on this issue. The Working Group was established in order to downplay the importance of the issue. OLAF, the anti-fraud office of the EU, began an investigation.

In the last few weeks, several German and Austrian newspapers reported that OLAF-investigators were sent to Israel and the Territories. It was furthermore reported, that even the investigating OLAF team could not deny that the accusations are well-founded. Markus Ferber (PPE, Germany) was quoted in the German newspaper "Die Welt" (30.01.2004) that he thinks that the resignation of Commissioner Patten could be a "quite possible" outcome of the OLAF-Investigations. ("Auch der CSU-Europaparlamentarier Markus Ferber sagte, er halte einen Rücktritt des britischen Außenkommissars 'für durchaus möglich'.")

Johannes Swoboda (PSE, Austria) who was against any inquiry committee was quoted: "There are hints, that money for financial support was indirectly channelled to the surroundings of terrorist organisations" (Die Presse, 03.02.04: "Es gibt Hinweise, dass Hilfgelder der EU indirekt in den Nahbereich terroristischer Organisationen geflossen sind".) Only a few days later, Armin Laschet (PPE, Germany) was quoted in the German newspaper "Die Welt": "It is obvious that the direct budgetary assistance to the Palestinian Authority was a big mistake". ("Aber dass die Zahlung von pauschalen Haushaltshilfen der EU an die Arafat-Behörde ein großer Fehler war, ist offensichtlich.")

In contrast to this indication, the French daily "La Libération" published the result of the "confidential" report yesterday, saying that there had been no use of EU funds for terrorist attacks. Reading this article rationally, it seems



as if the OLAF-report will only amount to a bad recycling of the answers given by Foreign Affairs Commissioner Patten.

Without going too much into details, please let me state once more what follows: It is wrong that the IMF controls the budget of the PA - this can be read in any IMF publication. It is well known that not even the Palestinian Minister of Finance did not know from where and to where money had been flowing until the end of 2002. It is known that the al-Aqsa brigades are closely linked with the Fatah movement of Palestinian President Arafat and that they have committed several suicide bombings against Israelis. It is known that not only school books, but also radio and TV stations, prayers paid by the state and official newspapers spread hate against Israel and anti-Semitic prejudice. If OLAF shouldn't know this or should not be capable to make the logical conclusions from these facts, then OLAF is simply the wrong institution to investigate this course of events, as I had already suggested in February 2003. Political scandals can rarely be solved with a calculator.

Many words, but little action. The "Working Group" is working in camera the whole time its mandate lasts — under a breach of the rules of procedures. I do not know, if, when and whom you will inform about your findings. If this takes you much more time it will be too late for any serious consequences and the downplay of the scandal will continue.

In June, a new Parliament will be elected. The fact, that the European Union allowed the use of EU money to kill Israeli citizens would most probably be considered as a mere historical discussion. The scandal, that the EU has participated indirectly in a war against Israel, will be just a footnote.

Something is wrong in this calculation. There are many more people involved in the support of the PA than the retiring Commissioner Christopher Patten. It is not only the Commission and its administration who are responsible. Let us also talk about the Presidents of the political groups, who took the relevant decision: José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Enrique Barón Crespo, Graham Watson and my dear comrade Francis Wurtz who vetoed — against the Rules of Procedures — the request of 158 MEPs for an Inquiry Committee. Let us also talk about Hans-Gert Poettering, who attended the meeting, but said nothing, and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who did not attend and said nothing either — but who let this happen even after a formal complaint from Charles Tannock and myself. Let us talk about the Court of Auditors that was informed by myself — and did, as far as we know, nothing. Let us talk about your role and the role of the whole Working Group: What have you done behind closed doors? What will be the results of your work, when and if you are going to Israel and the Territories in March 2004? And we can continue to ask why it did take OLAF such a long time to react. (It was in summer 2002, when Israel sent the proof for the use made of the European money to the Commission.)



Many of the people involved would like to get re-elected, some of them will be in charge after June 2004. Therefore, I suggest:

- That the Parliament urges OLAF to publish its "confidential" first report - that was so often quoted in the press - to all MEPs.
- That the working group provides every Member of the European Parliament with the outcome of its "investigations" until the end of February this year.
- That, in the case that accusations are founded — I have not the slightest doubt, that this would be the outcome of a real investigation — all Members of the Commission and President Cox admit their responsibility for not investigating the use of European money for the killing of citizens of Israel and that they resign.
- That the European Parliament apologises publicly and admits the fatal role of the European Union in the war against Israel. (This will make it easier for victims and the surviving dependants to sue the European Union.)

You as chairpersons of the "Working Group" that was installed to prevent any serious investigation of the accusations have now a good chance to act responsibly.

Best regards

Ilka Schröder

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