

European Citizens' Initiative

Surpasses One Million Signatures Calling for the Full Suspension of the EU–Israel Association Agreement

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The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) calling for the full suspension of the EU–Israel Association Agreement has reached an unprecedented milestone, surpassing 1,299,914 signatures, well above the legally required threshold of one million signatures. The initiative has also exceeded the minimum national threshold in more than half of the European Union's 27 Member States, giving it significant political and legal weight within the institutions of the European Union.

■ First: What is this initiative?

This is an official European Citizens' Initiative, registered with the European Commission under the title:

“Demand the full suspension of the EU–Israel Association Agreement in view of Israel's violations of human rights.”

The initiative was formally registered under the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) mechanism, a participatory instrument established by the EU Treaties that enables EU citizens to request the European Commission to propose legislation or take political action, provided that the initiative gathers at least one million signatures from EU citizens and reaches the required national thresholds in at least seven Member States.

■ Second: Why does the initiative call for suspending the Agreement?

The initiative is based on the argument that Israel has:

- Committed serious violations of international humanitarian law.
- Failed to comply with the rulings and orders of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).
- Violated Article 2 of the EU–Israel Association Agreement, which makes respect for human rights and democratic principles an essential element of the Agreement.

The organizers further argue that maintaining the Agreement effectively makes the European Union an economic and political partner of a state accused of committing international crimes, contrary to the EU's legal and moral obligations.

■ Third: What is the EU-Israel Association Agreement?

The Agreement entered into force in 2000 and constitutes the principal legal framework governing relations between the European Union and Israel. It covers:

- Free and preferential trade;
- Economic cooperation;
- Scientific and research cooperation;
- Industrial cooperation;
- Political dialogue;
- Cooperation in technology, energy, and education.

The European Union remains Israel's largest trading partner.

■ Fourth: What does Article 2 of the Agreement provide?

Article 2 states that:

Respect for human rights and democratic principles constitutes an essential element of the Agreement.

Accordingly, persistent and serious violations of these principles may legally justify the suspension of the Agreement, in whole or in part, under the applicable mechanisms of the European Union.

■ Fifth: What does exceeding one million signatures mean?

Reaching one million signatures does not automatically suspend the Agreement. However, it triggers a number of procedural obligations for the European Union institutions, including:

- Verification of the signatures by the competent national authorities;
- A formal meeting between the initiative's organizers and the European Commission;
- A public hearing before the European Parliament;
- A formal response by the European Commission indicating whether it intends to propose legislative or political measures or, alternatively, explaining the reasons for declining to do so.

■ Sixth: What is the significance of the figure 1,299,914?

According to the initiative's official website, the number of signatures reached 1,299,914, substantially exceeding the legal threshold of one million signatures. In addition, the initiative surpassed the required national thresholds in more than half of the EU Member States, significantly strengthening its democratic legitimacy and political credibility.

■ Seventh: What happens next?

Following the final validation of the signatures:

- The competent authorities in the Member States will verify the signatures.
- The certified results will be submitted to the European Commission.
- The organizers will meet with representatives of the Commission.



- A public hearing will be held before the European Parliament.
- The European Commission will issue its official response within the prescribed legal time-frame, stating whether it intends to take action regarding the suspension of the Agreement or rejecting the request while providing reasons for its decision.

■ **Eighth: Why is this initiative significant?**

The initiative is important because it:

- Represents the first European campaign of this magnitude formally calling for the suspension of the EU–Israel Association Agreement.
- Is among the fastest European Citizens’ Initiatives to surpass one million signatures since the establishment of the ECI mechanism.
- Reflects the growing public pressure across Europe for concrete measures in response to Israel’s actions in Gaza and the associated violations of international law.

■ **Ninth: Legal and Political Implications**

Although the initiative does not legally oblige the European Commission to suspend the Agreement, it nevertheless:

- Requires the Commission to engage formally with the initiative through the procedures established under the ECI Regulation.
- Increases political pressure on both the Council of the European Union and the EU Member States.
- May serve as a significant advocacy tool in discussions concerning Israel’s compliance with Article 2 of the Association Agreement, as well as in future calls to review, suspend, or condition cooperation between the European Union and Israel.

THE END