

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

EU Border Assistance Mission at Rafah Crossing Point (EUBAM RAFAH)

Updated: September 2016

Mission background

The Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority concluded an "Agreement on Movement and Access" (AMA) on 15 November 2005, which included agreed principles for the operation of the Rafah Crossing Point (RCP) on the Gaza-Egypt border. The Council of the EU agreed on 21 November 2005 that the EU should undertake the role and fulfil the responsibilities of the third party at the RCP, as envisaged in the AMA. To that end, the Council launched the EU Border Assistance Mission, EUBAM Rafah.

The operational phase of the Mission began on 24 November 2005. On 13 June 2007, following the Hamas takeover in the Gaza Strip, EUBAM Rafah has suspended operations at the RCP. Since then, the Mission has maintained its readiness to redeploy to the RCP and started the implementation of a Preparedness Project. On 7 July 2016, the Council extended the mandate of the Mission until 30 June 2017.



Head of Mission (center) meeting with Civilian Operations Commander Kenneth Deane (left) and Head of GABC Nazmi Muhanna (right)

Mandate and objectives

The aim of the Mission is to provide a third party presence at the Rafah Crossing Point in order to contribute to its opening and operation in accordance with the AMA, to build up confidence between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) and to enhance the PA border agencies capacity.



EU staff monitoring during security checks at the RCP.

Mission Achievements

During the 19 months (end of November 2005 until June 2007) while the EU monitors were present at the terminal, a total of 443 975 passengers crossed through the RCP.

Between 25 June 2006 and 13 June 2007, following political developments in the region, the RCP was closed for normal operations and open on an exceptional basis only. During the implementation of the PA Preparedness Project (since 2014), the Mission has been engaged in a number of activities to enhance the PA's capacity on border issues. The main Border Strategies to effectively manage the RCP have been designed along with the delivery of targeted training on border controls, risk analysis and Integrated Border Management.

Mission State of Play

Despite the suspension of operations at the RCP in June 2007, EUBAM has maintained its capacity to rapidly redeploy to the crossing point. On 23 May 2011, the Council reconfirmed the EU's readiness to reactivate EUBAM Rafah, once political and security conditions allow. In 2014, the Mission started the implementation of the PA Preparedness Project, to enhance PA's capacity and readiness to return to the RCP. In 2015, a Joint Road Map was signed with the Palestinian counterparts in this regard, which enhanced cooperation with the Mission in working on strategies and policies, in addition to training activities.



EU staff monitoring the entrance of the Rafah Terminal.

Cooperation with stakeholders

The Mission retains its expertise in Border Management and Customs Operations and is regularly approached to share its expertise with other stakeholders involved in the issue of borders and crossings. The Mission continues to liaise with all relevant parties on a regular basis. EUBAM staff also cooperates at a technical level with EUPOL COPPS, the EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories, based in Ramallah. EUBAM Rafah continues to attract attention and receives regularly visitors or delegations and participates in public events.

MISSION FACTS AND FIGURES

Theatre: occupied Palestinian territories
Headquarters: Tel Aviv
Starting Date: 24 November 2005
Head of Mission : Mrs. Natalina Cea
Mission strength: 4 EU staff, 8 local staff and 3 visiting experts
Mission budget: EUR 1,540.000 until 30 June 2017
Contributing Member States: Italy, France, Germany



www.eubam-rafah.eu

"The European Union, as part of the Quartet, is committed to assisting and facilitating the implementation of the Roadmap, which lays out reciprocal steps by the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority in the political, security, economic, humanitarian, and institution-building fields, that will result in the emergence of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours".

COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2005/889/CFSP of 12 December 2005 on establishing a European Union Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point.

*The European Union's **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)** includes the gradual framing of a common defence policy which might in time lead to a common defence. The CSDP allows the Union to develop its civilian and military capacities for crisis management and conflict prevention at international level, thus helping to maintain peace and international security, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The CSDP includes a strong conflict prevention component.*

*Based in Brussels, the **Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC)** is the permanent structure responsible for an autonomous operational conduct of civilian CSDP operations. Under the political control and strategic direction of the Political and Security Committee and the overall authority of the High Representative, the CPCC ensures the effective planning and conduct of civilian CSDP crisis management operations, as well as the proper implementation of all mission-related tasks.*

More information and background documents available on:

www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp