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# MEPs speak out against ACAA

## EFA press release from MEPs Jill Evans and Ana Miranda

The EU should not upgrade relations with Israel whilst its government fails to make progress in building peace with the Palestinians.

That was the view of a group of MEPs from the EFA Group in the European Parliament following a vote to approve a new trade agreement on pharmaceutical products.

Known as ACAA the vote relates to the EU - Israel agreement on the mutual recognition of certificates in medicinal products. The deal would mean that medicinal or pharmaceutical products authorised in the EU would have the same status in Israel, and vice versa.

Supporters see the agreement as a way of boosting trade and removing commercial barriers, but opponents fear it will undermine EU efforts in support of the Israeli - Palestinian peace process.

EFA MEPs Jill Evans, Francois Alfonsi and Ana Miranda have recently returned from a fact finding trip to the West Bank and East Jerusalem. They were shocked at the scale of illegal Israeli settlement building in Palestinian territory and its implications for creating a viable Palestinian state in the future.

Welsh MEP and EFA Group President **Jill Evans** spoke in the debate in the European Parliament. Jill said:

*"The European Union will usually be quick to criticise the Israeli government's latest violation of international law as regards its occupation of Palestine, but when it comes to taking action, it is much less keen to be so forthright. I call on my colleagues here to reject the ACAA agreement as Israel should not be rewarded for its unacceptable behaviour.*

*"I visited the West Bank earlier this month with my EFA colleagues and even though I have been many times before, the massive discrimination and ill treatment of Palestinians is still shocking. They live in fear of their houses being demolished; they are denied access to basic services such as water and waste collection even though they pay their taxes; they are humiliated by a system of segregation where their children are forced to take a dangerous road to school because the main road is for the settlers only.*

*"I could go on. I promised those people I met that I would come back to the Parliament and urge my colleagues to vote against this agreement. Reject ACAA."*

Galician nationalist MEP **Ana Miranda** commented:

*"As a BNG MEP I'm against of this agreement because the European Parliament has to send a clear signal to the Government of Israel: they cannot violate human rights, the rights of Palestinian people with impunity, without any consequences.*

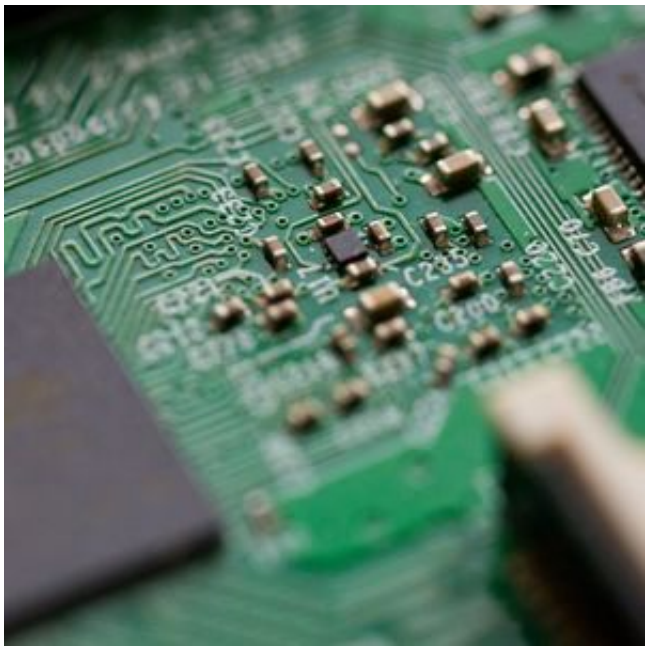
*"The European Parliament has to defend a fair agreement, and an agreement that contributes to consolidation of Israel's settlements policy is not a fair agreement for Palestinian people. The ACAA allows products made in the settlements to enter the EU, and this could even be interpreted as support from the European Parliament.*

*"Palestinian people are suffering because of segregation, loss of basic rights, and suffering due to an apartheid regime imposed by the state of Israel. Our vote against this commercial agreement is a gesture in favour of the right of Palestinians to live in peace and with the same rights as Israeli people."*

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Jill Evans

Member

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