



By: TA | AP Brief

EU diplomats to meet Board of Peace director over Gaza's future



The European Union's top diplomats are set to meet with the director of the Board of Peace in Brussels after a shaky and controversial embrace of U.S. President Donald Trump's efforts to secure and rebuild the war-ravaged Gaza Strip.

Nikolay Mladenov, a former Bulgarian politician and U.N. diplomat **chosen by Trump to manage the Board of Peace**, will meet the EU's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas and foreign ministers from across the 27-nation bloc.

The EU diplomats are also expected to discuss the war in Ukraine and fresh sanctions on Russia.

Just across the Mediterranean Sea from the Middle East, the EU has **deep links** to Israel and the Palestinians. It now plays a crucial oversight role at the Rafah border crossing, and is the top donor to the Palestinian Authority.

The question of whether to work with the Trump-led board has split national capitals from Nicosia to Copenhagen. The EU is supportive of the United Nations' mandate in Gaza.

EU members Hungary and Bulgaria are full members of the board, as are EU candidate countries Turkey, Kosovo and Albania.

Twelve other EU nations sent **observers** to the inaugural meeting in Washington on Thursday: Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The EU flag was displayed at the event alongside EU observer and member nations.

European leaders like French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen turned down invitation to join, as did Pope Leo XIV.

But von der Leyen did send European Commissioner for the Mediterranean Dubravka Šuica to the meeting in Washington as an observer.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said sending Šuica without consulting the European Council, the group of the bloc's leaders, broke EU regulations.

"The European Commission should never have attended the Board of Peace meeting in Washington," Barrot said in a post on X. "Beyond the legitimate political questions raised by the 'Board of Peace,' the Commission must scrupulously respect European law and institutional balance in all circumstances."

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"It is in the remit of the Commission to accept invitations," von der Leyen spokesperson Paula Pinho said Friday.

While the executive is not joining the board, it is seeking to influence reconstruction and peacekeeping in Gaza beyond being the top donor to the Palestinian Authority, she said.

Trump's **ballooning ambitions** for the board extend from governing and rebuilding Gaza as a futuristic metropolis to challenging the U.N. Security Council's role in solving conflicts.

But they could be tempered by the realities of dealing with Gaza, where there has so far been limited progress in achieving the narrower aims of the ceasefire.

Institutional balance