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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the publication of guidelines on Israel and EU funding instruments

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, made today the following statement:

“Today the EU published a document that reiterates the long-held position that bilateral agreements with Israel do not cover the territory that came under Israel's administration in June 1967. This is meant to clarify the EU's position in advance of negotiations of agreements with Israel during the forthcoming financial perspective commencing in 2014.

In no way will this prejudice the outcome of peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. It has been the EU's long held position that it will recognise changes made to the borders once agreed by both parties. The EU is deeply committed to Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and fully supports Secretary Kerry's intense efforts to restart negotiations at a particularly delicate stage. In this way, the EU hopes to further contribute to an atmosphere conducive to a meaningful and sustainable negotiation leading to a peace agreement between the parties.

However, the specific provisions of the guidelines will not be implemented before 1 January 2014. In the meanwhile the EU looks forward to working and consulting with Israel on a broad range of bilateral issues, and has invited Israel to hold discussions on the territorial scope of agreements with the EU that are currently under preparation.”

P R E S S

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