



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



## **Council conclusions on Middle East Peace Process**

*2951st EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting  
Luxembourg, 15 Juin 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The European Union remains committed to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid conference, including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Council reiterates its commitment to the two-state solution with an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state, comprising the West Bank and Gaza, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel. The Council confirms its view that this constitutes a fundamental European interest. It is an indispensable and urgent step towards a more stable and peaceful Middle East.
2. The Council welcomes the US Administration's commitment to vigorously pursue a two-state solution and a comprehensive peace in the Middle East and confirms the Union's readiness to work actively with the United States and other Quartet members to achieve this goal, including through coordinated monitoring of actions by all parties to the conflict and of developments on the ground. The EU is also ready to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements aimed at ensuring the sustainability of peace agreements, addressing also the regional economic and security dimensions.

# **P R E S S**

3. The European Union calls on the government of Israel to commit unequivocally to the two-state solution and welcomes the initial step, following the Israeli policy review, announced by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of commitment to a peace that would include a Palestinian state. It urges both parties to take immediate steps to resume peace negotiations, respecting previous agreements and understandings. To that effect, the Council also calls on both parties to implement their obligations under the Roadmap.
4. The Council remains deeply concerned by settlement activities, house demolitions and evictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including in East Jerusalem. The Council urges the government of Israel to immediately end settlement activities, including in East Jerusalem and including natural growth, and to dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001. It reiterates that settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace. The Council also urges the Palestinian Authority to continue to make every effort to improve law and order. All parties must stop incitement and violence against civilians and respect for international humanitarian law must be ensured. The EU will continue to follow closely investigations into alleged violations of international humanitarian law.
5. The Council reiterates the urgency of a durable solution to the Gaza crisis through the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1860. The European Union calls for the immediate and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza without which the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid, reconstruction and economic recovery will not be possible. The Council also calls for a complete stop to all violence, including a sustained halt of rocket attacks at Israel and an effective mechanism to prevent arms and ammunition smuggling into the Gaza strip. It calls on those holding the abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit to release him without delay.
6. The Council expresses continued encouragement for inter-Palestinian reconciliation behind President Mahmoud Abbas and support for the mediation efforts by Egypt and the Arab League. Overcoming divisions among Palestinians would help prevent a deeper separation between the West Bank and Gaza and preserve the chances of restoring the unity of a future Palestinian state. The Council calls on all Palestinians to find common ground, based on non-violence, in order to facilitate reconstruction in Gaza and the organisation of elections.
7. The EU stands ready to further develop and enhance its bilateral relations with the Palestinian Authority in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy. It will promote Palestinian state-building and intensify work in partnership with the PA towards further implementation of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan. This will involve a broad range of areas including health, education, governance, customs, public financial management and the rule of law. The EU welcomes the PA's efforts to develop an effective and reformed security sector and will cooperate towards additional improvement in restoring law and order, countering terrorism, the implementation of a more comprehensive security strategy, developing an effective and reformed security sector and criminal justice system. Civil police and justice will continue to be a focus of EU support, through the assistance provided by EUPOL COPPS, the European Commission and Member States, and in close coordination with the US and other partners.

8. The Council welcomes the declared readiness of the government of Israel to promote Palestinian economic development, stressing that this can only be achieved within the framework of the broader perspective of the two-state solution. The EU is ready to work closely with Israel, the Palestinian government and international donors in order to achieve sustainable economic development on the basis of the full implementation of the Agreement on Access and Movement of 2005. Such a step would not only improve living conditions and the situation on the ground but also reinforce support among Palestinians for a peaceful political process.
  9. The Council calls on all partners to contribute actively to the achievement of a comprehensive settlement. The EU urges Arab countries and other partners to be forthcoming, both politically and financially, in assisting the Palestinian Authority, in accordance with Roadmap provisions. Underlining the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative, the EU invites Israel and all Arab countries to take confidence building measures in order to overcome mutual mistrust and to create an atmosphere conducive to conflict resolution. Solutions to the various conflicts including a lasting settlement for the conflicts between Israel and Syria and between Israel and Lebanon must be pursued in parallel, creating mutually reinforcing processes. In this regard the EU expects that Syria and Israel resume peace negotiations.
  10. A comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict requires a regional approach, covering the political, security and economic dimensions. Encouraged by enhanced US engagement and convinced that tangible benefits regarding economic development and security would facilitate achieving agreement on the various political tracks, the EU stands ready to use all instruments at its disposal such as the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean. Through numerous agreements with partners in the region, the EU is uniquely placed to work with the parties on key issues of regional development. In light of further developments at the political level and on the ground, the EU will carefully assess how its policies and programmes can promote concrete and early results on the path of a comprehensive settlement of the conflict."
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