

EU Summary --Europe and the Middle East Peace process, June 2016

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The Resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a fundamental interest of the EU. The EU's objective is a two-state solution with an independent, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors.

The EU has been deeply concerned about developments on the ground, which threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. The only way to resolve the conflict is through an agreement that ends the occupation which began in 1967, that ends all claims and that fulfils the aspirations of both parties. A one state reality would not be compatible with these aspirations. A lasting solution must be achieved on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, agreements previously reached by the parties and of the Arab Peace Initiative. If an agreement to finally end the conflict was reached, the door would open to a deepened and enhanced cooperation among all the countries of the region.

The EU is willing to work with its partners to re-launch peace negotiations, based on the following parameters:

- An agreement on the borders of the two states, based on the 4 June 1967 lines with equivalent land swaps as may be agreed between the parties. The EU will recognize changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, only when agreed by the parties.
- Security arrangements that, for Palestinians, respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over; and, for Israelis, protect their security, prevent the resurgence of terrorism and deal effectively with security threats, including with new and vital threats in the region.
- A just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the refugee question.
- Fulfilment of the aspirations of both parties for Jerusalem. A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both states.

To that end, the EU undertakes a range of activities – both political and practical – and is the largest donor to Palestinian state-building efforts aiming at a Palestinian state based on the rule of law and respect of human rights and has consistently called for intra-Palestinian reconciliation and holding of democratic elections.

In 2013 and 2014, the EU strongly supported the diplomatic efforts by the US Secretary J. Kerry to foster direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. In December 2013, the EU foreign ministers signaled their readiness to provide unprecedented political, economic and security support to both parties in the context of a final status agreement. The EU offer includes a Special Privileged Partnership to both Israelis and Palestinians that will build on the strong existing EU-Israel and EU-Palestinian cooperation and fully exploit the potential of trilateral cooperation to address concrete social-economic challenges and opportunities.

The EU – with the UN, the US and the Russian Federation – is a member of the '[Quartet](#)' which in 2002 launched a 'road map for peace' aimed at resolving the conflict. The EU has welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative as a significant contribution from the Arab countries.

Regarding the Gaza Strip, the conflict in 2014 has demonstrated the unsustainable nature of the status quo and the need for a lifting of the Gaza closure regime in line with UNSC resolution 1860 (2009) and for an end to threats to Israel. The EU encourages the Palestinian Authority to progressively assume its government function in the Gaza Strip, including in the field of security, civil administration and through its presence at the Gaza crossing points. The EU stands ready to play a key role in international efforts to support a durable ceasefire, including through the rapid reactivation and possible extension in scope and mandate of its EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS missions.

## EU positions on the Middle East peace process

### The Israeli-Palestinian peace process

The EU's objective is a two-state solution with an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbors. The EU's long-term policy asserts that negotiations remain the best way forward.

### EU positions on "final status issues"

- **Borders:** The EU considers that the future Palestinian state will require secure and recognized borders. These should be based on a withdrawal from the territory occupied in 1967 with minor modifications mutually agreed, if necessary, in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1402 and 1515 and the principles of the Madrid Process.
- **Israeli settlements** in the occupied Palestinian territory: the EU has repeatedly confirmed its deep concern about accelerated settlement expansion in the West Bank including East Jerusalem. This expansion prejudices the outcome of final status negotiations and threatens the viability of an agreed two-state solution. The EU considers that settlement building anywhere in the occupied Palestinian

Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law, constitutes an obstacle to peace and threatens to make a two-state solution impossible.

- **Jerusalem:** The EU considers that the peace negotiations should include the resolution of all issues surrounding the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. The EU will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties. The EU supports institution building work in East Jerusalem, notably in the areas of health, education and the judiciary.
- **Palestinian refugees:** The EU supports a just, viable and agreed solution on this question. We will respect an agreement reached between the two Parties on this point. Since 1971 the EU has been providing significant support to the work of agencies providing vital services to the Palestinian refugees (UNRWA). It is committed to adapting this support as appropriate, in pursuit of a just and equitable solution to the refugee issue.
- **Security:** The EU condemns all acts of violence which cannot be allowed to impede progress towards peace. The EU recognizes Israel's right to protect its citizens from attacks and emphasizes that the Israeli Government, in exercising this right, should act within international law. Through its EUPOL COPPS mission, the EU supports the reform and development of the Palestinian police and judicial institutions. EU-Israel cooperation on the fight against terrorist financing and money laundering or other aspects of soft security as well as on security research represents a non-negligible practical EU contribution to Israel's security. Security arrangements should, for Palestinians, respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over, and, for Israelis, protect their security, prevent the resurgence of terrorism and deal effectively with new and emerging threats.

### **EU policymaking from the "Venice Declaration"**

The EU has set out its policy on the Middle East in a series of high level public statements. The **Venice Declaration of 1980** recognized the right to security and existence for all states in the region including Israel, and the need to fulfil the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The **Berlin Declaration of 1999** included an explicit commitment to the creation of a Palestinian state and to the recognition of a Palestinian state, when appropriate. The **Seville Declaration of June 2002** introduced specific details of the final status solution, as set out above.

In June 2002, the EU co-sponsored the **Roadmap for Peace**, a three-stage process for achieving these objectives. The Roadmap emphasizes the need for Palestinian institution-building and economic recovery with a view to enhancing the strength and viability of the future Palestinian state. This "state-building process" requires sustained engagement on the part of the international community. It also requires urgent improvement on issues

related to freedom of movement in the occupied Palestinian territory. The EU has repeatedly called for the immediate freezing of settlement activities and the proactive dismantling of outposts as set out in the Roadmap.

From 2007 onwards, the EU actively supported the "**Annapolis process**" which committed the Israelis and the Palestinians to implement Roadmap obligations and to reach a peace agreement by the end of 2008. The **EU Action Strategy for Peace in the Middle East** of November 2007 set out a range of ways in which the EU can support the peace process, including Palestinian state-building assistance and comprehensive conflict resolution on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative. Although negotiations took place throughout 2008 in the framework of the "Annapolis process", agreement could not be reached by the agreed deadline.

Since 2009, the EU has supported the US administration initiatives encouraging both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to resume **bilateral negotiations leading to a two-state solution** and at the same time continued to uphold the Palestinian state building. Through the PEGASE mechanism, the EU has provided support to the development plans of the Palestinian Authority (PA) starting from the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) of 2007 and the subsequent National Development Plans.

In December 2013, the EU foreign ministers signaled their readiness to provide unprecedented European political, economic and security support to both parties in the context of a final status agreement. The EU offer includes support measures addressing the final status issues, which would ensure the sustainability of a future peace treaty, as well as a Special Privileged Partnership with both Israelis and Palestinians that will build on the strong existing EU-Israel and EU-Palestinian cooperation and fully exploit the potential of trilateral cooperation to address concrete social-economic challenges and opportunities.