Statement by the spokesperson of the High Representative on the expansion of the Israeli settlement of Gilo

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

“The High Representative deeply regrets the decision by the Israeli Ministry of Interior to approve the expansion of Gilo settlement by 797 new housing units.

During 2011 and 2012 the High Representative has expressed her profound disappointment on a number of occasions concerning the expansion of nearby Har Homa settlement. Together these developments continue the process of separating East Jerusalem from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.

Settlements are illegal under international law and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. The EU has repeatedly urged the Government of Israel to immediately end all settlement activities in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, in line with its obligations under the Roadmap.

The European Union maintains that negotiations continue to represent the best way forward in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Continuous expansion of settlements makes this all the more difficult.”

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