

## EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



THE HEAD OF DIVISION

DIRECTORATE North Africa, Middle East, Arabian Peninsula,  
Iran, Iraq  
Division: Middle East II: Israel, occupied Palestinian  
territory, Middle East Peace Process,  
Brussels, 21 DEC. 2011  
AF/dw

**Subject: International Petition Against the Unilateral Vote of the U.N. and the European Union in Favour of a Palestinian State**

Dear Petitioner,

Thank you for your letter dated September 26, concerning the Palestinian bid to advance statehood. The High Representative and Vice President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton asked me to reply to you on her behalf.

Your petition raises a very critical issue relating to the Palestinian aspirations to establish a state and their ongoing efforts in the UN to prepare the ground towards this goal.

The High Representative, Catherine Ashton, continues to be personally engaged for a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict. Over the past months, she has travelled several times to the region to speak directly to the leaders of both sides. The state of the Middle East Peace Process was again prominently discussed among the 27 EU Foreign ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels on 1 December. The High Representative received broad support from Ministers to continue her efforts towards a re-launching of the Peace Process towards a two-state solution.

The EU is clearly of the opinion that negotiations are the best way to find a solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition. The EU was unequivocal in supporting the Quartet statement issued on 23 September that set clear timelines for the resumption of negotiations leading to an agreement not later than end of 2012. The Quartet will remain actively involved to encourage and review progress. In this vein the High Representative chaired a Quartet envoys' meeting on 9 October in Brussels, and Quartet envoys met with the parties on 26 October and 14 November in Jerusalem, as foreseen in the statement.

It should be pointed out, however, that the recognition of states remains within the competence of individual Member States and not of the EU or its institutions.

Yours sincerely,

  
Leonello Gabrici