



## Middle East Peace process

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 neighbours.

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 neighbours. 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 recognised 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 recognise 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 recognises Israel's right to protect its citizens from attacks and emphasises 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** recognised 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 emphasises 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 signalled 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.

## EU political support for the Middle East peace process

- The EU has strong political and economic relations with partners in the region including Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan. These are underpinned by "Association Agreements" and by European Neighbourhood Policy "Action Plans".
- The EU's Euro-Mediterranean Partnership / "Union for the Mediterranean" serves as a forum for regional dialogue and remains the only multilateral context outside the United Nations where all parties to the conflict can meet and work together on a range of issues.
- Along with Russia, the UN and the US, the EU participates in the Middle East Quartet. The Quartet supported the Annapolis process, which included a specific focus on implementation of the Parties' obligations under the 2002 Roadmap. In 2009, the Quartet expressed its support for the Palestinian Authority's plan for building the Palestinian state. HR/VP Federica Mogherini represents the EU at Quartet meetings and conducts dialogue with third countries on the Middle East Peace Process.
- Alongside regular consultations with our partners in the region, including the Arab League, the EU Foreign Ministers and the European Council issue regular policy statements as part of a coordinated EU policy.

# EU practical & financial support for the Middle East peace process

The EU is the largest donor to the Palestinians. In recent years, the combined contribution of the European Commission and EU Member States has reached €1 billion per year. European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is the main framework to develop political as well as economic relations of the EU with both [Israel](#) and [Palestinian Authority](#). Commission programmes targeted at ENP partner countries have been implemented mainly through a common financial instrument: the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The EU's development assistance is managed by the Commission's Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR). The Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) oversees humanitarian assistance. On the ground, the assistance is managed by the Office of the EU Representative for the West Bank and Gaza Strip in East Jerusalem. The humanitarian assistance is managed by the ECHO office in Jerusalem.

The EU has taken a leading role in the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), established in 1993, which is a 15-member body serving as the principal policy-level coordination mechanism for development assistance to the Palestinian people. The AHLC is chaired by Norway and co-sponsored by the EU and the US. The United Nations participates together with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. HR/VP hosts the Spring Sessions of the AHLC in Brussels.

Customs and trade: The EU is active in this area, for example by providing technological solutions for the swift control of goods passing through the borders of the future Palestinian state, and by supporting the Palestinian Authority's efforts to develop its trade policy and institutions.

EU assistance is intended to foster the conditions for peace, stability and prosperity in the region, notably by advancing the Palestinian state-building process, promoting good governance and encouraging economic recovery with a view to enhancing the viability of the future Palestinian state.

Examples include:

- **Humanitarian and emergency response:** Due to the situation on the ground, much of the EU's contribution is channelled in this way. We offer humanitarian and emergency aid through UNRWA and our PEGASE mechanism, providing a vital lifeline to Palestinian families affected by poverty and conflict.
- **"State-building" activities:** For over a decade, the EU has placed a major focus on empowering the Palestinian Authority (PA) through institution building and governance work. Since 2008, the EU has been intensifying these activities, in areas which complement the PA's reform and development plans, for example rule of law, private sector and trade and water and land development. The EU has also contributed to the development of a modern police force through its "EUPOL

COPPS" mission in Ramallah, established in January 2006, which provides police training, police equipment and the reconstruction of police, prison and training facilities. EU assistance to the civil police is complemented by wider support for the rule of law, including support for the establishment of an efficient penal and judiciary system.

- **Palestinian economic activity** - The EU has several measures aimed at encouraging the Palestinian private sector including credit guarantees, vocational training and trade facilitation. Palestinian economic activity is limited due to Israeli restrictions on access and movement in the occupied Palestinian territory and due to the closure of Gaza. In May 2012, the EU Foreign Affairs Council stated that social and economic developments in Area C are of critical importance for the viability of a future Palestinian state, as Area C is its land main reserve. The EU called upon Israel to work together with the PA to allow more access and control of the PA over Area C.
- **Border assistance:** In November 2005, an EU border assistance mission "EUBAM Rafah" was established to help ensure international standards at the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt. The mission was launched after Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip and had contributed to the opening of the crossing point and confidence building between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Despite the closure of the Rafah Crossing Point, following the Hamas take-over of the Gaza Strip in 2007, the EU has maintained its readiness to reactivate the EUBAM Rafah mission.
- **Civil society activities:** The EU's has consistently supported "people to people" projects. For example, the EU's "Partnership for Peace" programme offers support for local and international civil society initiatives that promote peace, tolerance and non-violence in the Middle East. The objective is to contribute to the rebuilding of confidence within each society and between societies. Projects implemented under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights focus on essential human rights aspects of the occupation and aim at improving the conditions of the Palestinian population in conformity with international humanitarian law requirements.

## See also

EU Delegation to Israel  
EU Delegation to Lebanon  
EU Delegation to Syria  
EU Delegation to Jordan  
EU Delegation to Egypt

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