

In Arabic

(not to be translated literally; if other words flows better in Arabic, we use other words):

Your Excellency, Representative of Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, Minister Ali Abu Diak
Ministers, Excellencies,

Dear colleagues, Dear friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you tonight at the occasion of Europe Day.

Celebrating Europe Day in Palestine means celebrating a very special partnership between
Europeans and Palestinians.

I would also like to thank our Palestinian friends who came here tonight to celebrate with us
tonight in such a big number. Your presence is precious to us.

If you allow, I would like to continue my short intervention in English.

Your Excellencies, Dear colleagues, Dear friends,

Welcome to Europe Day.

Tonight, we celebrate Europe Day in Ramallah. Yesterday, we celebrated in Jerusalem. The day before yesterday, we celebrated in Bethlehem. We will mark Europe Day in Gaza as well.

Marking Europe Day in four different locations in the same country is, I believe, unique in the world. Of course it shows how special the Palestinians are, how much we love them and that we can't get enough of celebrating with them. And it is of course every single time a pleasant opportunity, to meet old friends and make new ones. But if I have learned something during my stay here, then it is the simple truth that everything in Palestine is political. Even a heartbeat is political. Even more so talking about a heartbeat. And even more so reflecting upon a heartbeat. And so our four celebrations to mark Europe Day have a political dimension too. They reflect the sad reality of the continuous fragmentation of Palestine. A fragmentation which is not just geographical but, of course also, and primarily, political.

Dear colleagues, Dear friends,

In my speech yesterday in Jerusalem, I explained why, despite all odds and despite all the uncertainties, Europe remains committed to its political positions regarding the Israeli - Palestinian conflict. I do not want to repeat in detail what I said yesterday. Allow me to highlight that we have taken great attention and care to map out all the dimensions and the options related to the Israeli - Palestinian conflict in the last decades. Every time we do, we find ourselves returning to our starting point: The only just, fair, equitable and realistic solution to the Israeli - Palestinian conflict is the solution which foresees two States, one Israeli and one Palestinian, living side by side in peace, security and prosperity, based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital, and a just and fair solution of the refugee question. A solution must be compatible with and grounded in international law and respect the countless relevant Resolutions by the UN Security Council.

We are aware that a two State solution is not a foregone conclusion and we are aware that progress on the path of realizing a two State solution is not in sight for the moment. But this does not mean that we are willing to abandon our quest for a just and equitable solution of the Israeli - Palestinian conflict.

Dear colleagues, Dear friends,

The European Union and its Member States will stay the course politically to support a two State solution which deserves this label. We do support this project not just by declarations, but also by very concrete measures. The European Union and its Member States are by far the largest contributors of development assistance in Palestine. And Palestine is by a large margin the number one recipient of development assistance per capita in the world. Our development assistance is of course not just about development. It is a strong and unequivocal testimony to underpin our political goal to support the creation of an independent and viable State of Palestine.

With the Palestinian Authority, we have a strong and committed partner to implement the practical steps on the way ahead. The PA has put forward an ambitious National Policy Agenda for 2017 to 2022, which is a blueprint worthy of our partnership and support. We highly appreciate the heading of the National Policy Agenda: Putting citizens first.

Politically and in terms of our practical support, we will continue to pay particular attention to areas in which the PA has, for different reasons, a reduced footprint: Area C, Gaza, and last but not least, Jerusalem. All these areas are of crucial importance to a future Palestinian State.

Dear colleagues, Dear friends,

We are very well aware of the toll the Israeli occupation is taking on the Palestinians and of the systematic discrimination Palestinians living under the occupation are subjected to.

On their side, Palestinians can contribute to improving the prospects for statehood by continuing to work towards a return of the PA to Gaza and to improve the performance of the PA in terms of governance. We on our side remain ready to support our Palestinian partners in their efforts to make further progress in those fields.

I thank you all very much, once again for your presence, and for your kind attention.

I wish all of us together a nice and pleasant evening.