

EU Presidency Statement
on
The Situation in the Middle East

30 November 2005

by

**The Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the
United Nations**

on behalf of the European Union

General Assembly (New York)



I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, the EFTA country Iceland, a member of the EEA, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this message.

The European Union remains committed to the two-State solution as laid out in the Roadmap and agreed between the parties, which would result in a viable, contiguous, sovereign and independent Palestinian State existing side by side in peace with an Israel living within recognised and secure borders.

The European Union welcomed the successful conclusion of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank as a significant step towards implementing the Roadmap. It praised the positive steps on both sides but emphasised that more remained to be done.

The European Union welcomes the Agreement on Movement and Access between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. These issues are fundamental to improving the humanitarian situation in Gaza and essential for promoting peaceful economic development. The Agreement signifies a major breakthrough. The priority now is to ensure that the commitments made in it are translated into reality.

The European Union welcomes the holding of multi-party elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council foreseen for 25 January 2006. The European Union underlines that free and fair elections are an indispensable step in the process of consolidating democratic institutions. The EU stands ready to assist the Palestinian Authority financially, technically and politically with the elections, in liaison with other members of the Quartet and international community, to ensure that the electoral process is conducted in accordance with international principles for genuine democratic elections. To that end, the EU is ready to send an observer mission. The European Union urges the Palestinian Authority to uphold all provisions of the electoral law. The Council urges Israel to co-operate fully with the Palestinian Authority in facilitating the preparation and conduct of the elections.

Finally, Mr. President, the European Union will work with Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the international community to contribute to realising the aspirations of the Palestinian people and achieving a two state solution, with both Israel and Palestine living side by side peacefully within secure and recognised borders. We wish to stress that both parties can count on the undiminished support of the European Union on the path towards a peaceful, durable and just settlement of the conflict. We are convinced that this goal can be achieved for both Israelis and Palestinians. Moreover, we are convinced this will contribute to peace in the region.