

**EU Presidency Statement**

**on**

**Question of Palestine**

**31 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 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 by both sides but emphasised that more remained to be done. The EU calls for renewed action in parallel by both parties to fulfil their obligations under the Roadmap, and commitments made at Sharm el Sheikh.

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 is prepared to undertake the Third Party role proposed in the Agreement. It will monitor the operations of the Rafah border crossing point and provide assistance to reinforce Palestinian border management capacities. The European Community is taking forward the necessary capacity building, through training, equipment and technical assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

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 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.

The European Union welcomes the Palestinian Authority's statements condemning violence and urging Palestinian groups who have engaged in terrorism to abandon this course and engage in the democratic process. Ultimately, those who want to be part of the political process should not engage in armed activities, as there is a fundamental contradiction between such activities and the building of a democratic State.

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 is concerned by actions that could prejudice a final status agreement.

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.