



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on Middle East Peace Process

(2728th EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting - Brussels, 15 May 2006)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council assessed the situation in the Middle East and welcomed the statement of the Quartet Principals on 9 May in New York.
2. The Council expressed its serious concern about the deterioration of the humanitarian, economic and financial situation in the West Bank and Gaza.
3. The Council welcomed the willingness of the Quartet to endorse a temporary international mechanism, the objective of which is direct delivery and supervision of assistance to the Palestinian people. The EU is working urgently to develop such a mechanism which as a matter of priority will be aimed at contributing to meet basic needs including health services. It will consult International Financial Institutions and other key partners, and invite other donors to actively join in the effort to establish the mechanism as soon as possible.
4. The Council recalled its demand to the Palestinian Authority government to meet and implement the three principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of existing agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap.
5. The Council urged both parties to take concrete steps to implement their obligations under the Agreement on Movement and Access.
6. The Council urged Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues which are essential in averting a crisis in the Palestinian territories.

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7. In line with their declared intentions and recalling President Abbas' commitment to a platform of peace, the Council called for an early engagement between the Israeli Prime Minister and the President of the Palestinian Authority in view of the urgent need to relaunch the process towards a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict leading to an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. In this regard, the Council reiterated the importance of both parties avoiding unilateral measures which prejudice final status issues. Ministers recalled previous statements that the EU will not recognise any change to pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties.
8. The Council commended the services of James Wolfensohn as Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement and his central role in the conclusion of the Agreement on Movement and Access as well as his promulgation of an agenda for Palestinian economic recovery."

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