



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process

***FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 16 December 2013***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The European Union fully supports the efforts of the parties and of the US towards a just and lasting settlement for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The European Union particularly commends the tireless engagement by US SoS John Kerry and the leadership shown by President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu.
2. The European Union recalls previous Council conclusions which laid down its vision for a two-state solution resulting in an agreement on all final status issues, ending all claims, and fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of both parties.
3. The EU is convinced of the positive role that countries in the region can play in advancing the peace process, and remains committed to the on-going dialogue with the Arab States, including with regard to achieving peace in the Middle East. The Council reiterates the strategic importance of the Arab Peace Initiative for all parties and for the entire region.
4. Recalling its Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of June and December 2009, the European Union reiterates its readiness to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements for ensuring the sustainability of a peace agreement. The Council will work on concrete proposals, including by building on previous work undertaken on EU contributions to Palestinian state-building, regional issues, refugees, security and Jerusalem.
5. The EU will provide an unprecedented package of European political, economic and security support to both parties in the context of a final status agreement. In the event of a final peace agreement the European Union will offer Israel and the future state of Palestine a Special Privileged Partnership including increased access to the European markets, closer cultural and scientific links, facilitation of trade and investments as well as promotion of business to business relations. Enhanced political dialogue and security cooperation will also be offered to both states.

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6. Current talks represent a unique opportunity which must be seized for both parties to implement a two-state solution. A one state reality would not be compatible with the legitimate sovereign and democratic aspirations of both parties.
 7. The EU warns against actions that undermine the negotiations. In this regard, it deplores Israel's continuous expansion of settlements, which are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace. The Council also expresses its grave concern regarding incitement, incidents of violence in the occupied territory, house demolitions and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. The EU expresses its serious concern about actions that undermine the status quo of the holy sites, including in Jerusalem. The European Union will continue to closely monitor the situation and its broader implications, and act accordingly.
 8. The European Union reiterates that it is in its fundamental interest to see an end to the conflict, establish lasting peace and prosperity along its southern borders and simultaneously develop its political, economic and trade relations with both parties. The European Union stands firmly behind President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu in their efforts to take bold and concrete steps towards a just and lasting solution to the conflict within the agreed timeframe.
 9. The Council expressed its gratitude to the EU Special Representative, Andreas Reinicke, for his work and efforts undertaken during his time as EUSR. "
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