



Statement on behalf of the European Union

By

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Permanent Representation of Belgium to the United Nations

at the Fourth Committee General Debate on

**Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting
the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs
of the Occupied Territories**

Mr. Chairman,

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

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia¹ and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Mr. Chairman,

The re-launching of the negotiation process between Israel and the Palestinian side, which took place in Washington on the 2nd of September 2010, gave rise to a lot of hope and a lot of expectations from all sides of the international community. The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, stated on the 3rd of September that the parties must engage in this process with determination to overcome the obstacles and work fast and hard on all the final status issues to meet the Quartet's call for a negotiated settlement within one year.

Similar calls were heard from many other actors in the international community, and the importance of creating mutual trust and confidence between the parties was underlined many times, not least by the European Union. On 21 September 2010, the Middle East Quartet itself stated unequivocally that both parties need to promote an environment conducive to progress, including by refraining from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric.

Mr Chairman,

Heeding these calls requires the parties to uphold and implement commitments made. The European Union reiterates that settlements, including in East Jerusalem, the separation barrier where built on occupied land, the demolition of homes and evictions are illegal under international law. They constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. High Representative Ashton has urged Israel to reinstate the settlement moratorium in order to allow the Peace negotiations to continue. The EU considers that Israel immediately should end all settlement activities, in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, including natural growth, and to dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001.

The EU also calls for a complete stop to all violence, including rocket fire and all attacks against civilians. The EU reiterates its call on those holding the abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit to release him without delay.

¹ Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union welcomes recent measures taken to ease restrictions on movement in the West Bank and entry of goods into Gaza, and stresses the need for further steps to be taken in this regard. Such steps would improve living conditions, and could promote Palestinian economic development. The EU reminds Israel and all other parties of their obligation to respect the human rights of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories. The EU reaffirms its active support for the Palestinian Authority's reform and development plan for constructing the institutions of a Palestinian state and welcomes the progress achieved by the Palestinians on security and institution building to date.

As regards Gaza in particular, the European Union calls for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), the full respect of international humanitarian law and for an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza including goods from the West Bank. In this context the EU calls for the full implementation of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. The EU welcomes the recent measures announced by the Israeli Government as an important step forward. However, more is needed. The EU calls for full implementation and complementary measures in order to achieve a fundamental change of policy that allows for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza – including through exports. The European Union has offered its assistance for achieving this objective. The EU calls for a solution addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union will continue to work with its partners within the Quartet, as well as with the other actors of the international community, to contribute to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The EU will continue to provide political and financial support to this effect and, in so doing, will continue to place particular emphasis on the need for full respect of international humanitarian and human rights laws.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.