



COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION



## Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process

(Extract from the press release of the 2656th session of the EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
Council meeting - Luxembourg, 25 April 2005)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council notes the ongoing contacts between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and the commitment made by both parties to stop all acts of violence and to cease all military activity in parallel. However, the Council is concerned to note the lack of dynamism in the implementation of the commitments made at Sharm el Sheikh. At a time when there is a genuine window of opportunity, a lack of real and tangible progress could threaten the relaunch of the peace process. The European Union calls on Israelis and Palestinians urgently to renew their efforts to implement the commitments they made in Sharm el Sheikh and to avoid any action likely to undermine the climate of mutual confidence.

The Council is particularly concerned by the announcement of increased settlement-building in the West Bank, even though the Road Map provides for a freeze. It is also concerned by continuing construction of the separation barrier in the occupied Palestinian territories, including within and around East Jerusalem. Settlement policy threatens to make a solution based on the coexistence of two States physically impossible. The Council reaffirms its position that no party should take unilateral measures which might prejudice the outcome of negotiations on the final settlement. It welcomes recent statements by President Bush concerning a freeze on settlement activity.

The Road Map remains the main tool for the relaunch of the Peace Process. The Council recalls its support for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and certain parts of the northern West Bank insofar as they satisfy the conditions set out in the conclusions of the March 2004 European Council. The Council stresses the importance of accelerating reforms within the Palestinian Authority and welcomes the measures recently taken as regards the reorganisation of the Palestinian security services.

# P R E S S

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1  
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The Council welcomes the appointment of the current President of the World Bank, Mr Wolfensohn, as the Quartet's envoy for disengagement. The European Union undertakes to provide its political and practical support for the success of his mission, and welcomes the willingness expressed by both parties to cooperate with his efforts to ensure the success of the withdrawal.

The European Union is determined to support the parties in their efforts to make progress in the Peace Process and to achieve the objective of the coexistence of two States, by the creation of an independent, democratic, continuous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security.

The political perspective set out in the Road Map, which must be rapidly implemented, remains the international community's objective."

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