



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



Dead Sea, 13 October 2008

**DECLARATION
ON THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE

**BARCELONA PROCESS: UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,**

MARSEILLE 3-4 NOVEMBER 2008

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), meeting in extraordinary plenary session at the Dead Sea, in Jordan, on 12 and 13 October 2008, considers that the fact that the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean was attended by the most senior political authorities in the States concerned by, and involved in, the Middle East peace process demonstrates their shared goal of creating an area of peace, prosperity and mutual understanding; with that aim in view, our Assembly provides a unique forum for open and permanent dialogue between the elected representatives of the peoples on whom it is incumbent to establish peace in the region,

The EMPA unconditionally endorses action to mobilise the international community's political and economic support for the negotiation process launched at Annapolis and encourages all the States and international organisations bound by the commitments made at the Follow-up Conferences in Paris (17 December 2007), Bethlehem (24 May 2008) and Berlin (24 June 2008); urges the donors' community to closely coordinate their actions and to persevere in their efforts and fulfil their pledges to support the strengthening of the Palestinian Authority's institutional and budgetary capacities with a view to supporting the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian State within the 1967 borders living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security,

The EMPA recalls the reference documents to achieve this end: the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference and principles of the Madrid conference, including "land for peace", the Roadmap, the agreements previously concluded by the parties and the Arab peace initiative,

The EMPA calls on the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers, whose members account for over 60% of the promised contributions and, in many cases, play a mediating role, to continue to require strict compliance with the conditions on which the success of their (political, financial and material) commitment depends, by continuing to insist on respect for international law including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and international humanitarian law, and by systematically condemning any actions which imperil the security, dignity and physical integrity of the Israeli and Palestinian civilian population,

The EMPA

1. Reiterates its total support for the current negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and stresses the need for them to be conducted in a limited time framework and in a climate of mutual trust, which can only be established by visible progress on the ground which has a direct impact on the living conditions of the civil populations; regrets, therefore, that the international financial support that has been mobilised has not yet produced an economic revival in the Palestinian Territory because of the restrictions on access and movement which are still being imposed by the Israeli authorities and continue to jeopardise the prospects of Palestinian economic revival;
2. Welcomes the package of measures which the Quartet Representative has agreed with the Israeli and Palestinian parties, the purpose of which is to revitalise the Palestinian economy and prepare for the Territories' future State status by means of development projects in pilot areas in the West Bank and Gaza; calls on the international community, however, to ensure

that such projects are compatible with international law and do not prejudge the outcome of the final status negotiations;

3. Regrets that no progress report on the implementation of this package of measures is available; encourages the Representative's office, therefore, to make available information of this kind for the benefit of all donors along the lines of the progress reports produced by the World Bank and the European Commission; considers that concrete and visible progress is the best guarantee that the current high level of mobilisation of the international community will be maintained; encourages the Parliaments of donor countries to assess the impact of the funds granted to development projects;
4. Pays tribute to the mediating role played by Egypt, which has made possible a truce in Gaza, albeit a fragile one, and urges the parties concerned to comply with and support the controlled reopening of all the crossing points to and from Gaza, both for humanitarian reasons and to allow the commercial flows which play a crucial role in economic reconstruction; calls for the work of the international humanitarian agencies to be facilitated and protected;
5. Encourages and promotes the role of regional actors to fulfil regional peace and prosperity. Within this context initiatives like the Ankara Forum and the mediating role between Israel and the Palestinian Authority undertaken by Turkey, a regional actor and a negotiating member of the EU, will be welcomed;
6. Pays special tribute to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for her continuing hospitality to the Palestinian refugees;
7. Calls on the Quartet immediately to set up the monitoring mechanism and to take more effective action to reactivate the Agreement on Access and Movement, which it negotiated in 2005 and to which the parties subscribed, on the basis of the European Union's proposal to resume its supervision of the Rafa crossing under the aegis of the Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) in cooperation with the Egyptian authorities;
8. Continues to be very concerned by the continuing expansion of settlements, which is destroying trust between the partners, undermining the authority of the Palestinian negotiators and detracting from the credibility of the international community; draws attention to the fact that building settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem is illegal under international law and that settlement activities prejudge the outcome of final status negotiations and compromise the viability of an agreed two-State solution; calls on Israel to freeze all settlement activities, including natural growth, and to dismantle all settlements and outposts created since March 2001;
9. Encourages the parties to take further actions to demonstrate their good will with a view to strengthening the ongoing process of negotiations; welcomes the recent releases of Palestinian prisoners by the Israeli Government and urges it to continue along this path; welcomes the encouraging results obtained by the Palestinian Authority in its reform of the security sector which greatly contribute to the restoration of the state of law in the areas it controls;

10. Reiterates its call for the release of all Palestinian former ministers, the PLC Speaker, elected parliamentarians and mayors detained in Israel;
11. Reiterates its call for the release of the Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit and demands that humanitarian organisations be given immediate access to ensure his well-being;
12. Recalls that no definitive resolution of the conflict will last unless it has popular support, and calls on both sides' political leaders and civil societies to step up their efforts to combat mutual distrust and prevent the idea that a lasting peace is possible between the neighbouring people from fading away; calls on the executive bodies of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean to help achieve this aim by setting up exchange programmes to bring young people together; supports human rights organisations and Israeli and Palestinian popular non-violent movements.