



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 31 January 2005 (01.02)
(OR. fr)**

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COMEP 5**

NOTE

Subject : Middle East Peace Process
– Council conclusions

At its meeting on 31 January 2005 the Council (General Affairs and External Relations) adopted conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, which are annexed hereto.

**Conclusions of the GAERC on the Middle East Peace Process
(Brussels, 31 January 2005)**

1. The Council welcomes the holding of the Palestinian presidential elections and their free and fair nature. It voices its respect for the responsibility and democratic maturity shown by the Palestinian people. It expresses its appreciation to Israel for the measures taken to facilitate the electoral process. It presents its warmest congratulations to President Mahmoud Abbas and undertakes to work with him and his Prime Minister towards the goal of realising legitimate Palestinian aspirations through the implementation of the road map as a matter of urgency. In this connection, the Council will develop the short-term action plan adopted by the European Council last November. The London meeting, which will take place on 1 March, will offer the international community an opportunity to support the efforts of the Palestinian President.

2. The Council is willing to support and encourage the efforts of the two parties to relaunch political contacts at all levels. To that end, the Council would urge all parties concerned to refrain from any act which would compromise the negotiations leading to a solution, by means of the process defined in the road map, based on the co-existence of the two States and leading to the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living alongside Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security.

3. The Council condemns all acts of terrorism and violence. Every effort must be made to seize the opportunity offered by the new political context. The two parties and the international community must seize the chance to give renewed impetus to the Peace Process by relaunching the road map. The Council stresses the importance it attaches to current efforts to ensure a halt to violence. It would ask both parties to cooperate to that end. The Council calls upon the Israeli Government to take steps to alleviate the suffering and improve the living conditions of the Palestinians, including questions of freedom of movement.
4. The Council reaffirms that the European Union, in cooperation with the other members of the Quartet and Egypt, will support the implementation of withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and certain areas of the North of the West Bank as a first stage in the overall process, in accordance with the conditions defined by the European Council in March 2004.
5. The Council recalls that an overall peace settlement must also include Syria and Lebanon. It further recalls the importance of implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004).
