



Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008

February

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"Malta Communiqué" (EU- League of Arab States Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting)

1. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Members States of the European Union, the League of Arab States, as well as the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Commissioner for External Relations and the Secretary General of the Arab League, participated in a meeting under the co-chairmanship of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Dr. Dimitrij Rupel, of Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness Prince Saud Al-Faisal, and of Malta Dr. Michael Frendo.

2. Ministers stressed the importance of a dialogue between the 27 EU Member States and the 22 League of Arab States, and warmly thanked the Government of Malta for its initiative that was endorsed by the Arab Summit in Riyadh (March 2007) and for the successful organization of the meeting.

3. The EU and the League of Arab States briefed each other on developments in their respective regions. While being fully aware of existing challenges, Ministers stressed the importance of the continuation of political and economic reforms in their respective countries, in order to broaden the scope of political participation and to promote sustainable economic development. Ministers expressed their confidence that renewed economic dynamism and growth will promote prosperity and stability in both regions.

4. Ministers reaffirmed that their commitment to peace and the respect of democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms, remain central in the dialogue between the EU and the League of Arab States. This dialogue is guided by the principle of mutual respect.

5. Ministers believed that this EU- League of Arab States meeting has provided a useful and constructive opportunity for open dialogue on enhanced co-operation on regional and global issues of common concern. The EU-Arab League meeting builds on and seeks to reinforce the inter-regional, regional and bilateral relations. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the EU-Africa Partnership, the Cotonou Agreement, the EU-GCC cooperation, the EU Cooperation and Association agreements and the European Neighbourhood Policy, constitute the basis for the solid relations between the EU and the League of Arab States. Ministers stressed that EU-Arab League initiatives are not intended to replace other frameworks of cooperation.

6. Ministers considered that there are a number of potential areas that deserve to be explored in existing frameworks and recognized that these could be used to continue dialogue between the European Commission and the Arab League Secretariat. They referred, in particular, to issues related to economic co-operation and integration, scientific co-operation and education, dialogue among cultures, energy security and climate change.

7. The discussion on regional issues covered various areas of mutual interest.

- Ministers reaffirmed their support for the current Israeli – Palestinian negotiations which are the only way to achieve a peaceful two state solution. Only a comprehensive political agreement can deliver sustainable security for all peoples of this region. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, consistent with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and its principles, including land for peace and based on the relevant UNSC resolutions and the Road Map, as well as building on the Arab Peace Initiative. They also confirmed that both the League of Arab States and the EU stand ready to support the Parties during negotiations and the subsequent implementation period. Ministers welcomed the results of the International Donors' Conference for the Palestinian State held in Paris in December 2007.
- Ministers expressed deep concern about the situation in Gaza. They called for the immediate re-opening of the crossings between Gaza and Israel, so that essential goods and services, including fuel, can be supplied on a continuous basis.

- On Lebanon, Ministers reiterated their firm denunciation of all attempts to undermine security, stability and national unity in Lebanon. Ministers underlined their strong conviction that the plan unanimously endorsed by the Foreign Ministers of the League of Arab States on 6 January 2008 and calling for immediate election of the President as well as the formation of a new national unity government in accordance with the Lebanese Constitution and the adoption by that government of a new electoral law is an appropriate basis for a solution to the ongoing crisis in Lebanon. The Ministers called upon all parties to work responsibly for the implementation without delay of the Arab Plan and to refrain from all acts that could disturb public order and security in Lebanon.
- On Iraq, Ministers stressed the importance of respecting the unity, integrity and sovereignty of Iraq and called for advancing the process of national reconciliation among the Iraqi people.
- Ministers expressed concern at the lack of progress towards resolution of the territorial conflict between the United Arab Emirates and Iran over Abu Musa and the Tunbs Islands. They reiterated their support for a peaceful solution to the conflict in accordance with international law, either through direct negotiations or by referring the issues to the international Court of Justice.

8. Ministers reiterated their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and their determination to eradicate it.

9. Ministers affirmed their concerns at the consequences of climate change and considered that the EU and the League of Arab States have an obligation to their peoples to combat global warming. In this spirit, they agreed to intensify collaboration to tackle this matter in a manner conducive to greater environmental, social and economic development within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. Ministers agreed on strengthening co-operation and dialogue on climate change, including clean and renewable energy while promoting sustainable development within existing frameworks.

Date: 12.02.2008