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Delegation of the European Parliament for Relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council

## Press release

### **European Parliament Delegation hold first reconciliation meeting with Hamas, Fatah PLC Members in Gaza**

For the first time since the serious division between Hamas and Fatah in 2007, Palestinian Legislative Council Members (PLC) from Gaza representing Hamas, Fatah, PFLP and Independents, came together to meet with the Delegation of the European Parliament for Relations with the PLC.

The topics addressed were primarily regarding the implementation of reconciliation agreements, the impact of the ongoing siege on the social and economic life for the people in Gaza, human rights with particular attention to the need to abolish the death penalty.

Discussions confirm that the illegal Israeli siege of Gaza continues to deprive the population of normal living conditions. UNRWA still provides food for 600,000 people who would starve without this assistance. All UNRWA programmes, including Job Creation and School Meals are under serious threat of reduction or ended due to a lack of funds.

The Delegation also met with some of the prisoners released in the recent Israeli Hamas swap and agreed with the concerns they raised regarding the conditions of the remaining 5000 prisoners and the need to release all of the prisoners, especially the 16 PLC Members and the 164 children.

In the course of discussions, all the Palestinians were angry that they are being punished for seeking their rights in an international body, on this occasion in UNESCO. The Delegation welcomes the positive vote in favour of Palestinian membership. It deplores the decision of the Israeli Government for withdrawing funding for UNESCO and increasing the illegal settlements in East Jerusalem.

EP Delegations for the DPL, led by P De Rossa, visited the Gaza Strip from 31<sup>st</sup> Oct to 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 2011 and was composed of Sir Robert ATKINS, Chris DAVIES, Erminia MAZZONI, Norbert NEUSER, Alexandra THEIN and Georgios TOUSSAS.