



EUROPEAN UNION

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Remarks by High Representative Ashton on Gaza

EU High Representative Catherine Ashton made the following remarks today in the margins of the European Council meeting in Brussels:

"I look with great interest at what the Israeli government has said and this is an 'in principle' statement at this stage. We've said there should be a change from a list of goods that are allowed into Gaza, a reversal of that, to a list of goods that are not allowed, in order to make sure that many many more goods can get in to Gaza to enable people to reconstruct their homes, to build schools, to replace infrastructure and also to allow people to get on with their ordinary lives.

We also want to see that the crossings are open to enable that to happen properly, effectively and quickly. And we've offered to Israel support, of course linked to the Palestinian Authority, if we can be of value. And tomorrow I'll chair a meeting in Brussels of people involved in the EU's work in the Middle East to see what we can offer and then we can move forward, if that would be useful for Israel and for the Palestinian Authority.

I've been in touch with Israel, with the Palestinian Authority, with Egypt, Turkey, the US. This morning I spoke with Senator Mitchell to find out how the proximity talks are going, which of course are a very important aspect towards peace in the Middle East. We hope that the 'in principle' statement of the government of Israel can now be followed up very quickly with the detail which we shall look at with interest and hope that we can push forward, offer our support, and ensure that the people of Gaza can now actually move to a normal life."

P R E S S

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