



EUROPEAN UNION

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Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the speech of President Obama

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made today the following statement:

"I welcome the important statement delivered by President Obama. He set out a broad and ambitious vision at a transformational time in North Africa and the Arab world. His ideas and objectives find a clear echo in the work the EU is doing, including the March Communication on a "Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity" and the proposals agreed by the March European Council.

As I discussed earlier this week in Washington there is a lot to gain from the EU and the US joining forces in our common agenda to promote reform and support transitions to Democracy.

I have repeatedly stated that in the light of these historic changes it is even more important to advance the Middle East Peace Process. Together with the USA, the EU has long pushed for a return to the negotiations as the best way forward.

I therefore warmly welcome President Obama's confirmation that the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, secure and recognised borders for both sides, an Israel whose security concerns are met, and an agreement on the issues of Jerusalem and refugees. Our common goal remains a just and lasting resolution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. This is more urgent than ever. We will do whatever is possible, working with our Quartet partners, to help both parties choose the path of peace and engage in successful negotiations."

P R E S S

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