

ANNEX D.4

**DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS**

The European Council reiterates its full support for the Middle East Peace Process in both its bilateral and multilateral aspects, and the role of the co-sponsors. It welcomes the commitment to the process of the incoming administration in the United States. The European Community will continue to play an active and constructive part in the process in accordance with its positions of principle on the basis for a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement.

The European Council is convinced that such a settlement is in the interests of Israel and its neighbours, of the Palestinians, and the Middle East region as a whole. The current peace process represents a great opportunity which must be seized if dangers to the stability of the region are to be avoided. The European Council calls on all parties concerned to press ahead with the negotiations constructively.

The European Council stresses the importance of assuring respect for human rights and of implementing confidence-building measures as a means of increasing the level of trust between the parties and taking the negotiations forward.