MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU’s role in the Middle East Peace Process
(2015/2685(RSP))


on behalf of the ALDE Group
The European Parliament,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on the Middle East Peace Process,

– having regard to the EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 20 July 2015 on the Middle East Peace Process,

– having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the State of Israel, of the other part,

– having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission (the ‘High Representative’) made her first official visit abroad in this capacity to Israel and Palestine in November 2014, and was also the first senior EU official to visit after the formation of the new Israeli government in May 2015; whereas the High Representative has on several occasions expressed her commitment to renewing and intensifying the Union’s role in the peace process;

B. whereas in April 2015 the High Representative appointed a new EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process (the ‘EU Special Representative’);

C. whereas the Union is the biggest aid provider to the Palestinians and is also Israel’s largest trading partner, and Israel has access to EU funds under Horizon 2020 as well as being party to agreements on agricultural, industrial and pharmaceutical products;

D. whereas the time during which European diplomacy has remained in observer mode should therefore come to an end;

E. whereas the Union considers that peace in the Middle East requires a comprehensive regional solution;

F. whereas the Union has repeatedly confirmed its support for the two-state solution, under which the State of Israel, with secure and recognised borders, and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine, would side by side in peace and security, and has declared that no changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by the parties will be recognised, including with regard to Jerusalem as capital of the two states;

G. whereas protecting the Palestinian population and its rights in the West Bank, with particular regard to Area C, and in East Jerusalem is of the utmost importance for preserving the viability of the two-state solution;
H. whereas an ongoing process exists among a number of Member States to recognise the State of Palestine;

I. whereas Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and constitute a major obstacle to peace efforts;

J. whereas the occupation has lasted for more than 50 years now and the Oslo I Accords were signed in 1993;

K. whereas the formation of a new Israeli government has opened the way for a relaunch of the Middle East peace process;

L. whereas ongoing efforts are taking place in the UN Security Council to resume peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians;

**A European peace initiative**

1. Considers that the Union is at a turning-point if it wants to play a role in bringing peace to this region; welcomes, therefore, the appointment by the High Representative of an EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process as a clear signal of the EU’s engagement in the region;

2. Underlines that the Union should be instrumental in reaching comprehensive, long-lasting and peaceful solutions, as was the case with the recent agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme;

3. Reminds the Member States that their first duty is to actively contribute to the shaping of a united European position on how to address the Middle East Peace Process, and to refrain from unilateral initiatives weakening European action; underlines that European heads of state and government cannot ask the Union to be proactive in the region if their diverging positions prevent the Union from speaking with one voice through the High Representative;

4. Stresses the need for a comprehensive peace fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of both parties, also in the light of the strongly deteriorating regional context and its spillover effects;

5. Calls on the Member States, therefore, to engage with the EU Special Representative in setting up a European peace initiative which should be launched in case of failure of the ongoing efforts in the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution setting up a framework for this process;

6. Urges the High Representative and the EU Special Representative to make better use of the political relations and institutional expertise of the EU and its Member States, based as they are on Europe’s geographical proximity, historical ties and intensive economic exchanges with the Middle East region, in order to ensure a more active and efficient political role in the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, and between Arab states and Israel in a broader context;
A new Quartet

7. Considers that the Union should play a key role in redefining the Quartet’s objectives and format;

8. Supports, in this context, the High Representative’s intention to involve the Arab states more closely in the peace process by associating them with the work of the Quartet and to nominate the EU Special Representative as the Union’s envoy to the Quartet;

9. Considers that the objectives of the Quartet should be refocused on finding a political solution to the conflict;

Implementing Union law

10. Calls for the full and effective implementation of existing Union legislation and of the EU-Israel bilateral agreements, as well as the associated control mechanism – the ‘technical arrangements’ – in a way that does not allow Israeli settlement products to be imported into the European market under the preferential terms of the EU-Israel Association Agreement;

11. Calls on the EEAS and the Commission to verify on the ground all allegations concerning destruction of, and damage caused to, EU-funded structures and projects in the occupied territories, and to submit their findings to Parliament;

Using Union competences

12. Urges the Union to continue to provide significant financial aid to the Palestinian people and to support Palestinian state-building, but also to ensure better controls over EU funds so that they cannot be diverted, directly or indirectly, to terrorist organisations or activities; calls for increased EU financial support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), while also stressing the need to address the underlying core issue of Palestinian refugees;

13. Recognises that Israel is currently providing aid to Gaza, and invites Egypt to open access to aid on a basis that is at least similar;

14. Reiterates its call for the urgent reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Gaza Strip, in the wake of the war of summer 2014; stresses that this must be a humanitarian aid priority for the EU and the international community, and in this regard urges the Member States to fulfil their pledges to support the trilateral mechanism for the monitoring and checking of reconstruction materials;

15. Reiterates its call on the Israeli authorities to immediately put an end to the blockade in Gaza and to ensure the full opening of the crossing points;

16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President/High Representative, the EU Special Representative, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Quartet Envoy to the Middle East, the Knesset and the Government of Israel, the President of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Legislative Council.