



THESSALONIKI EUROPEAN COUNCIL 19 AND 20 JUNE 2003 **PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS**

Wider Europe/New Neighbourhood

Enlargement is expanding the borders of our European Union and is bringing us closer to new neighbours. In Athens we declared "We are also committed to developing ever deeper ties and bridges of cooperation with our neighbours and to share the future of this community of values with others beyond our shores.". Their stability and prosperity is inextricably linked to ours. To reinforce our shared values and promote our common interests, we have been developing new policies toward Wider Europe, our New Neighbourhood. The European Council confirmed at Copenhagen the importance it attaches to these policies. The meetings with the partners concerned that have since taken place in the framework of the European Conference in Athens on 17 April and the mid-term EuroMediterranean Ministerial Meeting in Crete on 26-27 May lend new dynamism to the development of these policies. In this spirit, the European Council endorses the GAERC conclusions of 16 June and looks forward to the work to be undertaken by both the Council and the Commission in putting together the various elements of these policies.

Relations with the Arab world

The European Union is convinced that it must strengthen its partnership with the Arab world. It intends to promote a closer political dialogue, pluralism and democratic reform, economic and social development. The dialogue between cultures, religions and civilisations should be stepped up.

The European Council accordingly invites the Commission and the High Representative to carry forward the work and to formulate a detailed work plan to be presented to the European Council in October this year, taking full account of existing policies and programmes and in particular the Barcelona Process and the New Neighbours Initiative. On that basis the Council will take the appropriate decisions.

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The European Council welcomed the spirit of co-operation shown by all participants at the Mid-Term Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting, which was held in Crete. It stressed that the strengthening of the parliamentary dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership will greatly contribute to the interparliamentary cooperation. It also recognised that the adoption of the Guiding Principles of the dialogue between cultures and civilisations would facilitate the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation. In the effort to transform the Mediterranean Basin into an area of dialogue, co-operation, peace and stability, the civil society of the countries of the region, including women, is expected to play an important role in promoting democratic values, social awareness, education and development.



Middle East

There is historic opportunity for peace in the Middle East. The European Council welcomes the decision of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to accept the Roadmap developed by the Quartet, with full participation of the European Union.

It also welcomes the results achieved at the Aqaba Summit, the personal engagement of President Bush, the commitments undertaken by Prime Ministers Sharon and Abu Mazen and the commitment to peace shown by Arab leaders in Sharm-el-Sheikh.

The European Council is determined that this opportunity for peace should not be missed. It remains deeply concerned by the continuing violence on the ground that has reached new levels. This must not be permitted to endanger the implementation of the Roadmap. There remains no alternative to the speedy implementation, in good faith by the two sides, of the Quartet roadmap which contains clear timelines for the establishment of a Palestinian State by 2005, living side by side with Israel together in peace and security.

The European Council underlines the importance of the role of the Quartet and the readiness of the EU to contribute in all aspects of the implementation of the roadmap towards a lasting, just and peaceful settlement of the conflict, including through the setting up of a credible and effective monitoring mechanism. The upcoming Quartet Principals' meeting in Amman is a good opportunity to underline this.

The European Union unequivocally condemns terrorism and will contribute to efforts aimed at cutting off support, including arms and financing, to terrorist groups. It is also ready to help the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to stop terrorism, including its capacity to prevent terrorist financing.

The Union demands that Hamas and other groups declare immediately a ceasefire and halt all terrorist activity and recalls that the Council is urgently examining the case for wider action against Hamas fund raising. It is essential that all concerned, in particular the countries of the region, condemn terrorism and assist in efforts to eradicate it.

The Union welcomes the relaunch of security talks and the active role of Egypt in this regard.

The European Council calls on Israel to take action to restore trust and abstain from any punitive measures, including extra-judicial killings, and to act in accordance with international law.

It also calls on Israel to reverse the settlement policy and activity and end land confiscations and the construction of the so-called security fence, all of which threaten to render the two-State solution physically impossible to implement.

Peace in the Middle East will not be comprehensive if it does not include Syria and Lebanon as well.



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Peace will never be attainable if it is not supported by the people. The European union stands ready to take initiatives aiming at the creation of the necessary bridges among representatives of the civil society of the two sides. This should include the role of women, whose contribution has been often shown to be an important factor in building peace in war-torn areas.

The European Council expresses its gratitude to Miguel Angel Moratinos for the remarkable work he has performed for the past seven years as EU Special Representative to the Middle East.

Finally, the European Union underlines the importance it attaches to the regional dimension through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and welcomes the spirit of cooperation shown by all participants at the recent mid-term Ministerial meeting in Crete.