

Palestinian National Authority:
Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in
Reference to EU-Israel Association Council Meeting –
Israel Must Be Held Accountable and Not Rewarded

Ramallah, 24th, 2012

Auf der Jahrestagung des „EU-Israel Association Council“ am 24. Juli 2012 hat die Europäische Union in 60 Bereichen die Handels- und diplomatischen Beziehungen zu Israel aufgewertet. Dazu gehören Migration, Energie und Landwirtschaft, der israelische Zugang zu staatlich kontrollierten Märkten in der EU (60 Prozent des israelischen Handels wird mit Europa abgewickelt) sowie die Zusammenarbeit mit neun Einrichtungen – darunter „Europol“ und „European Space Agency“. Mit der Aufwertung wird der teilweise Stopp des Aufwertungsprozesses aufgehoben, der nach dem Gaza-Krieg Ende 2008 / Anfang 2009 unterbrochen wurde¹. Die Stellungnahme der Palästinensischen Autonomiebehörde verlangt, dass Israel für sein Handeln in den palästinensischen Gebieten verantwortlich gemacht und nicht belohnt werden solle.

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls on the European Union to reconsider its practical upgrading of its relations with Israel. Despite the freeze of the upgrade, the EU and Israel committed last year to further explore the opportunities offered under the current Action Plan and to pursue technical talks to identify areas for future cooperation. We believe that the practical implementation of such decisions will lead to the enhancement of their bilateral relations and will contribute to further integration of Israel into the EU.

We call on the EU to adopt measures that will ensure that the freeze of the upgrade continues, especially at the practical level. In June 2009, that upgrade of the relations was suspended because the context was deemed unfavorable. Today, with the situation reaching dramatic levels of unprecedented settlement expansion and settler violence; theft and exploitation of resources; removal of

¹ Vgl. die Eintragung am 24.07.2012 in der Menüleiste „Chronologie“ dieser Homepage.

communities; house demolitions; the continuation of the construction of the Wall; the closure of Gaza and the destruction of projects in Area C and elsewhere in the Occupied Territory; the change of the demographic composition of the City of Jerusalem and denying Palestinians access to it; the prolonged use of administrative detention without charges or trial, the transfer of detainees into Israeli detention facilities and the practice of extra-judicial killings and torture, not to mention the Israeli refusal to adhere to the principles of the Quartet including freezing settlement construction, as agreed requirement for the resumption of negotiations, the context is far more unfavorable for any kind of upgrade whether it be official or practical. We therefore urge the EU to reconsider its relations with Israel as an occupying power. Israel must not be given any preferential treatment and must not be allowed further integration into the EU economic, social, political and scientific structures especially as it persists with its violations of international law, refuses to end its occupation of the Palestinian Territory and continues to deny Palestinians their right to self-determination.

In the face of all of this, the EU must bring Israel into compliance with Article II of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which conditions relations between the parties as well as the provisions of the agreement itself on the respect for human rights and democratic principles. Meanwhile, the agreement itself applies to the Territory of the State of Israel and does not apply to the Occupied Territory and therefore excludes settlement products. The EU states must find mechanisms to ensure the exclusion of settlement products from receiving any preferential treatment and settlements from benefiting from EU funds. In this regard, the EU-Israel ACAA agreement represents a stark contradiction to the Association Agreement and to international law. Palestinians have hoped that the EU-Israel Association Council meeting will be an opportunity to emphasize the Council Conclusions on the Middle East of May 14th, 2012 and to

press on Israel to respect its commitments according to international law and the agreements signed.

Israeli practices and policies towards the Palestinians endanger the prospects of peace in the region and undermine the two-state solution. The EU as an active member of the Quartet and a responsible player under international law must contribute to “the strict observance and the development of international law, and in particular of the principles of the UN Charter”. Thus, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls on the EU to adopt effective steps to encourage Israel to comply with international law and to safeguard the two state-solution by using all its political and economic leverage to put an end to the unlawful Israeli occupation and illegal settlements.
