

23 September 2009

To: EU ministers of foreign affairs

Addressing inconsistencies in the EU's approach to the Middle East Peace Process at the next Council meeting on 27-28 October 2009

Dear Minister,

The fresh approach of the Obama administration has created a new dynamic in the diplomatic process in the Middle East. We believe this is also an opportunity for the EU to refresh its own approach to the Middle East in accordance with its principles.

The European Union and its Member States are to be commended for paying high attention to the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). In various areas of the MEPP the Council has taken a principled position putting the EU at the forefront of international efforts to secure a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

However, over recent years, Council statements on the MEPP have been inconsistent in a number of key areas – so reducing the EU's standing as an honest broker in the process. The annexed briefing points out nine such cases that we would like to bring to your attention with recommendations for redressing the inconsistencies for the future.

The briefing has been prepared by a group of 15 European and international humanitarian, development, human rights and peace organisations with first-hand experience working among communities in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

We believe that in order to play a genuinely constructive and impartial role in the MEPP, the EU and its Member States must correct the inconsistencies detailed herein in future Council Conclusions, beginning with the next meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 27-28 October 2009.

Crucially, the EU also needs to act on its statements by adopting policies and concrete measures that give effect to its positions.

We thank you for your attention to the issues and recommendations raised in the briefing and remain at your disposal to discuss them in greater depth.

Sincerely,



Nicolas Beger
Director EU Office
Amnesty International



Chris Bain
Director
CAFOD



Pol Degreve
Director
Broederlijk Delen (Belgium)



Aida Kanouté
Secretary, Med.iterranean Region, Europe and Migrants Desk
CCFD Terre Solidaire (France)



Koen De Groof
Coordinator
**CIDSE Working Group on
Palestine/Israel**



Jeremy Hobbs
Executive Director
Oxfam International



Rifat Odeh Kassis
President
Defence for Children International



Claudette Werleigh
Secretary General
Pax Christi International



Bo Forsberg
Secretary General
Diakonia (Sweden)



Justin Kilcullen
Director
Trócaire (Ireland)



Kamel Jendoubi
President
**Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights
Network**



Jan Gruiters
Chairperson
United Civilians for Peace (Netherlands)
(A coalition of Dutch organisations: Oxfam
Novib, Cordaid, ICCO and IKV Pax Christi)



Mr. Thomas Gebauer
Executive Director
medico international (Germany)



Mark Waddington
Chief Executive Officer
War Child UK



Trine Pertou Mach
Chairwoman
MS ActionAid Denmark

Copies to:

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations
Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy
Member State Ambassadors to the Political and Security Committee