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Rete europea degli Enti Locali per la pace in Medio Oriente
Network of European Local Authorities for peace in the Middle East
Réseau des collectivités européennes pour la paix au Proche-Orient
Red Europea de las Autoridades Locales por la paz en Oriente Medio
Netzwerk von europäischen lokalen Behörden für den Frieden im Nahen Osten



**PEACE IN THE MIDDLE-EAST
A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF
LOCAL AUTHORITIES IS
EMERGING**

PEACE IN THE MIDDLE-EAST : A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IS EMERGING.

It is obvious that without a decisive intervention of the International Community, it will be very difficult to put an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the impressive mourning and suffering experienced by the Israeli and Palestinian population.

The European Union and member countries have a vital role to play in finding a sustainable solution to the conflict – a solution based on justice and on International Law. Europe has a special interest in solving this conflict, and it should therefore use all its human, political and economical potential to contribute to find a viable solution.

European Local Authorities should be part of this challenge. As direct representatives of the European citizens, European local authorities should be committed to fight against war, violence and terrorism, and to promote the building of a just peace in the Middle East. All this, by means of meetings, dialogue, solidarity actions and decentralised co-operation programmes.

European local Authorities need to be heard by the European Union and encourage the latter to improve its – thus far too limited – involvement in the Middle East. European local authorities should co-operate in order to increase the European citizens' mobilization for a just peace based on the recognition of two principles: (a) Two States for two People, and (b) the right of both people to the same dignity, the same rights, and the same security. Therefore, they should develop decentralised cooperation programmes in Israel and Palestine, contribute to enhance the dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli Local Authorities, and support all peace initiatives between Palestinians and Israelis.

Aware of their responsibilities, and following the Dunkirk Conference (France, December 2002), and crucial meetings in Brussels (September 2003), Naples (November 2003) and Paris (February 2004,) a group of European Local

Authorities decided to found a “Network of European Local Authorities for Peace in the Middle East” (ELPME).

The Network will be open to national and regional networks of local authorities as well as any European local government committed to peace and decentralised cooperation in the Middle East. It will work with the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities and the Union of Local Authorities in Israel as main interlocutors and wishes to link its activities to those of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

Concrete common initiatives have already been taken. A website was created by the Greater Dunkirk District Council (Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque, France). A database containing all decentralised cooperation programmes between European and Middle East Local Authorities will be established by Cités Unies France. A “Resolution for Peace in Middle East”, drafted by the Italian Co-ordination of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights, was officially adopted by the Network and will be proposed for motion to European Local Authorities assemblies. A Medical Conference for Peace organized in Lille in 2004 – 2005 will aim at co-ordinating more efficiently health cooperation programmes.

The situation is very difficult but the new "Network of European Local Authorities for Peace in the Middle East" actively works for restoring hope.

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