

"ISRAEL AND PALESTINE NEED BRIDGES, NOT WALLS"

A Call from European Local Governments For Peace in the Middle East

The Municipality of _____ (or name of the Local Authority)

Considering the ceaseless character of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the overwhelming tragedy and suffering that continue to take place in the Middle East, whether in Israel or Palestine;

Convinced that without a decisive intervention by the international community, it will be very difficult to break the cycle of violence and to start rebuilding favourable conditions for peace and coexistence between the two peoples;

Concerned by both the negative impact violence in the Middle East has on our own communities and its effects on peace in other regions of the world;

Fully cognizant of the crucial role the European Union and the member states can and should play in finding a way out of the conflict—a way out based on justice and on international law, and stemming from a recognition of both Europe's own historical responsibilities and the common destiny that binds it with the Middle East;

Convinced that the solution for the problem lies in recognising equal rights, dignity and security for both peoples, and in implementing the formula "Two States for Two Peoples" in strict compliance with international law and the numerous relevant United Nations Resolutions;

Convinced that Europe should use its energy—personal, political and economic—in order to contribute to solve the conflict and build in the Mediterranean Region a peaceful community defined by co-operation, intercultural dialogue, human rights, democracy, and the denial of racism and anti-Semitism;

Convinced of the important role European Regional and Local Authorities—as direct representatives of European citizens committed in the fight against war, violence and terrorism, and willing to promote a just peace in the Middle East—can play by means of meetings, dialogue, solidarity, and decentralised co-operation programmes;

Expresses a deep worry with regard to the continuous deterioration of the situation and the disastrous conditions of the Palestinians' life, especially after the Israeli decision to build a long wall of separation;

Reaffirms its firm condemnation of all violence, terrorism, and all other forms of destruction;

Solemnly condemns the wall that prevents the resumption of the peace process;

Strictly condemns any racist or anti-Semitic action, whether it takes place in the Middle East or elsewhere;

Commits itself to support joint peace initiatives carried out by the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) and the Union of Local Authorities in Israel (ULAI) as well any other peace initiative based on dialogue between Palestinians and Israeli such as the Roadmap or the Geneva Accord;

Commits itself to reply to calls for help sent by the Palestinian people and by their local authorities to promote solidarity projects and decentralised co-operation programmes which can reduce the suffering and nourish the hope for a better future;

Demands that the European Union and all its member states, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission give priority to the commitment for peace in the Middle East by immediately assuming all necessary and concrete initiatives that can bring an end to violence and to the daily violations of human rights, to the occupation and to the terrorist attacks, and to resume a course of negotiations to build a just and lasting peace.