

To the European Heads of State
European Council

Sent by email

Subject: EU Council and EU Member States should recognize the State of Palestine

Dear Heads of State of the European Union,

We are writing on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), representing more than 200 million workers across the world. We urge the Heads of State of the European Union sitting on the European Council to take immediate and concrete steps to formally recognize the State of Palestine.

Within two years, the 75th anniversaries of the adoption of UN Resolution 181 on the Partition of Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel will be marked, yet the Palestinian people remain under the yoke of the Israeli occupation, held hostage to Israel's willingness to negotiate their future, with no end in sight. This year, an [ITUC report](#) has highlighted the exploitation of Palestinian workers due to the expansion and deepening of the occupation and the settlements. Only when Palestine becomes an independent state existing alongside Israel, in line with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, can its economy flourish and its people no longer have to rely on substandard employment.

The EU has an obligation to promote respect for human rights in all areas of its external action (Art. 3(5) TEU and 21(1) TEU) as well as an obligation to develop common policies and actions to consolidate and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law in all fields of international relations (Art. 21(2)(b) TEU), and so its Member States.

In line with these commitments, in December 2014, the European Parliament [voted overwhelmingly](#) for a resolution recognizing the state of Palestine. In 2017, another European Parliament Resolution was [adopted](#) that reiterated " its strong support for the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states, with the secure State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security, on the basis of the right of self-determination and full respect for international law".

In July this year, Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid addressed 26 European foreign ministers in his speech to the EU Foreign Affairs Council expressing its support for a two -state solutions between Israel and the Palestinians. Recently the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security

Policy, Josep Borrell, stressed the importance of Israel's security while expecting the country to offer a political perspective to end the conflict with the Palestinians. He highlighted the EU's strong support for the 'two-state solution', and its will to support both Israelis and Palestinians in their efforts to rebuild a meaningful process towards peace and justice. Last week, some members of the Democratic block in the US government have introduced a Two-State Solution Bill to support, "reserve conditions for, and improve the likelihood of, a two-state solution".

We believe that there is momentum for the EU and its member states to show its leadership and lead with urgency a diplomatic initiative that aims to achieve a just and sustainable resolution of this long-standing conflict through three guiding principles in conflict resolution: multilateralism, upholding human rights, and respect for the rule of law. Recognition of the State of Palestine is an important step toward this end.

The commitment undertaken by Europe in the Venice Declaration of June 1980, which recognizes the Palestinian people's right to fully exercise self-determination, must be implemented without further delay. It's time to face reality. Decades later, the occupation is not temporary, and there is no real peace process today. Recognition of the State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, and with East Jerusalem as its capital, is imperative to provide the Palestinians with a diplomatic horizon and to create parity of esteem between the sides prior to negotiations.

Yours sincerely,



Luca Visentini
ETUC General Secretary



Sharan Burrow
ITUC General Secretary