



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Dromoland Castle, 26 June 2004
10000/04 (Presse 186)

**EU-U.S. DECLARATION SUPPORTING PEACE,
PROGRESS AND REFORM IN THE BROADER MIDDLE
EAST AND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

DROMOLAND CASTLE, 26 JUNE 2004

1. The European Union and the United States pledge our support to the governments and peoples of the countries concerned who have, in recent declarations and statements, expressed their determination to meet the challenges of modernisation; to advance political, social and economic reforms; to build democracy; and to promote human rights. We believe that increased economic and political freedom can advance and change lives in the countries concerned. This task will require the sustained and increased support of the European Union and the United States. We offer this support in friendship, respect and the spirit of partnership, recognising that we share the objective of a prosperous, secure and vibrant area. We welcome and support the initiative launched earlier this month at the G8 Summit in Sea Island, Georgia and the EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East endorsed by the European Council on 18 June.

P R E S S

2. We welcome the reform initiatives and declarations calling for political, economic and social progress that have stemmed from governments and civil societies in the countries concerned. Our engagement should draw on statements including the Arab League declaration of 23 May 2004, which expressed determination “to firmly establish the basis for democracy”, and the declarations of Alexandria, the Dead Sea, Sana’a and Aqaba. It should also take into account the significant analysis and recommendations provided in the Arab Human Development Reports of 2002 and 2003.
3. We remain convinced that engagement should be based on partnership and acknowledgement of the importance of local ownership. In order to be successful and lasting, reform must come from within the countries concerned and cannot be imposed from outside. With this in mind, we seek partnership with governments as well as with civil society and business communities who aspire towards reform and are ready to work with us on these shared objectives.
4. The peoples of these countries have rich traditions and cultures and have made many lasting contributions to human civilisation. Each country is unique and their diversity should be respected. Our engagement must respond to local conditions and be based on local ownership. Each society will reach its own conclusions about the pace and scope of change. Yet distinctiveness, important as it is, must not be exploited to prevent reform. The values they seek for themselves, and which we support, are universal: human dignity, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, economic opportunity and social justice.
5. We reaffirm our commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Progress towards a negotiated peace settlement in the Middle East and towards reform will be mutually reinforcing. Neither should be a precondition nor a substitute for the other. We support the work of the Quartet on the Road Map and endorse its declaration of 4 May 2004. We also welcome the League of Arab States’ continued support for the Roadmap as expressed at the Summit meeting held in Tunis on 22/23 May and the League’s rejection of acts of violence against civilians without distinction. We reiterate our common vision of two states, Israel and a viable, democratic, sovereign and contiguous Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. We welcome and support the efforts of governments in the countries concerned to contribute to a settlement of this conflict, including the announced intention of Israeli withdrawal from all Gaza settlements and from parts of the West Bank which can be a step towards achieving the two-state solution and has the possibility of restarting progress on the Roadmap. We call for an end of all acts of violence and terrorism.

We support all efforts, including those by Egypt, to resolve critical security issues relating to Gaza. In this context, any unilateral initiative should be undertaken in a manner consistent with the Roadmap and the two-state vision. At the same time, we welcome the establishment of the World Bank Trust Fund and urge international support for this important initiative for Palestinian economic and social reconstruction.

6. We will build upon our respective policy frameworks and instruments. For the U.S., the Middle East Partnership Initiative is a key instrument, together with other bilateral instruments. For the EU, cooperation is based primarily on its Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Cooperation Agreement, the EU Neighbourhood Policy and other bilateral or multilateral initiatives, including the EU Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean and the Middle East, as recently adopted by the European Council. We welcome the G8 Plan of Support for Reform, including the establishment of the “Forum for the Future”. In this context, we pledge to work with each other in concrete areas to support:

- **Democratic development and the fullest possible participation by all citizens** through programs to strengthen civil society and promote democratic norms and institutions, including by providing technical assistance and support to independent election commissions, voter registration programs, conduct of elections, civic awareness programs (including those with a particular emphasis on women voters and candidates) and through strengthening parliamentary exchanges and independent media.
- **Increased practical and financial support to enhancing human rights**, legislative reforms and norms of good governance and linking closer relations and financial assistance to the achievement of measurable progress in these areas.
- **Efforts to significantly increase literacy skills, including through increased higher and basic education cooperation** in areas such as increasing enrolment rates or improving quality, with a special focus on education for women and girls. These efforts will help the countries concerned meet their target of imparting literacy skills to an additional 20 million people by 2015, as set out in the Beirut Declaration on Education for All of January 2004.

- **Economic integration, intra-regional trade and expanded trade opportunities in global markets**, through support, where appropriate, for accession to the WTO, including technical assistance, support for entrepreneurship and intraregional trade agreements, programs on trade facilitation and support for development of local chambers of commerce. In this regard, we will take into account regional integration initiatives.

7. In order to follow up on these initiatives, we have agreed to find better ways to coordinate our respective efforts with each other and in partnership and dialogue with governments and representatives of civil society and business sectors in the countries concerned. In all instances, we will seek to respond to the impetus for reform stemming from the individual countries concerned. We will make full use of the existing structures of cooperation and dialogue between the EU and U.S., such as the Senior Level Group, to ensure that opportunities for cooperation and synergy between our respective programs are availed of to the full.
