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#### OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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Subject:	Council conclusions on the Middle East (Gaza)

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on the Middle East (Gaza), as adopted by the Council on 15 August 2014.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST (GAZA)****Foreign Affairs Council, 15 August 2014**

1. The EU is extremely concerned about the fragile situation on the ground following the recent conflict in the Gaza Strip. It strongly welcomes the ceasefire which has been in place since 11 August and calls on all the parties concerned to agree on and abide by a durable ceasefire. The EU commends the considerable efforts and commitment of Egypt to broker this and earlier deals.
2. The EU remains concerned about the disastrous humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip particularly the conditions of the displaced population, water supplies, electricity services, unexploded ordnance as well as destroyed and uninhabitable homes. The EU calls for increased efforts to facilitate, in accordance with international humanitarian law, immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access into the Gaza Strip including for humanitarian personnel and supplies, and for the mobilisation of humanitarian aid for the population of Gaza.
3. The situation in the Gaza Strip has been unsustainable for many years and a return to the status quo prior to the latest conflict is not an option. A durable ceasefire must lead to a fundamental improvement in the living conditions for the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip through the lifting of the Gaza closure regime, and it must end the threat to Israel posed by Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza as demonstrated by rocket attacks and tunnel construction. All terrorist groups in Gaza must disarm.

4. In this context and subject to the requests of our partners based on the outcome of the Cairo talks, the EU reiterates its readiness to contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable solution enhancing the security, welfare and prosperity of Palestinians and Israelis alike. The EU will develop options for effective and comprehensive action in the following areas: movement and access, capacity building, verification and monitoring, humanitarian relief and post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation through international donor efforts including the eventual organisation of a donors' conference. The EU is ready to support a possible international mechanism endorsed by the UNSC, including through the reactivation and possible extension in scope and mandate of its EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS missions on the ground, including the launch of a training programme for Palestinian Authority customs personnel and police for redeployment in Gaza.
5. In line with UNSCR 1860, the EU is prepared to contribute to arrangements that prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition to the Gaza Strip and which can ensure the sustained re-opening of Gaza's crossing points. The EU will also study options for an internationally-supervised mechanism to enable full access and movement through all Gaza ports of entry.
6. The EU recalls that the situation in the Gaza Strip has to be seen within the broader context of the Middle East Peace Process and the prospect of comprehensive peace where two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace with secure and recognised borders. This remains our ultimate objective. The Gaza Strip constitutes an integral part of the territory occupied in 1967 and will be part of a future State of Palestine. The situation in the Gaza Strip cannot and must not be seen separately from the broader challenges and developments on the ground that continue to make the prospect of the two-state solution increasingly difficult to attain.
7. The EU has demonstrated its commitment to working with the government of Prime Minister Netanyahu and with the Palestinian consensus government comprised of independent personalities under the leadership and expressed commitments of President Abbas, which must exercise its full government responsibilities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip including in the field of security, civil administration and through its presence at Gaza's crossing points. The EU reiterates that commitment today.