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COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION

6039/07 (Presse 18)  
**PROVISIONAL VERSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**  
2780th Council Meeting  
**General Affairs and External Relations**  
**External Relations**

Brussels, 12 February 2007

President: **Mr Frank-Walter Steinmeier**  
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany

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**MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council welcomed the fact that an agreement has been reached in Mecca on 8 February on the formation of a Palestinian national unity government. It paid tribute to the sustained efforts of President Abbas to form a government of national unity and expressed its appreciation for the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Arab leaders in bringing about Palestinian reconciliation. The EU stands ready to work with a legitimate Palestinian government that adopts a platform reflecting the Quartet principles and welcomed the Quartet statement of 9 February.

The Council also welcomed the statement by the Quartet at its meeting in Washington on 2 February, in particular its intention to give active follow-up to meetings between Israeli and Palestinian leaders and to remain closely engaged at this moment of increased activity and dialogue. The Council looks forward to early and regular meetings of the Quartet at Principals' and envoys' level on the basis of an agreed calendar, including meetings with the parties and other regional parties. It welcomes the Quartet's commitment to monitor developments and actions taken by the parties and to discuss the way ahead.

The Council expressed its full support for the forthcoming meeting between Prime Minister Olmert, President Abbas and Secretary of State Rice, and encouraged the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to launch a process with the goal of ending the occupation that began in 1967 and creating an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel.

The Council looks forward to the next Quartet meeting at Principals' level on 21 February in Berlin to further discuss the way forward.

Reiterating its position, as set out in the European Council Declaration of 14 and 15 December 2006 and the General Affairs and External Relations Council Conclusions of 22 January 2007, the EU underlines its determination to pursue its practical measures and to continue playing an active political role, notably in the framework of increased Quartet engagement."

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