



, 08.01.2009

EU must continue to play leading role in ending conflict

European Greens reiterate demand for a full and immediate ceasefire in Gaza

The Spokespersons of the European Green Party have repeated their call for Israel and Hamas to implement an immediate and full ceasefire in Gaza.

EGP Co-Spokesperson Ulrike Lunacek, who is also an MP and is the Austrian Green Party's parliamentary spokesperson on Foreign affairs, said: "Israel's suspension of its bombardment of Gaza for three hours each day in order to allow the distribution of humanitarian aid is at least an improvement on the Israeli government's claim that there was no humanitarian emergency in Gaza. However, such a partial suspension is completely inadequate and nothing short of a full and immediate ceasefire is acceptable. We call on both the Israeli government and Hamas to agree without any delay to the terms of the ceasefire proposed by Egypt and France (and supported by the EU) so that the spiral of violence and the terrible suffering of people can be ended. The key requirements for this ceasefire to succeed are that Israel stops its air strikes and ground attacks on Gaza, Hamas stops firing rockets into Israel and illicit tunnel are immediately closed so that the smuggling of arms into Gaza can be stopped. Borders need to be opened for people, food, medicine, etc. The latest reports of rockets being fired into Israel from Lebanon and Israeli forces responding are extremely disturbing as they clearly show the danger of the conflict in Gaza spilling over into other areas of the Middle East."

EGP Co-Spokesperson Philippe Lamberts continued: "All parties involved must immediately agree to the ceasefire proposed by France and Egypt. We welcome the fact that this proposal is backed by the UN as a whole and in particular the United States. We hope that the new US administration of Barack Obama will commit itself fully to the pursuit of an enduring and comprehensive peace agreement in the Middle East in a more pro-active and balanced way than President Bush's administration. Green Parties throughout Europe are calling for the EU to play a leading role in both ending the current crisis in Gaza and obtaining an enduring peace for the region. We are also aware that our member party in the Czech Republic, the Czech Greens, who form part of the Czech Government, which currently holds the presidency of the EU, are doing



everything they can to push for a strong and united EU approach on this issue. We also support the calls from our colleagues in the Greens/ EFA group in the European Parliament for the EU Council to agree to the immediate deployment of an EU-led international peace-keeping force under UN-mandate in the Gaza strip, including peacekeeping forces from Arab countries. We share the indignation of the Greens/ EFA group that other political groups in the European Parliament are failing to treat the current situation with the sense of urgency that it requires. It is shameful that both the EPP and PES, the Parliament's largest groups, have refused to include a resolution on the Gaza conflict in the agenda of next week's parliament session in Strasbourg. "
