

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Brussels, 4 December 1998

13679/98 (Presse 433)
P. 147/98

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the Middle East Peace Process**

The European Union strongly supports the Wye Memorandum as a welcome step forward in the Peace Process, and welcomes implementation of the first phase of the Memorandum by both sides.

The European Union believes it is essential that further implementation proceeds in good faith and in accordance with the timeline established at Wye.

The European Union is therefore greatly concerned by the recent announcement by the Israeli Government that it will not proceed with further implementation unless the Palestinians give additional assurances which go beyond the Wye Memorandum.

An important achievement of the Wye Memorandum was to establish a series of measures to address both sides' legitimate security concerns. In that context, the European Union deplores the recent violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, which can only damage confidence in both communities. The right response is for both sides to exercise restraint both in their actions and in their public statements. It is not an appropriate response to introduce new conditions for the implementation of the Wye Memorandum.

The European Union, therefore, stresses the need for the obligations in the Wye Memorandum to be fulfilled as signed.