

Brussels, 26 April 1996

6795/96 (Presse 115)  
P. 39/96

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union**  
**about the decision taken by the Palestinian National Council**  
**on the Palestinian Charter**

The European Union congratulates President Arafat and the Palestinian National Council on their decision of 24 April, taken by an overwhelming majority, to amend the Palestinian Charter so that it will no longer deny the right of the State of Israel to exist.

The European Union wishes to underline its continuing commitment to the cause of peace and democracy courageously undertaken by the Palestinian people and its leadership. The decision to amend the Charter, which constitutes a confirmation of the strong Palestinian desire to fulfil its undertakings, shows how widespread the support for peace is among the Palestinians, and how limited the following of those who are opposed to it through violent means and terrorist actions.

In this respect, the European Union is confident that the Government of Israel will respond to this gesture of the Palestinians by:

- implementing all the agreements, including the withdrawal from Hebron,
- continuing the peace talks which are expected to resume on 7 May,
- ending the closure which has been imposed on the West Bank and Gaza since the beginning of March.