

Press release

Brussels, 06th of January 2017

Israel and Palestine both ready for new peace talks

During a visit to Israel and Palestine by the European Parliament's foreign affairs committee, both sides confirmed their willingness to start fresh peace talks without preconditions. The Socialists and Democrats Group MEPs participating in the Delegation, Arne Lietz (Germany) and Gilles Pargneaux (France), welcomed these statements. However, they also warned that both sides are blaming the other for not being ready to start the talks. The delegation also visited Jordan.

S&D MEP Arne Lietz described their findings:

"Israeli settlements in Palestine jeopardise the possibility of a two-state solution and peace-building process. During the visit, the UN Security Council vote last December on the illegal Israeli settlements was discussed numerous times. We welcome the result of the vote and invite Israel to follow up on the resolution. The European Parliament should also adopt a resolution on this matter soon."

"During our visit to Bethlehem the city mayor showed us the expansion of the settlements and how they are having an increasingly negative impact on the daily living conditions of Palestinians."

S&D MEP Gilles Pargneaux added:

"We reminded our interlocutors about the Arab Peace Initiative. Prince Faisal of Jordan is considering bringing it back to the table during Jordan's upcoming presidency of the Arab League. This could be the next step after the Paris Peace Conference taking place on 15 January."

"During the meetings in Jordan we expressed our appreciation to the country for accepting 1.2 million refugees from Syria, making it one of the biggest refugee communities in the world. We understand the burden which it places on the country and welcome that the European Union is stepping up efforts in helping the Jordanian authorities with the integration of Syrian refugees into the local job market and into their education system."