Committee on Foreign Affairs

6 January 2017

Press Statement

Delegation from the European Parliament visited Israel, the West Bank and Jordan (2-6 Jan 2017)

A delegation of the European Parliament, headed by Elmar BROK, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, visited Israel, the West Bank and Jordan from 2 January to 6 January.

Members discussed the situation in the region with representatives of the government and parliamentarians from the majority and the opposition in Israel, after which they visited the Palestinian Authority and Jordan.

The fight against terrorism, a common concern, was at the heart of most discussions. The threat that the Islamic State (IS) represents in the region and in Europe calls for joint answers. The various interlocutors recognized that countering the hate speech of terrorists pretending to fight in the name of Islam should be done using all means (education, strategic communication, or cyber security) acknowledging that this is an absolute priority for Jordan and should be for all Muslim countries. For more immediate threats, cooperation between intelligence services is the only valid security option for all countries concerned.

The rise of IS takes place in the context of various proxy wars in the region where the role of regional and global powers (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey as well as Russia or the future Trump Administration) is of utmost importance, in fuelling or resolving the conflicts. The Israeli counterparts stressed their concerns about Iran's role in the region. A seminar held in the Knesset gave a chance to MEPs to explain the EU action in the region and have a deeper exchange of views with their Israeli counterparts. On the peace process, the Israelis as well as the Palestinians reaffirmed their support to the two-State solution and expressed their readiness to resume peace talks without preconditions.

Members were all concerned that those various caveats from both sides would provide obstacles for a peaceful solution in the foreseeable future. They called on both parties to come back to the negotiating table.
The visit of Members of the European Parliament in the region was highly appreciated as it was noted that they would get real insight. In Amman, Members held a long exchange of views with Prince Feisal who called for a Marshall Plan for reconstruction. Members stressed that Jordan is indeed highly affected by the war in Syria as well as by the broad instability in the region. The EU is one of the main sources of aid to Jordan and should continue supporting the country's development hence ensuring its stability.

To win the war against terrorism the EU should support and closely cooperate with Israel, Palestine and Jordan.

The delegation was also composed of Cristian Dan PREDA (EPP, RO), David McALLISTER (EPP, DE), Gilles PARGNEAUX (S&D, FR), Arne LIETZ (S&D, DE), Marek JUREK (ECR, PL), Takis HADJIGEORGIOU (GUE/NGL, CY) and Tamas MESZERICS (Greens/ALE, HU). Fulvio MARTUSCIELLO, Chair of the Delegation for relations with Israel (EPP, IT) took part in the meetings with the Israeli authorities.