

Brussels, 27 February 1997

6308/97 (Presse 59)  
P. 18/97

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union**  
**on the decision of the Israeli government to approve construction plans**  
**for Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim**

The EU deeply deplores the decision of the Israeli government to approve construction plans for Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim located on the West Bank in the Jerusalem area. The EU has repeatedly stated that settlements in the occupied territories contravene international law and are a major obstacle to peace.

The EU once again reaffirms its policy on the status of Jerusalem. East Jerusalem is subject to the principles set out in UN Security Council Resolution 242, notably the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and is therefore not under Israeli sovereignty. The Union considers that the Fourth Geneva Convention is fully applicable to East Jerusalem, as it is to other territories under occupation.

The EU calls on Israel to respect its obligations under international law and to refrain from measures that have an eroding effect on the confidence necessary for the further implementation of the agreements and prejudice the outcome of the permanent status negotiations. The decision is especially regrettable since the signing of the Protocol on Hebron was a positive development which created a new momentum in the peace process and raised the hope for further constructive steps in this process.