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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the expansion of settlements on the Golan Heights**

The European Union is concerned about reports that on 19 August an Israeli Ministerial Committee approved a plan to expand settlements on the Golan Heights. Under the plan 2300 new housing units and 2500 holiday units are to be built in Mamot, Ma'ale Gamla, Kanaf and Had Nex.

If such a plan is implemented it would represent a significant setback to the efforts to resume the Israeli-Syrian negotiations. It would also constitute a further complication for the implementation of the principle "land for peace" and raise questions about Israel's commitment to the Peace Process.

Recalling the Cardiff European Council conclusions, which expressed grave concern at the lack of progress on the Syrian track, the European Union urges Israel not to implement the above-mentioned plan concerning the expansion of Golan settlements nor to take any other related steps which would jeopardise the Peace Process.

In this context the European Union reiterates its position that settlements in the occupied territories are illegal and in contravention of international law.