

Brussels, 26 October 2007

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner to visit Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory and Egypt

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, will travel to Israel, the occupied Palestinian Territory and Egypt between 28 and 31 October.

In the run-up to the Annapolis meeting this visit aims at encouraging both sides to make further progress in their bilateral talks and at emphasizing the international community's expectations for a substantive result at the meeting in the US. At the same time the visit is an expression of the unwavering support by the European Union for the Middle East Peace Process.

The first stop during the trip will be Israel, where Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner will be meeting with President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Minister of Defense Ehud Barak and Vice Prime Minister Haim Ramon.

Talks in the occupied Palestinian territory will be held among others with Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, Acting Foreign Minister and Minister of Information Riyad Al-Maliki, as well as with Chief Negotiator Ahmed Q'urei. Furthermore, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner will visit the Qalandia Refugee Camp as well as the Al Karameh School, which was built with EU funds, where Minister of Education, Lamis al Alami, will be present. Representing the biggest donor, the Commissioner will confirm the EU's assistance to the Palestinian people. At the same time Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner will underline her full support for the efforts by the Quartet representative Tony Blair.

In Cairo, bilateral meetings of Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner are scheduled with President Hosni Mubarak, Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit and others on Wednesday, 31 October. In the centre of the meetings will be the further development of EU-Egypt relations especially within the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan which was adopted on 6 March.

On 1 November Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner will be co-hosting with the Foreign Minister of Egypt Aboul Gheit the first ever EU-Africa-Middle East Energy Conference (separate press release to follow) in Sharm el Sheikh.

For more information:

The EU's Mediterranean & Middle East Policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/med_mideast/intro/index.htm