2025/443

3.3.2025

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2025/443

of 28 February 2025

appointing the European Union Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 33, in conjunction with Article 31(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

(1) On 25 November 1996, the Council agreed to appoint a European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the Middle East Peace Process.

(2) The resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a strategic priority for the Union and the Union must remain actively engaged until that conflict is resolved on the basis of the two-state solution.

(3) The Union is committed to a comprehensive and lasting peace for the entire Middle East region and stands ready to work to that end together with regional and international partners.

(4) An EUSR for the Middle East Peace Process should be appointed for a period of 3 months.

(5) The EUSR will implement the mandate in the context of a challenging regional situation which may deteriorate and could impede the achievement of the objectives of the Union's external action as set out in Article 21 of the Treaty,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

European Union Special Representative

Mr Luigi DI MAIO is hereby appointed as the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the Middle East Peace Process from 1 March 2025 until 1 June 2025. The Council may decide that the EUSR's mandate (the 'mandate') be terminated earlier, on the basis of an assessment by the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and a proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the 'High Representative').

Article 2

Policy objectives

The mandate shall be based on the following policy objective regarding the Middle East Peace Process:

(a) the overall objective is a just, lasting and comprehensive peace that should be achieved on the basis of a two-state solution, with Israel and a democratic, contiguous, viable, peaceful and sovereign Palestinian State living side by side within secure and recognised borders, enjoying normal relations with their neighbours in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and recalling other relevant resolutions, including UNSC Resolution 2334 (2016), the Madrid principles, including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties, the Arab Peace Initiative and the recommendations of the Middle East Quartet (the 'Quartet') of 1 July 2016; in light of the different strands of Israeli-Arab relations, the regional dimension constitutes an essential component for a comprehensive peace;

(b) in achieving the objective set out in point (a), policy priorities are to preserve the two-state solution and relaunch and support the peace process; in that light, clear parameters defining the basis for negotiations are key elements for a successful outcome and the Union has set out its position with regard to such parameters in the Council conclusions of December 2009, December 2010 and July 2014, which it will continue to actively promote;

(c) the Union is committed to working with the parties and with partners in the international community, in the Middle East, and to pursuing actively appropriate international initiatives to create a new dynamic for the negotiations.

Article 3

Mandate

1. In order to achieve the policy objective set out in Article 2, the mandate shall be to:

(a) provide an active and efficient Union contribution to actions and initiatives leading to a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the two-state solution and in line with the Union parameters and relevant UNSC Resolutions, including UNSC Resolution 2334 (2016), and to put forward proposals for Union action in this regard;

(b) facilitate and maintain close contacts with all the parties to the peace process, in particular Israel and the Palestinian Authority, relevant political actors and countries of the Middle East, and other relevant countries, as well as the United Nations and other relevant international organisations, including the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council, in order to work with them to strengthen the peace process;

(c) take advantage of the evolving regional landscape in the Middle East and in particular the normalisation of relations between Israel and a number of Arab countries, in order to further advance the peace process and thus contribute to regional stability;

(d) pay particular attention to factors affecting the regional dimension of the peace process, including the developments related to the conflict in Gaza and in the region following the brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel on 7 October 2023, to the engagement with Arab partners and to the implementation of the Arab Peace Initiative;

(e) actively support and contribute to peace negotiations between the parties, including by putting forward proposals on behalf of the Union in line with its consolidated longstanding policy in the context of those negotiations;

(f) ensure the continued presence of the Union in relevant international fora;

(g) contribute to crisis management and early warnings;

(h) contribute to the implementation of international agreements reached between the parties and engage with them diplomatically in the event of non-compliance with the terms of those agreements;

(i) contribute to political efforts to promote a sustainable solution for the Day After in the Gaza Strip, which is an integral part of a future Palestinian state, support the Palestinian Authority's return to Gaza, including by facilitating discussions between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and promote humanitarian efforts;

(j) engage constructively with signatories to agreements within the framework of the peace process in order to promote compliance with the basic norms of democracy, including respect for international humanitarian law, human rights and the rule of law;

(k) make proposals for Union intervention in the Middle East Peace Process and on the best way to pursue Union initiatives and ongoing peace-process related Union efforts, such as the Union's contribution to Palestinian reforms, the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and the political aspects of relevant Union development projects;

(l) engage the parties on refraining from unilateral actions threatening the viability of the two-state solution, in particular in the occupied Palestinian territory, including by way of settlement policy and incitement to violence and hate speech;

(m) contribute to the implementation of the Union's human rights policy in cooperation with the EUSR for Human Rights, including the Union Guidelines on human rights, in particular the Union Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict as well as on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them, and Union policy regarding UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security;

(n) contribute to a better understanding and visibility of the role of the Union among opinion leaders in the Middle East;

(o) engage with representatives of civil society, including women and young people, as well as with those involved in measures to build confidence between the parties.

2. The EUSR shall support the work of the High Representative, while maintaining an overview of all activities of the Union related to the Middle East Peace Process.

Article 4

Implementation of the mandate

1. The EUSR shall be responsible for the implementation of the mandate, acting under the authority of the High Representative.

2. The PSC shall maintain a privileged link with the EUSR and shall be the EUSR's primary point of contact with the Council. The PSC shall provide the EUSR with strategic guidance and political direction within the framework of the mandate, without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative.

3. The EUSR shall ensure regular, systematic, thorough and clear, as well as coherent and consistent, action and cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the relevant departments thereof.

4. The EUSR will undertake regular visits to the Middle East region and will ensure close coordination with relevant Union Delegations across that region, including the Union Representative Office in Jerusalem, the Union Delegation in Tel Aviv and, through them, with Member States' diplomatic representations.

Article 5

Financing

1. The financial reference amount intended to cover the expenditure related to the mandate (the 'expenditure') in the period from 1 March 2025 until 1 June 2025 shall be EUR 273 229,68.

2. The expenditure shall be managed in accordance with the procedures and rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

3. The management of the expenditure shall be subject to a contract between the EUSR and the Commission. The EUSR shall be accountable to the Commission for all expenditure.

Article 6

Constitution and composition of the team

1. Within the limits of the mandate and the corresponding financial means made available, the EUSR shall be responsible for assembling a team. That team shall include the expertise on specific policy issues as required by the mandate. The EUSR shall keep the Council and the Commission promptly informed of the composition of the team.

2. Member States, institutions of the Union and the EEAS may propose the secondment of personnel to work on the EUSR's team. The salaries of such seconded personnel shall be covered by the seconding Member State, by the institution of the Union concerned or by the EEAS, as appropriate. Experts seconded by Member States to the institutions of the Union or the EEAS may also be seconded to work on the EUSR's team. International contracted personnel shall have the nationality of a Member State.

3. All seconded personnel shall remain under the administrative authority of the sending Member State, the sending institution of the Union or the EEAS and shall carry out their duties and act in the interest of the mandate.

4. The EUSR's team shall be co-located with the relevant EEAS department, Union Delegation in Tel Aviv and Union Representative Office in Jerusalem in order to ensure the coherence and consistency of their respective activities.

Article 7

Privileges and immunities of the EUSR and of the EUSR's team

The privileges, immunities and further guarantees of the EUSR and the EUSR's team necessary for the completion and smooth functioning of the EUSR's mission shall be agreed with the host parties, as appropriate. Member States and the EEAS shall grant all necessary support to that effect.

Article 8

Security of EU classified information

The EUSR and the members of the EUSR's team shall respect the security principles and minimum standards established by Council Decision 2013/488/EU ([1]).

Article 9

Access to information and logistical support

1. Member States, the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council shall ensure that the EUSR is given access to any relevant information.

2. Union Delegations and Member State diplomatic representations in the Middle East, as appropriate, shall provide logistical support in that region.

Article 10

Access to documents and data protection

1. The EUSR shall apply the rules laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 ([2]) of the European Parliament and of the Council. The High Representative shall adopt relevant implementing rules concerning the EUSR.

2. The EUSR shall protect individuals with regard to the processing of their personal data in accordance with the rules laid down in Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 ([3]) of the European Parliament and of the Council. The High Representative shall adopt relevant implementing rules concerning the EUSR.

Article 11

Security

In accordance with the Union's policy on the security of personnel deployed outside the Union in an operational capacity under Title V of the Treaty, the EUSR shall take all reasonably practicable measures, in conformity with the mandate and on the basis of the security situation in the area of responsibility, for the security of all personnel under the EUSR's direct authority, in particular by:

(a) establishing a specific security plan based on guidance from the EEAS, including specific physical, organisational and procedural security measures governing the management of the secure movement of personnel to, and within, the area of responsibility and the management of security incidents, and by establishing a mission contingency and evacuation plan;

(b) ensuring that all personnel deployed outside the Union are covered by high risk insurance as required by the conditions in the area of responsibility;

(c) ensuring that all personnel to be deployed outside the Union, including locally contracted personnel, have received appropriate security training before or upon arriving in the area of responsibility, based on the risk ratings assigned to that area by the EEAS;

([1]) Council Decision 2013/488/EU of 23 September 2013 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 274, 15.10.2013, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2013/488/oj).

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2001/1049/oj).

([3]) Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1725/oj).

(d) ensuring that all agreed recommendations made following regular security assessments are implemented and providing the High Representative, the Council and the Commission with written reports on the implementation of those recommendations and on other security issues within the framework of the regular progress reports and the final mandate implementation report.

Article 12

Reporting

The EUSR shall regularly provide the High Representative and the PSC with reports. The EUSR shall also report to other Council working parties as necessary. Regular reports shall be circulated through the COREU network. The European External Action Service shall be fully informed at all times. The EUSR may provide the Foreign Affairs Council with reports. In accordance with Article 36 of the Treaty, the EUSR may be involved in briefing the European Parliament.

Article 13

Coordination

1. The EUSR shall contribute to the unity, consistency and effectiveness of the Union's action and shall help ensure that all Union instruments and Member States' actions are engaged consistently, to attain the Union's policy objectives. Liaison with Member States shall be sought where appropriate. The activities of the EUSR shall be coordinated with those of the European External Action Service and Commission services. The EUSR shall provide regular briefings to the Union's Delegations and to Member States' diplomatic representations, including the Union Representative Office in Jerusalem and the Union Delegation in Tel Aviv.

2. In the field, close liaison shall be maintained with the relevant Heads of Member States' diplomatic representations, Heads of Union Delegations and Heads of common security and defence policy missions. They shall make every effort to assist the EUSR in the implementation of the mandate. The EUSR, in close coordination with the Head of Union Delegation in Tel Aviv and the Union Representative Office in Jerusalem, shall provide the Heads of the European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS) and of the European Union Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point (EUBAM Rafah) with local political guidance. The EUSR shall also liaise with other international and regional actors in the field.

Article 14

Assistance in relation to claims

The EUSR and the EUSR's team shall provide assistance in responding to any claims and obligations arising from the mandates of the previous EUSRs for the Middle East Peace Process, and shall provide administrative assistance and access to relevant documents for such purposes.

Article 15

Review

The implementation of this Decision and its consistency with other contributions from the Union to the region shall be kept under regular review. The EUSR shall present the High Representative, the Council and the Commission with regular progress reports.

Article 16

Entry into force

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, 28 February 2025.

For the Council

The President

A. SZŁAPKA