



EUROPEAN UNION

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## Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the expansion of Israeli settlements

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission issued the following statement today:

*“The approval of an additional 2610 housing units in the settlement of Givat Hamatos is extremely troubling, coming in addition to announcements made at the end of November and Monday’s approval of 1500 units in Ramat Shlomo. This plan for Givat Hamatos would cut the geographic continuity between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. I strongly oppose this unprecedented expansion of settlements around Jerusalem.*

*The EU has never been clearer than it was on 10 December in voicing its strong opposition to settlement expansion. The EU particularly opposes the implementation of plans which seriously undermine the prospects of a negotiated resolution of the conflict by jeopardizing the possibility of a contiguous and viable Palestinian state and of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. In the light of its core objective of achieving the two-state solution, the EU will closely monitor the situation and its broader implications, and act accordingly.*

*The European Union calls for a bold demonstration of political will and leadership from both sides to break the current impasse and resume negotiations. The parties must engage in direct and substantial negotiations without pre-conditions in order to achieve a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ending all claims.”*

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**P R E S S**

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 299 97 80 - [Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu)  
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - [Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu)  
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - [Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu)

[www.eeas.europa.eu](http://www.eeas.europa.eu)

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