



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 31 May 2010
10485/10 (Presse 152)
(OR. en)

**Declaration by HR Catherine Ashton on behalf of the EU on
the Israeli military operation against the Flotilla**

The EU deeply regrets the loss of life during the Israeli military operation in international waters against the Flotilla sailing to Gaza and offers its condolences to the families of the victims. The EU condemns the use of violence that has produced a high number of victims among the members of the flotilla and demands an immediate, full and impartial inquiry into the events and the circumstances surrounding them.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains a source of grave concern. The EU does not accept the continued policy of closure. It is unacceptable and politically counterproductive. We need to urgently achieve a durable solution to the situation in Gaza.

The EU underlines its call for an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza.

The EU calls on Israel to urgently provide Member States with consular access to and information about their citizens.

The EU calls upon all parties and relevant actors to prevent a further escalation of tensions and underlines the need to continue the proximity talks with a view to the resumption of direct negotiations.

P R E S S