

Mr. President,

I am taking the floor on behalf of the European Union members of the Council and Romania.

We would like to thank the Palestinian delegation and other co-sponsors of the draft decision for engaging in constructive discussion on draft resolution L.13 during the second and third session of our council. The discussions were conducted in an open atmosphere of mutual respect.

Mr. President, the EU is following closely the developments in the region and welcomes the recent announcement of a ceasefire urging both parties to exercise and implement restraint to allow the ceasefire to hold and facilitate return to the negotiating table.

Mr. President, we welcome the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on her recent visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and we share her view that civilians on both sides need to be protected from harm. Therefore, a reference to her report in the draft decision would have been desirable, but regrettably that was not possible. The EU fully supports the High Commissioner for Human Rights in her efforts to keep the council informed on the developments in the region in an objective manner.

We note furthermore, that the mandate of the fact finding mission of Professor Dugard does not encompass the conduct of all parties and all aspects of the conflict. That was the reason why the EU members of the council voted against the draft resolution in the first special session.

Mr President, it is important to uphold the principle that all states are duty bound to co-operate with the special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council. That is why the EU will abstain in the vote.

The European Union Member States that are not members of the Council and Bulgaria align themselves with this position.

Thank You Mr. President