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PALESTINE: ISRAEL'S RETALIATION "LOSING IT" SAYS LEADING MEP

After Unesco's vote on Monday [31 October] to admit Palestine, the strength of Israel's retaliation will lose further international support in advance of the Security Council vote on 11 November, Mr Edward McMillan-Scott, Vice-President of the European Parliament for democracy and human rights, told a Tel Aviv conference on the subject today [Wednesday, 2 November].

On Tuesday [1 November] the Israeli government decided to freeze October's tax transfers of some €60 million to the Occupied Territories and to build another 2,000 homes for Jewish settlers there. McMillan-Scott, who on Tuesday had meetings with Quartet and UN ambassadors in Jerusalem, before further meetings with the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, said:

"The focus is now on the 11 November vote in the UN Security Council on Palestine's application for recognition as a state. I hope that the three EU countries will vote 'yes' - in particular the UK, which abstained on the Unesco vote - and encourage others to follow."

McMillan-Scott was speaking alongside Ms Tzipi Livni, leader of the Israeli opposition, Mr Saeb Erekat, Palestine's chief negotiator and Mr Martin Schulz, leader of the Socialist MEPs, at a conference of academics, NGOs and policy-makers organised by Germany's socialist Friedrich-Ebert foundation to discuss UN recognition of Palestine.

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