**López-Istúriz: The need for fluid dialogue with Israel is essential**

**Strasbourg, February, 10.** The President of the Delegation for Relations with Israel in the European Parliament and Secretary General of the European People's Party (PPE), Antonio López-Istúriz, has stated that "recent developments and the rise of tensions in the Middle East make the need for a fluid dialogue with Israel essential,” in two questions addressed to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, and to the President of the European Council, Charles Michel.

The President of this Delegation has assured that “the EU-Israel Association Council is a good meeting place since it aims to ensure political dialogue between both parties. However, it has not held a formal meeting since 2012.”

López-Istúriz regrets that “some EU Member States are fixed on blocking the celebration of these meetings as a way of boycotting Israel due to the country's policy vis-à-vis Palestine. So, instead of sitting at the table to discuss and find solutions and political agreements, they simply prefer to veto EU-Israel bilateral talks, as well as the path towards peace and understanding in the region.”

He asked Josep Borrell and Charles Michel to work in order to build consensus and re-establish new EU-Israel meetings within the framework of the Association Council.

The Secretary General of the EPP maintains that the EU´s renewed leadership is the “perfect opportunity to resume contacts through this mechanism and improve our relations with the country.”

He also stated that "Israel has been a strategic ally of the European Union, even before the Association Council agreement was signed in 1995."