Press Release
08 March 2016

The European Union celebrates the International Women's Day in Palestine

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, the Office of the European Union Representative joins Palestinian women and men to acknowledge women's critical economic, social, and political contributions and celebrate their remarkable achievements. Throughout the week, EU implementing partners will celebrate this occasion by organizing different activities in Gaza, Jericho, Ramallah, Hebron, and East Jerusalem.

The EU's long-standing and dedicated commitment to improve women's status and remove constraints on their economic, social, and political potential continues unchanged.

Here in Palestine, the EU stands alongside Palestinian women as they work hand in hand with Palestinian men towards a better future. EU-funded projects in Palestine address gender in different contexts and contribute to the fight against gender inequality. The EU supports equal engagement of women in economic development and promotes stronger involvement in governance at local and national levels. This is in addition to a number of human rights and youth actions where gender is a core component.

"Progress on women's rights is progress on human rights. But our world is still facing a persistent gap in access to opportunities and decision-making power for women and men. Globally, women have fewer opportunities for economic participation than men, less access to education, greater health risks, and less political representation. Therefore the EU has chosen to be at the forefront of the protection and fulfilment of women's and girls' rights," said the **EU Representative, Ralph Tarraf**. "Women are critical to meet the challenges of poverty, inequality and the recovery of the communities hardest hit by

conflicts. This is particularly clear in Palestine. Despite the massive challenges women face here, Palestinian women are making fundamental economic, social, cultural, and political contributions to advance their society. Still much more needs to be done. The EU will continue to support Palestinian women in overcoming the challenges and seizing the opportunities to promote and achieve gender equality," he added.

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The Information sheet on the EU activities to celebrate the International Women's Day 2016 in Palestine is here below.

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Information sheet on the EU activities to celebrates the International Women's Day 2016 in Palestine

"A society where women have the same rights as men is not just more just; it is more secure, and richer. When women have no access to good education or to top jobs, we are only wasting their huge potential, which is our potential as well. And this is true both abroad and inside our own European Union," said the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Federica Mogherini.

The EU and its Member States are at the forefront of the protection and fulfilment of girls' and women's rights. The strong EU positioning in the post-2015 development agenda clearly contributed to gender equality being accepted as a central element within the new Sustainable Development Goals.

In line with this, the EU-funded projects in Palestine address gender in different contexts and contribute to the fight against gender inequality. The EU supports equal engagement of women in economic development and promotes stronger involvement in governance at local and national levels. This is in addition to a number of human rights and youth EU-funded actions where gender is a core component. In this context, the EU-funded projects in Palestine actively celebrate the International Women's Day through a series of activities from Gaza to the West Bank to East Jerusalem.

Through the longstanding partnership with the UNRWA, several EU funded activities are organized throughout March 2016 marking the International Women's Day. The activities are organized across the Agency's five fields of operations – Jordan, Lebanon, West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Syria. Women are celebrating the day in theatre, awareness sessions, school activities, competitions, bazaars, film screenings, exhibitions, and seminars with various stakeholders, of whom are religious leaders, men, youth, children, and decision makers.

On the 6th of March, the EU funded project "Advancing the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Palestine"[1]supported the Palestinian Ministry of Women Affairs in organizing a roundtable

[1] http://palestine.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-security-humanitarian-response/programmes

session in Gaza to discuss the Palestinian National Strategic Framework and Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325.

While in Jericho, the EU-funded project 'Women: generating incomes, creating new democracies' organized on the 7th of March a ceremony to celebrate the occasion. The event was attended by hundreds and included several activities. The Deputy EU Representative and Jericho Governor addressed the ceremony and received a position paper from representatives of women community based organizations in the governorate. Meanwhile, the EU-funded project ''Promotion of the local democracy and economic activity through the reinforcement of Palestinian Non State Actors'' organised a conference in Hebron addressing gender policies and procedures in Palestinian civil society institutions.

On the 8th of March, three different activities were organized by EU funded projects to celebrate the occasion. In East Jerusalem, the EU celebrated the opening of the newly renovated ceramics laboratory in Burj Al LaqLaq in the Old City. This ceramics workshop will provide vocational training to a number of young women and men, with the aim of creating job opportunities for them. While in Ramallah, 50 young Palestinians joined an open live radio debate on gender equality. It also featured some success stories of women who started unique initiatives that benefited their societies and communities. The live programme was produced and broadcasted by Nisaa and three other radio stations in West Bank and Gaza FM. This activity was implemented in the framework of the EU regional project "NetMed Youth[2]". In Ramallah, the EU-funded project "Inheritance Denied II[3]" organised an advocacy conference to promote the support of establishing an Inheritance Department within the Ministry of Justice among the decision makers. The conference issued a joint statement calling for the establishment of this department that contributed positively to the promotion of women rights and gender equality.

Finally and on the 10th of March, the EU funded project "Empowerment of Disabled People's Organisations promoting Women with Disabilities rights in the West Bank" will organise a cultural event in Nablus to celebrate the occasion. Music bands and theatre groups will perform at Jamal Abdel Nasser Garden at the city centre. The shows will promote the rights of Disabled people with a specific focus on Women with Disabilities.

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http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/

[2] http://www.enpi-info.eu/mainmed.php?id=615&id_type=10

[3] https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/inheritance-denied-ii-promoting-palestinian-womens-social-and-economic-rights-through_en