

Press Release - European Union
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The European Union, Austria, Ireland and Portugal provide over €12 million to support families living in poverty in the West Bank and Gaza

The European Union is making its first contribution in 2016 to the Palestinian Authority's (PA) quarterly payment of social allowances. Around 119,000 poor Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza will receive financial payments through the PA's cash transfer programme. This contribution, amounts to around €12.2 million and is funded by the European Union (€10 million) and the Governments of Austria (€1.5 million), Ireland (€0.7 million) and Portugal (€0.025 million).

Eligible beneficiaries are poor households registered in the cash transfer programme of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The programme is designed to provide a basic safety net for the poorest and most vulnerable Palestinians in the West bank and Gaza, through cash and in-kind assistance. Almost 119,000 Palestinian households are currently enrolled in the programme. Almost two-thirds of the beneficiaries live in Gaza. The €12.2 million contribution covers nearly 40% of the cost of this payment. This contribution is channelled through the PEGASE[1] mechanism.

"The European Union, Austria, Ireland and Portugal have joined efforts to support this year's first payment of social allowances to nearly 119,000 poor families registered in the Palestinian cash transfer programme", said ***Mr. Ralph Tarraf, the EU Representative.*** *"This payment once more demonstrates our long-standing commitment to providing practical support to the most vulnerable Palestinians in partnership with the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs."*

This contribution represents the first tranche of the European Union's support for the cash transfer programme in 2016. Over €42.2 million were made available to support the budget of the cash transfer programme this year, including €40 million from the European Union budget and contributions from the Governments of Austria, Ireland and Portugal.

Background:

Most of the European Union's assistance to the Palestinian Authority is channelled through PEGASE, the financial mechanism launched in 2008 to support the PA Reform and Development Plan (2008-2010) and the subsequent Palestinian national development plans.

As well as helping to meet a substantial proportion of the PA's running costs, European Union funds are supporting major reform and development programmes in key ministries to help prepare the PA for statehood. Since February 2008, over €2 billion have been disbursed through the PEGASE direct financial support programmes. In addition, the EU has provided assistance to the Palestinian people through UNRWA as well as a wide range of other cooperation projects.

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