Press Release

Jerusalem

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The European Union provides €10 million to support families in need in the West Bank and Gaza

The European Union made the second contribution this year to the Palestinian Authority's (PA) quarterly payment of social allowances to Palestinian families living in poverty in the West Bank and Gaza. Around 115,000 poor Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza will receive social allowances through the PA's cash transfer programme. The contribution of €10 million from the European budget is equivalent to nearly one-third of the budget for this payment.

Eligible beneficiaries are households living in extreme poverty that are registered in the cash transfer programme of the Ministry of Social Development. The programme is designed to provide basic safety net to the poorest and most vulnerable Palestinians in the West bank and Gaza, through cash and in-kind assistance. Over 115,000 Palestinian households are enrolled in the programme, with almost two-thirds of living in Gaza.

"*The assistance provided through the cash transfer programme is essential to ensure that those Palestinians in greatest need have access to basic services and minimum income security. However, on its own, it is not a sufficient remedy to fight poverty and exclusion," said* ***Mr. David Geer, Deputy EU Representative****. "Ultimately, it is only through social and economic development that Palestinians will be provided with real opportunities for growth and prosperity. The Ministry of Social Development's determination to place socio-economic empowerment at the forefront of its upcoming strategy to combat poverty is an encouraging step in that direction."*

Payments are made through a network of local banks. Beneficiaries living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank will collect their allowances from 28 August.

This contribution, channelled through the PEGASE[(1)], represents the second tranche of the European Union's support to the cash transfer programme this year. Over €42.2 million were made available to support the budget of the cash transfer programme in 2016, 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.

(1) Mécanisme ***P****alestino-****E****uropéen de* ***G****estion de l'****A****ide* ***S****ocio-****E****conomique (PEGASE)*

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