Press Release
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The European Union provides €21 million to support families in need in the West Bank and Gaza

The European Union and Spain made a new contribution to the Palestinian Authority's (PA) payment of social allowances to Palestinian families living in poverty in the West Bank and Gaza. Around 111,500 poor Palestinian families will receive social allowances through the PA's Cash Transfer Programme (CTP). This contribution of €21 million is equivalent to more than two-third of the budget for this payment. Out of this amount, the EU provided €20 million and Spain €1 million.

Eligible beneficiaries are households living in extreme poverty that are registered in the cash transfer programme of the Ministry of Social Development. As part of the social protection package, the programme provides cash allowances to some 111,500 families, among which two-third live in Gaza.

"The fundamental idea behind social protection is one of social justice and cohesion. All citizens should have access to essential services and minimum income security, to ensure that no one is left behind or marginalized in society, in particular those who are the most vulnerable. In this context, regular social allowances are essential to ensure that the basic needs of the most vulnerable Palestinian families are met," said ***Mr. Ralph Tarraf, EU Representative****. " The Ministry of Social Development has made remarkable achievements in terms of institutional capacity and delivery of services. The Cash Transfer Programme promotes social inclusion of the poor and vulnerable. The EU and Member States will continue to support the Ministry in putting people first and empowering vulnerable Palestinian families. This ultimately serves the growth and prosperity of the Palestinian society," he added.*

Payments are made through a network of local banks. Beneficiaries living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank will collect their allowances from 18 December.

This contribution, channelled through the PEGASE[(1)] Direct Financial Support to the PA, brings the total annual support to the CTP to €43.2 million in 2016, including €40 million from the European Union budget and the remaining part from the Governments of Austria, Ireland, Spain 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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