Press Release
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The EU provides €20 million to support families in need in Palestine

Today, the European Union has made a contribution of €20 million to the Palestinian Authority's quarterly payment of social allowances to poor Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

This contribution is the first payment channelled following the signing of the intra-Palestinian agreement between Fatah and Hamas. Nearly 80% of the 70,000 beneficiary families live in Gaza.

The EU's support to vulnerable families is a commitment to the welfare of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The EU supports the Ministry of Social Development to serve a total of 111,000 vulnerable families through an inclusive and equitable social protection system.

"*The EU stands firms in its support to vulnerable Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza. We are aware that the period ahead requires joint efforts to allow for the Palestinian Authority to fully resume its responsibilities in Gaza. This is vital to the welfare and inclusivity of the Palestinian society as a whole*," said **Deputy EU Representative Tomas Niklasson**. "*We stand ready to support, in all ways possible, the reconciliation efforts. This is vital to facilitate much needed basic and social services to Palestinians,"* he added.

Background:

Most of the European Union's assistance to the Palestinian Authority is channelled through PEGASE (1) Direct Financial Support to the PA, 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. The social allowances are paid to households living in extreme poverty who are registered in the cash transfer programme of the Ministry of Social Development.

Since February 2008, over €2.3 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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