Press Release
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The European Union Launches Agricultural Programmes in Palestine

The European Union and the Palestinian Authority (PA) launched today the Assistance to Agriculture Programmes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in a ceremony organized in Bethlehem. The ceremony was attended by Palestinian Prime Minister, Rami Al Hamdallah, Deputy EU Representative, Tomas Niklasson, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Palestinian Agriculture Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund and a large group of Palestinian farmers benefiting from the assistance.

The Assistance to Agriculture Programmes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip work with farmers and agribusinesses that have been directly affected by the Israeli occupation. This support will help around 900 farmers to restart, repair or replace their damaged businesses.

The financial support allocated by the EU to the Assistance to Agriculture in the West Bank and Gaza Strip amounts to 17.5 million euros. The programme benefits around 900 farmers in the West Bank and Gaza. In the West Bank, the programme focuses on agribusiness located in Area C, while focusing on private sector reconstruction in Gaza.

The EU works with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Palestinian Agriculture Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund to implement this programme. The payments are made by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Finance and Planning through a network of local banks in the West Bank.

"The EU and the Palestinian Authority work together in the agricultural sector to support farmers in Palestine to resume and sustain their economic activities. The EU support covers reconstruction, repair, and replacement of damaged capital equipment that resulted from the practices of the Israeli occupation. This is much needed to empower the agricultural sector and secure its development and growth," said the ***Deputy EU Representative, Tomas Niklasson*** *at the launching ceremony****.*** *"This sector is one of the backbones of our support to Palestinian development and resilience. It demonstrates in concrete terms our commitment to the building of a future Palestinian State and the vision of the two-state solution," he added.*

To date, the EU has provided its contribution of 1.46 million euros to 251 farmers in the Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus, Tubas, Bethlehem, Hebron, Salfit and Jericho Governorates. The two programmes will roll out in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Background:
Most of the European Union's assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA) 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. 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 through 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)*

For more information:
The Office of the European Union Representative
Shadi Othman (02 5415 867, 0599 673 958); Inas Abu Shirbi (02 541 5 859, 0599 673 957)
http://eeas.europa.eu/palestine