Press Release
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Celebrating Europe Day in Palestine

The Office of the European Union Representative celebrated the 68th anniversary of Europe Day through four events that were held in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Gaza.

On 08 and 09 May 2018, the EU celebrated Europe Day in Jerusalem and Ramallah with hundreds of Palestinian and international partners working towards a peaceful resolution of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. At the Manger Square in Bethlehem, the EU celebrated Europe Day on 07 May with an open-air exhibition. The EU Village brought together over 12 EU Member States and institutions to showcase European heritage, culture and engagement with Palestinians. In Gaza, the EU marked Europe Day at the SOS Children Village on 10 May with around 200 children.

The events organized on the occasion of Europe Day reflected the spirit of partnership and values shared between the European Union and the Palestinians. The European Union is determined to continue working with all partners in the world, including in Palestine.

Sixty-eight years ago today, French foreign minister Robert Schuman proposed a joint authority to oversee French and German production of coal and steel, launching an ambitious and remarkable project which has shaped the course of European history and redefined Europe's place in the world. This project – of peace, of partnership, of shared values and solidarity – is far from over. In today's world, the European Union is more indispensable than ever. The European Union is a living project, adapting to and taking on new challenges with each passing year. We are determined that our project should continue to be a force for good in the world, and look forward to working with all our partners to this end.

"*We celebrated Europe Day this year in Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Gaza. Marking Europe Day in four different locations in the same country is unique in the world. This, of course, is an opportunity to extend our celebrations across the Palestinian territories, but also reflects the tough reality of the continuous geographical and political fragmentation of Palestine*," said the **EU Representative Ralph Tarraf**. "*The European Union and its Members States will stay the course politically to support a two State solution which deserves this label. We do support this project not just by declarations, but also by very concrete measures. The European Union and its Member States are by far the largest contributors of development assistance in Palestine. And Palestine is by a large margin the number one recipient of development assistance per capita in the world. Our development assistance is of course not just about development. It is a strong and unequivocal testimony to underpin our political goal to support the creation of an independent and viable State of Palestine*," he added.

Background:

The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources, and destinies. Together, they have built a zone pf stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

Europe Day celebrates the founding of the European Union. On May 9th, the European Union marks the symbolic date when in 1950 French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman put forward his ideas of a united Europe to bring lasting peace and prosperity to the continent. From the original Six to twenty-eight European countries today, the European Union is spreading democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights to more than 500 million European citizens. What started off as a coal and steel community and then turned into a broader economic club has since turned into an outward-looking Union with a growing role and reach, acting as a force for good in Europe and globally.

Photos from Europe Day in Bethlehem here

Speech of EU Representative, Ralph Tarraf on the occasion of Europe Day, 08 and 09 May 2018 – Jerusalem and Ramallah

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