EU High Representative Catherine Ashton meets Palestinian leaders and lays first stone for security complex in Jenin

Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, has today concluded her visit to occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) by laying the ceremonial first stone for construction of Security Compound (Muqata) in Jenin, West Bank, together with Prime Minister Fayyad.

"The Security Compound in Jenin will contribute importantly to the rule of law and security of the people. As a project it demonstrates the significance of the work going on every day to build the Palestinian state and provide for people. I would like to pay tribute to Prime Minister Fayyad for his amazing work to build the institutions of a state," said Catherine Ashton at the stone laying ceremony for the construction of the Security Compound, which the European Union is cofinancing with 9.24 million euro as part of the wider contribution to security sector reform of the Palestinian Authority.

The EU has currently ongoing activities of over 40 million euros in support of improved Palestinian Rule of Law, including infrastructure, capacity building to different judicial institutions, support to Palestinian Civil Police as well as civil society active in the field of human rights and security. The Security Compound in Jenin, due to be built by 2013, will house the General Commander, the Brigadier, the National Guard Service and the Police.

During her two-day visit to oPt the High Representative met President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad as well as Hanan Ashrawi, Member of the PLO Executive Committee. She also met with the Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, who is travelling in the region.
"I came to the region to continue deliberations with the Palestinians and the Israelis on the Middle East Peace Process. With President Abbas and PM Fayyad I discussed the future of the Palestinian people and my desire to see the peace negotiations restarted and for them to reach a satisfactory conclusion," said Catherine Ashton after her meetings in Ramallah.

From oPt Catherine Ashton will today travel to Israel where she will meet with President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defence Minister Ehud Barak, Foreign Minister and Deputy PM Avigdor Liberman and Kadima Chairwoman Tzipi Livni.

EUHR Ashton will end her travel to the Middle East on Monday with the visit to Jordan.

The coverage of the trip is available on the Europe by Satellite.