José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

Speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the Police Training Centre

Police Training Centre, Jericho
8 July 2012
Your Excellency Prime Minister Salam Fayyad,
Major General Hazem Attallah,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First I would like to thank you all for the warm welcome I have received here today.
I am very pleased to be in Jericho, one of the most historic towns in the world and one of the most important Palestinian cities today.
And I am very pleased to inaugurate the Palestine College for Police Sciences alongside the Prime Minister.

The EU is strongly committed to a two-state solution. Heeding the aspirations of the Palestinians for statehood is a crucial element for lasting peace, stability and prosperity in the region.
This is why we have been firmly supporting the Palestinian state-building process, aiming at a Palestinian state based on the rule of law and respect of human rights.
We have been doing it not just through words but also deeds. The European Union is the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority contributing over half of total international financial assistance. This college is in itself a concrete illustration of our support in developing future state institutions.

Security is essential for democracy, stability and economic development. Over the last years, the security situation in the West Bank has considerably improved. But it is also important that, in parallel, human rights are fully observed and respected.

It is important that the Palestinian authorities uphold these values, in particular the right to peaceful protest and demonstration, the freedom of expression and of the media; as well as the proper treatment of arrested persons and of detainees.
Mechanisms for civilian oversight of the security forces need to be reinforced. We stand ready to pursue our support to the Palestinian Authority in this direction.

The construction of this college is also a good example of the strong co-ordination that exists between the European Union, its Member States and other donors in their support to the Palestinian Authority.

While the European Commission contributed over 20% of the €15 million cost of this facility, its opening today would not have been possible without the bilateral contributions of Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, as well as Canada.

We have been honouring our commitments even in times of economic turbulence. We call also on other donors, especially donors in the region, to do the same and maintain their financial support to the Palestinian Authority.

I know that you did not waste any time and that the College is already working. Allow me therefore to congratulate the first graduates, among them 20 women who have celebrated the completion of their training last April.

I am confident that the Palestine College for Police Sciences will quickly establish itself as a reference institution for training officers and staff of the Palestinian Civil Police, enabling them to better serve the citizens, and gain the respect and trust of the Palestinian people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today I am also here to sign an important agreement with Prime Minister Fayyad in support of the Palestinian Authority’s efforts to promote the rule of law and democracy.
Respect for the rule of law is key to a future Palestinian state. And the European Union has worked side by side with the Palestinian Authority in this area.
Already over the past five years we have invested €32 million in the Palestinian justice sector and €53 million in the security sector.

The European Union’s police and rule of law mission has brought police officers and representatives from our own judicial systems to work alongside and train their Palestinian counterparts. I am grateful to the EU’s Member States for providing the necessary personnel for this vital mission, and also for their financial support, which adds to the contribution provided from the EU budget.

Today’s new financing agreement will provide an additional €20 million to the Palestinian Authority to build on the good work that has already been done.

This will allow for the development of several projects, notably:

The construction of eight new police stations in rural communities;

A new correctional and rehabilitation centre in Jenin, to help improve conditions for prisoners and;

The establishment of a modern post-graduate degree in legal and judicial studies to be run by competent Palestinian academic institutions.

It will also assist civil society in monitoring security sector institutions and their performance, especially with regard to human rights.

Finally, this agreement sets aside €2 million to support transparent legislative and presidential elections in conformity with international standards.

The Palestinian Authority has organised free and fair elections in the past. We hope it will be in a position to do so again, and soon.

The holding of elections is part and parcel of the Palestinian state-building process and an essential feature of the Palestinian’s civic and political rights.

To conclude let me reiterate the European’s Union strong commitment in supporting the state-building efforts of the Palestinian authority and strengthening bilateral relations, as well as in building a better future for all Palestinians.

I thank you for your attention.