



Press Release - European Union
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Social Affairs, Energy and Economy: European Union and Palestinian Authority policy dialogue

The European Union (EU) and the Palestinian Authority (PA) concluded on Wednesday 3rd October three days of policy dialogue in the areas of Social Affairs & Health; Transport, Energy, Environment & Water; and Economic & Financial matters, respectively. Under the chairmanship of the Palestinian Authority, representatives from the two sides met in Ramallah as part of an annual dialogue in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which guides the partnership between the EU and the PA.

Officials from the EU and their counterparts at the relevant Palestinian Authority Ministries (including Ministries of Social Affairs, Health, Transport, Environmental Affairs, Finance, National Economy, the Palestinian Energy Authority, Palestinian Water Authority and Palestinian Monetary Authority) engaged in detailed exchanges on latest developments in these areas both within the EU and the PA.

"Our cooperation with the Palestinian Authority is based on partnership and dialogue. Over the last three days we have had extensive exchanges on a number of important areas where we have achieved considerable progress in partnership with the PA". "We work closely with the Ministry of Social Affairs especially with regards to the PA's social protection policy reform. In terms of our economic dialogue our priority remains the long-term fiscal sustainability of the PA in line with its plans" said the **EU Representative Mr. John Gatt-Rutter**. "The sustainable management of natural resources, especially water, is a strategic issue for the EU and we strongly believe that progress in this sector can accelerate growth". "We also updated the PA on the challenges which the EU itself is facing in particular concerning our own economic and sovereign debt problems", added the EU Representative.

In the Sub-Committee for Social Affairs and Health, the points covered this year included developments in the field of employment, social protection, health, gender equality and health. The dialogue of the Sub-Committee on Transport/Energy/Environment/Water focused on the PA's energy sector reform programme, including energy efficiency and renewable energy resources such as solar initiatives. The parties also discussed progress on the European Investment Bank's support for the development of a seawater desalination plant in Gaza, the improvement of the electricity transmission in the West Bank as well as transport infrastructure in the oPt. The Palestinian macroeconomic and fiscal situation was at the centre of the Sub-Committee of Economic and Financial Affairs. The partners also took stock of the progress made in reforms on public finance management, private sector and statistical issues.

Background:

The three meetings took place in the context of the ENP and the EU – PA Joint Action Plan. A new Joint Action Plan for the duration of five years is being negotiated with the PA and due for endorsement later this year. The EU – PA policy dialogue consists of a total of six forums on issues ranging from human rights to trade. This round of policy dialogue with the PA was preceded by consultations between the EU and civil society organisations.

Contact:

The Office of the European Union Representative:

Antonia Zafeiri, Tel: 02 5415 859, Mob: 0548 024 915; Shadi Othman, Mob: 0599 673 958

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