



2009

Governance



PEGASE: Helping to build a Palestinian State

Promoting good governance and the rule of law



The *Palestinian Reform and Development Plan* (PRDP) sets out the Palestinian Authority's (PA) vision for institutional reform and development and its ambitions to establish a democratic and sovereign Palestinian state. The European Union (EU) supports the PA's governance reform agenda through the PEGASE mechanism. The EU co-chairs the *Governance Strategy Group* attended by members of the international community and the PA to discuss and implement these reform initiatives.

Ensuring stable public finances

The PA faces a significant budgetary shortfall each year due to the extremely difficult political and economic situation. The PRDP's

Open and Accountable Government programme sets out a series of ambitious reforms to address this challenge. The EU fully supports this process, and is financing a number of major projects in public financial management. A €4 million project to support the Internal Control and Internal Audit Departments of the Ministry of Finance is helping to improve public financial management and to increase efficiency and accountability. A long-term project with the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau, the PA's external audit institution, was recently launched. The EU also finances the modernising of Palestinian Customs through the third ASYCUDA programme, a €2.5 million project.

The new face of Palestinian judges

Judge Hala is one of two women to have recently completed a six-month training programme for judges run by the EU-funded SEYADA judicial empowerment programme at the Palestinian Judicial Training Institute as part of the PRDP Justice Now reform process. A former lawyer and legal consultant, Judge Hala will soon be appointed to a Palestinian court. The SEYADA training programme is unique in that it includes a practical component in the judges' training as well as theoretical components on civil and criminal law. "I benefited from the practical training hugely. We had mock trials and real-life court experience. I learned how to manage a trial session, to deal with case files and with lawyers," said Judge Hala.



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Reforming the judiciary

The PRDP launched the *Justice Now* reform process to strengthen the criminal and civil justice system and to train and appoint an impartial and efficient judiciary. The EU supports this judicial reform through a number of major programmes. These include: establishing the Palestinian Judicial Training Institute, a permanent professional training system; providing legal training for judges and prosecutors and IT training for all legal staff; setting up an inspection department and legal library that supports the High Judicial Council; and the provision of IT equipment for the judiciary. The EU has funded the compilation of a database of all Palestinian court judgements, which is an integral part of the Legal and Judicial Databank, Al-Muqtafi.

Modernising the police force

The PRDP identifies security as essential to economic growth and social development. The Palestinian Civil Police has brought about a

marked improvement in the security situation in the West Bank in recent times. *The EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories* (EUPOL COPPS), set up in 2006, provides the Palestinian Civil Police with technical assistance, training and advice on operational, human rights and civilian aspects of policing. The EU has contributed €5 million for civil police equipment including communications equipment and vehicles. Nearly €16 million has been provided by the EU for the reconstruction of the Jericho Police Training Centre, which was designed by EUPOL COPPS, and for regional police and security facilities.

Building democratic institutions

The EU supports the Palestinian democratic process both by helping the PA to build functioning democratic institutions and by funding fair, open and transparent elections. The Palestinian Central Elections Commission has received substantial support from the EU since it was established. EU Election Observers ensure the integrity of the democratic process. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, which is responsible for gathering and analysing social and economic data, also receives EU funding. For example, the 2007 Census was financed by the EU. Support for PA institutions is complemented by the EU's funding of NGO activities to ensure accountable and effective institutions.

Fair and transparent elections

The Palestinian Central Elections Commission (CEC) is an independent body in charge of administering, conducting and supervising presidential, legislative and local elections in the occupied Palestinian territory. The EU is the single largest donor to the CEC. In 2008, the EU agreed a PEGASE grant of €750,000 for the CEC, building on earlier investments of over €13 million, to update the Palestinian voter registry, to provide elections outreach programmes in schools, and to modernise the commission's IT facilities. Dr Hanna Nassir, Chairman of the CEC, believes that these ongoing projects are essential to the CEC's work, "We are a permanent election commission. Between elections, we run many projects to raise awareness about democracy and the rule of law. Our voter registry needs to be updated every year to be in line with international standards. EU funding of CEC has been very effective in helping us carry out our work."

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