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The European Union launches the 3rd annual "Study in Europe" days from Gaza

Today the office of the European Union Representative and the Consulates-general of a number of EU Member States launched from Gaza City the 3rd annual "**Study in Europe**" days in Palestinian universities. Through informal and interactive dialogue and presentations, these one-day events at universities in the West Bank and Gaza will provide students with a first hand opportunity to learn about the various graduate and post-graduate programmes at European universities to which they can apply, and the scholarships that are available.

The event launched at the French Cultural Centre in Gaza, showcased the opportunities available at more than 4,000 higher education institutions in Europe, from top-level research establishments to small, teaching-focused colleges.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Consul General of France in Jerusalem Mr. Frederic Desagneaux underlined that it was the first time that this event was organised in Gaza. Welcoming the students he stressed that France and Europe were determined to foster their cooperation with Gaza Universities in order to give the opportunity to their students to complement their academic background. He mentioned the programme of scholarships carried out by the French government which benefits to 13 Gazan students who are among the 200 Palestinian students currently attending French Universities. He concluded by reaffirming the necessity to lift the blockade that affects Gaza and its population, assuring the students that France and its European partners would continue to exert all efforts to enable them to go out of Gaza and study in European Universities if it were their choice.

From his side, Christian Berger, the European Union Representative, added: "Hundreds of Palestinian students from Gaza and the West Bank are studying now in European universities and exploring as well the European culture. We believe that the key for a better future is a well educated generation that can build and make a difference. Therefore and regardless of all the difficulties, we have chosen this year to start from Gaza that continues to suffer from unacceptable and politically counterproductive policy of closure. We are very happy to see that Gazan students are determined to continue their studies and expand their knowledge under all these frustrating conditions."

The opening ceremony included also a presentation by the educational section at the office of the European Union Representative about "Erasmus Mundus" which is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with third-countries. So far nearly 180 Erasmus Mundus mobility grants were given to Palestinian students and scholars, 53 of them to citizens from Gaza.

Two Palestinian alumni of European universities shared their experiences of studying in Europe with other students in an interactive dialogue where they talked about the application process, the challenges, and their own perceptions of studying in Europe.

The EU, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom hosted information booths enabling students to get more detailed information on opportunities in each country, as well as details on how to apply for scholarships.

Similar events are planned in the coming weeks at a number of universities in the West Bank where EU Member States will participate.

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