



Press Release - European Union
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European Union helps the Palestinian Authority provide essential social protection to families in need

On Monday 3rd October the European Union (EU) will be making its third contribution this year to the Palestinian Authority's quarterly payment of social allowances to poor Palestinian households, across the West Bank and Gaza. This contribution, channelled through the PEGASE⁽¹⁾ mechanism, amounts to over €9.9 million (ILS 50.8 million) and is funded by the EU (€8.9 million) and the Government of Finland (€1 million).

Eligible beneficiaries are identified in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Social Affairs, through the latter's national cash assistance programme – a programme designed to provide basic safety net to the poorest and most vulnerable Palestinian citizens. The assistance takes the form of a cash allowance.

The €9.9 million contribution, through PEGASE, will directly benefit 50,556 eligible Palestinian families – out of 87,000 receiving assistance in the framework of the National Cash Transfer Programme.

The **Minister of Social Affairs, Mrs Majeda Al Masri**, said:

It is our responsibility to protect the poor and the marginalised. For this reason, the Ministry of Social Affairs is striving to develop programs that deliver efficient humanitarian and social services to improve the well-being of these vulnerable groups. In line with the Ministry's objective to reach out to populations in need, this payment will benefit 10,000 new eligible families in Gaza. Around 87 thousand poor families and marginalised households in the West Bank and Gaza will receive assistance in the framework of the national cash transfer programme. We continue to work in close collaboration with community organisations, and no efforts are spared to deliver the highest level of services to beneficiaries of our programmes. Not to forget here the role of partner donors, who have been supporting the Ministry in its endeavours both financially and technically – in particular the European Union, which is the biggest partner and supporter of our programs."

The **Acting Representative of the European Union, Mr John Gatt-Rutter** said:

"The EU and Finland are joining efforts to fund this year's third payment of social benefits to the Ministry of Social Affairs' cash transfer programme. The EU reiterates the conclusion of the recent donor's meeting in New York (Ad Hoc Liaison Committee) that we should all work along side the PA in providing predictable budget support to the Palestinian government and assisting it in achieving fiscal sustainability. From 2008 to present, PEGASE has been systematically contributing on a quarterly basis to the payment of social allowances to the Ministry of Social Affairs' cash assistance programme – representing a total of over €141 million. The Ministry continues its remarkable efforts to support the poorest of the poor in the oPt. The EU will continue to be a reliable partner especially at this critical time".

Payments will be made across a network of local banks across the West Bank and Gaza. Beneficiaries residing in the West Bank will receive their allowance directly through individual bank accounts. In Gaza, beneficiaries will continue to collect their allowance over-the-counter. Beneficiaries may collect their allowances as of Monday 3rd October 2011, at the bank branch indicated by their social worker.

Background:



Most of the EU assistance to the Palestinian Authority is channelled through PEGASE, the financial mechanism launched in 2008 to support the three-year Reform and Development Plan presented in 2007. As well as helping to meet a substantial proportion of its running costs, European funds support major reform and development programmes in key ministries, to help prepare the PA for statehood in line with the plan put forward by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in August 2009. Since February 2008, approximately €1.17 billion have been disbursed through the PEGASE Direct Financial Support programmes. In addition, the EU has provided assistance to the Palestinian people through UNRWA and a wide range of cooperation projects.

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