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Press Release

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The EU and the Palestinian Bar Association announce the launching of a new project

Ramallah – The Acting EU Representative, John Gatt-Rutter, and the Chairman of the Palestinian Bar Association, Nabil Mushahwar, launched today a 1.4 million Euro grant to support the Palestinian Bar Association. The proposed action shall serve the overall objective of enhancing the competency, capability, proficiency effectiveness and professionalism of Palestinian lawyers through institutional strengthening of the Palestinian Bar Association in order to deliver systematic, cost-effective, efficient and planned services to its members and community. The launching event brought together representatives of Palestinian government bodies, legal institutions, and international organisations that implement joint activities with the PBA.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman of the PBA, Nabil Mushahwar, stressed the importance of the European Union's support to the rule of law sector in the Palestinian territories and highly appreciated the role the EU plays to support PBA's operation and activities. Mr. Mushahwar added "The EU grant will help the PBA promote lawyers' capacities and establish the principle of the rule of law within the Palestinian society."

From his side, the Acting EU Representative, John Gatt-Rutter, emphasized the importance the EU relation with Palestinian Bar Association. Gatt-Ruuter added: "in various forms, the EU has been one of the key actors supporting the institutional development of the Bar Association and the running of trainings. We are confident that this new support to the activities of the Bar Association will provide an added value to all the work being done to date and in that respect, the role of the SEYADA II project has been crucial."

Alfons B. Lentze, Director of the EU-funded project (SEYADA-II), made a brief presentation of the project's activities explaining the main objectives of this action.

The EU two-year, Euro 1.4 million grant to the PBA is part of an ongoing cooperation with the PBA. The financial grant is set to support the PBA's capacities and upgrade the legal profession in three major components: Component (1) is designed to develop professional capacities of trainee and practicing

lawyers by preparing training schemes to be operated by the PBA. These include training on relevant practical subjects to improve skills and knowledge of law graduates in their two years training program managed and implemented by the PBA as well as examination rules, and monitoring and evaluation systems. Continuing education programmes will also be offered to practicing lawyers in new, significant themes in the legal profession. Component (2) supports launching a public sensitisation campaign on the PBA activities and citizens' rights. In this context, a technical office will be established to supervise PBA publications (a periodical magazine and monthly newsletter). Component (3) provides support to create an IT (automated) system to further promote effective and efficient PBA functions and to develop the PBA website.

For further information:

Seyada project

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The EU-funded project, Seyada 2, will run until August 2012 and also supports the Palestinian Judicial Training Institute, the High Judicial Council, the development of Legal Aid, and advice on Constitutional Review.

Seyada 2 is implemented by a consortium led by ICON-INSTITUT Public Sector GmbH and including the Belgian Development Cooperation Agency (BTC-CTB) and the Centre for International Legal Cooperation (CILC).

Seyada II project activities

- Seyada II will support the **High Judicial Council**. The project will support the work of the Council's Inspection Office that has overall responsibility for quality control such as evaluating judges' work, ensuring that the law and procedures are properly applied and that judgments are

properly assessed. Seyada II will assist the Council's Technical Office to facilitate access to information and legal resources for judges and for the legal community. The project will support the work of the Council's Media Department and train Court of Cassation judges to ensure that judgments are well reasoned. Seyada II will help establish legal libraries throughout the West Bank, and will support the procurement of IT equipment required by the justice sector.

- Seyada II will assist the **Palestinian Judicial Institute** to improve legal professionalism through initial and continuing professional training programmes such as a judicial training system for judges and public prosecutors, the development of a two-year Judicial Studies Diploma Programme, training for trainers' activities and professional education programmes for non-justice staff.
- Seyada II is the first instance of major international donor funding for the **Palestinian Bar Association** to support institutional and capacity building and to run initial and continuing professional training for lawyers.
- Seyada II will assist the Palestinian Authority to extend the **Legal Aid** system in the Palestinian Territory so that all citizens can access justice regardless of their means.
- Seyada II aims to improve **Constitutional Review** by the High Court to help ensure the compatibility of laws and regulations with Palestinian Basic Law. The project will review legislation, train judges in constitutional issues, as well as work to develop judges' knowledge and skills in judicial review.

European Union activities supporting the Rule of Law in Palestine

The EU supports a number of important initiatives to improve Palestinian rule of law, investing more than €40 million in such programmes. Current programmes include:

- New Nablus muqata complex, providing central infrastructure for the security services and detention facilities complying with international standards (€15 million).
- Construction of the Jenin muqata (€8.5million).
- The EU is the single largest single donor to the Jericho Police Training Centre.
- The EU works closely with many local civil society organisations on rule of law projects.
- The EU will shortly deploy a team of experts in civil justice to work alongside EUPOL COPPS which focuses on criminal justice.