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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## European Union supports families living in extreme poverty in the West Bank and Gaza

The European Union is making its second contribution, this year, to the Palestinian Authority's quarterly payment of social allowances to Palestinian families in need in the West Bank and Gaza. This contribution, channelled through PEGASE<sup>[1]</sup>, amounts to just under €9.9 million.

Identified in cooperation with the PA Ministry of Finance, eligible beneficiaries are households living in extreme poverty registered under the cash transfer programme of the PA Ministry of Social Affairs. The programme is designed to provide basic safety net to poorest and most vulnerable Palestinians in the West bank and Gaza, through cash and in-kind assistance.

The contribution, equivalent to just under €9.9 million, will directly benefit 64,417 eligible Palestinian families. Over half of the beneficiaries live in Gaza.

Payments will be made across a network of local banks. In Gaza, where payments are processed over-the-counter, beneficiaries may collect their allowance at the bank branch indicated by their social worker from 23 June to 19 July 2012. Beneficiaries living in the West Bank may collect their allowance, directly through individual bank accounts, as of 24 June.

### Background:

Most of the European Union's assistance to the Palestinian Authority is channelled through PEGASE, the financial mechanism launched in 2008 to support the PA Reform and Development Plan (2008-2010) and the subsequent PA Palestinian National Plan (2011-2013). 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, €1.34 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.

For further information in Arabic and English on the EU's assistance to the occupied Palestinian territory and the PEGASE mechanism, please visit: <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/>

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