



Press Release
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European Neighbourhood Policy Progress Report for Palestine: steady progress in cooperation despite challenges

The EU Representative, Mr. John Gatt-Rutter and the Palestinian Authority Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Riad Al Malki, presented today the 2012 European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) progress report for Palestine. In its annual Progress Reports, the European Commission takes stock of the reform achievements made by countries within the ENP and identifies the areas where further efforts are needed. The European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy first published the annual “neighbourhood package” on March 2013 which includes progress reports on 16 of EU's closest neighbours¹.

"In 2012 the Palestinian Authority made reasonable progress in implementing the EU – PA Action Plan in the areas where it is able to exercise control. Yet the challenges imposed primarily by the occupation and the deepening fiscal crisis continued to have an impact on the Palestinian Authority, threatening its viability and undermining its ability to deliver essential services to the population. These realities, coupled with the on-going division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the inability to hold national elections and the continued suspension of the work of the legislature all risk seriously undermining the achievements in the state-building process", said **the EU Representative**.

The report describes all reforms initiated, carried out successfully, or delayed during 2012 in the different areas of cooperation between the EU and Palestine. Some of the issues reported deserve special attention. In the political area, the **democratic legitimacy** of the Palestinian Authority continued to decrease in the absence of national **elections**. A positive development was the holding of local elections. Serious concerns remain regarding freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, particularly in light of the arrests of journalists and bloggers. Regarding **trade**-related issues, the Agreement between the EU and the PA on the further liberalisation of trade in **agriculture**, processed agricultural, fish and fisheries products, entered into force in 2012. An increasing number of Palestinian students and researchers benefited from different European programmes in the **education** area.

The report provides a series of recommendations on the basis of the EU – PA Action Plan. In 2013 the PA is invited - inter alia – to: (i) work towards the holding of presidential and legislative elections in Palestine in line with international standards and (ii) reform and further develop the Palestinian security sector.

Read full report here in [EN](#) and [AR](#)

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¹ Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.