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European Union provides new €13 million to East Jerusalem Hospitals to sustain top patient service for all Palestinians

Today the European Union (EU) and the East Jerusalem Hospitals marked an award of €13 million from the EU to the hospitals at a ceremony organized at Augusta Victoria Hospital. The event took place in the presence of Michael Köhler, Director for Neighbourhood at the European Commission's DG DEVCO and Dr Tawfiq Nasser, Coordinator for the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network. It also served as an occasion to celebrate the Joint Commission International¹ accreditation for quality and patient safety awarded to Augusta Victoria and St John's Eye Hospitals earlier this month.

The EU responded to the major cash flow problems of East Jerusalem Hospitals as a result of the Palestinian Authority's financial crisis. With €10 million in 2012 and €13 million in 2013 the EU is covering the referral costs over a period of 1,5 years (January 2012 to March 2013) for patients referred for treatment in East Jerusalem Hospitals by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. By addressing this severe debt problem, hospital facilities remained open and medical staff continued working to provide much-needed specialized health services to patients across West Bank and Gaza. The EU mobilized its recently strengthened cash transfer mechanism, PEGASE, to deliver its funds to the PA. This comprehensive mechanism is also open for other donors to use.

"The EU continues to be a close and reliable partner to the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian people. The objective of our support, announced today, is to allow the Palestinian Authority meet its obligations towards the East Jerusalem Hospitals and ultimately ensure the provision of essential services to the Palestinian people. All six facilities of the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network provide quality specialized health services which are not available elsewhere in Palestine. Preserving their work is important", said the EU Representative Mr. John Gatt-Rutter. *"In the last four years we have worked closely with the World Health Organization and the hospitals to make sure all patients receive the best possible health service. The international accreditation awarded to Augusta Victoria and St John's Eye Hospital is testament to this work",* added the EU Representative.

Speaking on behalf of the Network, Dr. Tawfiq Nasser, coordinator of the Network, expressed the sincere appreciation of all the hospitals for the support extended by the EU through WHO to all the hospitals. He emphasized that this type of grant guarantees the health and wellbeing of patients, helps the Palestinian Ministry of health sustain its services to its people, and empowers the national health system to respond to community needs while reducing costs of treatment referrals outside the Palestinian territories. That comes in addition to strengthening the Palestinian professional and civil society in East Jerusalem.

The European Union and the World Health Organization have supported the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network for the last four years. Through the latest phase of this programme the EU provided €2,4 million which allowed the hospitals to improve the quality of their health

¹ The JCI is a US based organization that has established patient safety and quality service standards and goals for health service facilities

services and upgrade their status to the highest international standards. As a result, Augusta Victoria and St John's Eye Hospital were recently awarded the Joint Commission International accreditation for quality and patient safety.

Background:

The East Jerusalem Hospitals serve as the main centres for specialized care within the Palestinian health system. Patients needing services and procedures that are not available in the West Bank and Gaza – such as specialist oncology, renal care and cardiac surgeries - are referred for treatment in the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network facilities by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. There are six health institutions in East Jerusalem: Augusta Victoria Hospital, Makassed Hospital, St Joseph Hospital, St John Eye Hospital, Palestinian Red Crescent Maternity Hospital and Princess Basma Rehabilitation Centre. The EU is supporting all of these six institutions through a programme with World Health Organization, with two main objectives: to ensure that quality of treatment follows the highest international standards of hospital care, and to support the evolution of the East Jerusalem Hospital Network. The Network has the capacity to collaborate closely and share certain tasks such as the organisation of permits for patients coming from West Bank and Gaza and collaboration on procurement of drugs and disposable items.

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