

Brussels, 27th June 2002

Commission decides on emergency rehabilitation of administrative infrastructure of Palestinian Authority

The Commission has decided to finance a €5 m programme to launch a programme providing immediate assistance to rehabilitate the administrative infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority. The main objective of this programme financed by the Rapid Reaction Mechanism¹, is to allow the Palestinian Authority to resume fully the provision of services to the population of the Palestinian Territories. This rapid assistance is essential for the restoration of budgetary management and accountability capacity and for the Palestinian Authority to comply fully with the conditions of transparency and similar requirements attached to EU assistance. This assistance package also represents first additional support of the EU in response to the call of the international community and announcements made by the Palestinian leadership to embark on reform of the PA and to prepare for democratic elections.

The Commission has decided to launch a programme designed to provide immediate assistance with the objective of allowing the Palestinian Authority to return to its crucial role in providing services to the population of the Palestinian Territories. This rapid assistance will contribute to the restoration of the capacity of budgetary management and accountability of the Palestinian Authority. It is essential for the Palestinian Authority to continue to comply successfully with the transparency and other conditionalities attached to EU budgetary assistance.

The programme will provide information technology and office equipment to key ministries of the Palestinian Authority, those delivering essential welfare services to the population (such as the Health Ministry), those responsible for revenue raising and budgetary management (Finance Ministry), and those with a lead role in the reconstruction effort (e.g. Transport Ministry). Re-establishing this administrative capability will be an essential requirement for the effective implementation of longer term EC programmes, which are designed to make faster progress towards specific reform objectives.

The programme is being closely co-ordinated with the programmes of the World Bank, UNDP and bi-lateral EU donors. This programme follows a substantial programme of humanitarian assistance launched by ECHO (€3.5 million). Complementary follow-up actions are being planned under the MEDA programme, on the basis of a detailed independent needs assessment currently being undertaken.

¹ IP/01/255 of 26 February 2001: Council adopts Rapid Reaction Mechanism Commission now in position to intervene fast in civilian crisis management.

Background

Following the launch of Operation "Defensive Shield" in the West Bank by the Israeli army on 29 March 2002, the basic administrative capacity of the Palestinian Authority has been severely disrupted. Buildings, equipment and records have been damaged or destroyed. The cost of basic office equipment and information technology destroyed is estimated to be €15.7 million.

The European Union has supported over the last eight years the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the territories of the West Bank and Gaza, and has contributed significant resources to developing the Authority's administrative capacities, promoting a broad-based agenda of reform.

Website : http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/gaza/intro/index.htm

See also Commissioner Patten speech on EU budgetary assistance to PA:

http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action=getfile=gf&doc=SPEECH/02/293|0|RAPID&lg=EN&type=PDF