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HR Ashton and Palestinian PM Fayyad sign agreements worth €35 million to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people

Brussels, 19 March 2012 - High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the Commission Catherine Ashton signed today, on behalf of the European Union, two Financing Agreements with Prime Minister Fayyad for a total value of €35 million. This funding will enable the building of a medium-scale wastewater treatment plant in Tubas Tayasir areas in the West Bank (€22 million) and the upgrading of border crossing infrastructure at the Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom crossing point (€13 million), which is currently the only functioning goods crossing point in the Gaza Strip.

“Through this investment, the EU will significantly contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the Palestinian population through two separate projects in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip,” said Catherine Ashton. *“Fully aware of the scarcity of water resources in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), the EU has identified water as one of the focal sectors of its assistance. The upgrading of the Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom crossing point allows for an increased movement of goods in and out of the Gaza Strip. The EU has repeatedly called for the opening of the crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza.”*

The HR Catherine Ashton is hosting on 21 March in Brussels the Spring meeting of the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), the donor coordination group for the Palestinian people.

Background

Water and sanitation in the West Bank - 22 M€

This project under the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument will enable the financing of a medium-scale wastewater treatment plant in Tubas Tayasir areas in the West Bank. It will be the second wastewater treatment plant of its kind in the West Bank. The project will also be the first to re-use the treated water for agriculture purposes. Hence the outcome will not only be about sanitation but also about saving the limited groundwater resources of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). Water and Water Sanitation are a focal sector of the EU's financial assistance to the Palestinian people.

P R E S S

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Upgrading of Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom crossing point in the Gaza Strip - 13M€

This project is part of the commitment made by the European Union Foreign Ministers in the aftermath of the Gaza flotilla in 2010 to extend the EU's support to the improvement of the crossings infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. It is an EU crisis response measure under the Instrument for Stability (IfS). It will allow the expansion of the only currently open goods crossing point in the Gaza Strip and consists of the construction and expansion of hard infrastructure (loading and inspection areas, warehouses etc.) and the supply of equipment (IT, weigh-bridge, x-ray equipment). It will be carried out by the Palestinian Authority in full coordination with the Israeli authorities.
