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The EU and the Palestinian Authority conclude negotiations on a new ENP Joint Action Plan

Salam Fayyad, Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, and Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission today announced the conclusion of negotiations between the European Union (EU) and the Palestinian Authority (PA) on a new European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan. The Action Plan sets out the objectives of EU-PA bilateral relations for the next five years.

In a ceremony marking the conclusion of negotiations during her visit to the occupied Palestinian territory, High Representative Ashton said:

“I am pleased to announce that we have now concluded negotiations on a new ENP Action Plan. This will mark a new phase in our privileged bilateral partnership with the Palestinian Authority. It is significant that the PA will be one of our first partners in the region to conclude such a plan, which reflects the EU’s new response to changes in the region. The EU reiterates its commitment to the institution and state-building objectives of the Palestinian Authority and to further deepen bilateral relations with the future state of Palestine. This is an ambitious plan for the EU and the PA, which has demonstrated its ability to be a full partner for the EU within our Neighbourhood Policy and has made a strategic political choice to anchor its socio-economic development with the European Union. The ties between the Palestinians and the EU are deep and long standing. I am confident we can increasingly translate these ties into mutually beneficial outcomes.”

Prime Minister Fayyad said: *“We are both pleased and proud to have concluded negotiations with the EU on this new European Neighborhood Policy Action Plan, especially with the promise this carries for establishing a full-fledged Association Agreement between the EU and the future state of Palestine. We are especially pleased with the centrality of Palestinian statehood in this Plan’s design and objectives, and its emphasis on supporting our political, social, economic, and cultural rights in East Jerusalem. This is an opportunity for me to reiterate our deep gratitude for the most generous support which the EU has extended to the PA in its drive to achieve state-readiness and its overall socio-economic development effort in the occupied Palestinian Territory in its entirety.*

P R E S S

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Last but not least, we view this Plan, in all of its components, as a key element in our effort to attain a strategic partnership with the EU, a goal which we view as absolutely essential to success in attaining a just and durable peace in our region, including by the establishment of a fully sovereign, democratic and viable Palestinian state on all the territory occupied in 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.”

Reiterating their commitment to a two-state solution and the creation of an independent state of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security, the EU and the PA have, in this new Action Plan, outlined a number of key **priority objectives** including a commitment to:

- Deepen bilateral relations in preparation for establishing a full-fledged Association Agreement between the EU and the future state of Palestine.
- Work together towards building a Palestinian state based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and democratic, accountable institutions.
- Ensure sustainable PA finances and economic development throughout the occupied Palestinian territory.
- Support the political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem.
- Promote inclusive development in Area C.

The Action Plan also provides the framework for an EU-PA work programme across a wide variety of sectors including justice and home affairs, economic co-operation, trade-related issues, energy, water and transport. The EU and the PA will monitor progress in achieving the plan’s objectives through regular policy discussions.

Background

The Palestinian Authority (PA) and the European Community (EC) first established contractual relations in 1997 when the EC and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), for the benefit of the PA, concluded an Interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation. On the basis of this agreement, the EU-PA European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan was signed in May 2005 for a period of five years. Its validity has been extended while work on a new Action Plan for the next 3 to 5 years was ongoing. Following the conclusions of negotiations, both sides will now complete their internal ratification process in view of the adoption of the Action Plan by the EU-PLO Joint Committee.
