

EU reaffirms strong commitment to support for Palestine refugees and for Palestine's socio-economic development

The funding provided to UNRWA supports the Agency's efforts to ensure the provision of essential services to vulnerable Palestine refugees in the Middle East. This will bring the EU's total contributions to UNRWA in 2018 to €153 million. Moreover, the EU made available an additional €73.3 million to support living conditions in East Jerusalem and strengthen resilience of Palestinians, as well as to promote economic development in all of the occupied Palestinian territory. This brings the EU support to Palestinians to a total of €350 million.

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, **Johannes Hahn**, said: *"We are confirming our strong commitment to support Palestinians. The EU additional financial support to UNRWA, which is a factor of stability in the region, will allow the Agency to continue to provide essential services to vulnerable Palestine refugees. In parallel, the EU is working with the Agency to intensify fundamental reforms and tackle its recurrent financial deficit. In addition, we are investing in socio-economic development including by moving ahead on the critical project '[Gaza Central Desalination Plant](#)' and improving living conditions in East Jerusalem in line with our support to the two-state solution, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both Israel and a future state of Palestine."*

Background

EU support to UNRWA

The EU is the largest contributor to UNRWA. Together with the EU Member States, the EU's contribution for 2016, 2017 and 2018 amounted to €1.2 billion. This underlines the EU's strong commitment to supporting UNRWA's key role in responding to the needs of Palestine refugees for human development and protection in its five areas of operation, i.e. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The EU is working closely with UNRWA to take forward reform efforts to ensure the provision of basic fundamental services to vulnerable Palestinian refugees. The objective is to secure the continued and sustainable delivery of services to Palestine refugees.

2018 EU support package to Palestinians

EU support to the Palestinians covers a wide range of areas, including humanitarian assistance, capacity building, democratic governance and socio-economic development. In 2018, it amounted to a total of nearly €350 million. The funding is framed by the ["European Joint Strategy in Support of Palestine 2017-2020"](#) agreed by the EU Institutions, 22 EU Member States, as well as

Norway and Switzerland.

Today's newly adopted €73.3 million assistance package is part of the 2018 support for Palestine and comprises the following programmes:

- **“Support to East Jerusalem programme”** (€12 million) which responds to the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of Palestinians living in the Eastern part of the city and to their decreasing cultural visibility. It will contribute to better education and skills development but also create more job opportunities through private sector support, fostering the overall resilience of the Palestinians. Living conditions are expected to be improved through urban development and housing measures. Finally, investments will target the protection of the Palestinian heritage in East Jerusalem.
- **“Access to self-sufficient water and energy services programme”** (€31.4 million) through which the EU invests in long-term water, energy and sanitation infrastructure across the occupied Palestinian territory with an emphasis on the Gaza Strip, in order to ensure sufficient, equitable, affordable and sustainable access to basic services. A particularly important component of this programme is the allocation of €14.2 million (first tranche of the EU pledge of €77.1 million) for the construction of the Gaza Central Desalination Plant following the successful donor's conference in Brussels on 20 March 2018. The very high population density in Gaza is putting a significant strain on the ailing water infrastructure, which is collapsing because of repeated conflicts, over ten years of Israeli closure, and the intra-Palestinian split. In Gaza, currently 97% of the water is unfit for human consumption.
- **“Support to sustainable economic development and enhanced governance programme”** (€29.9 million) which will promote productive investments in Gaza and enhance economic development in Area C of the West Bank through a better provision of services. Investments in the energy sector intend to enhance its overall efficiency and to encourage the use of renewable energy. Lastly, the programme aims at facilitating democratic improvements, through a strengthened justice system and higher civic participation in electoral processes.

For more information

[EU support to Palestine](#)

[EU-Palestine relations](#)

[Factsheet – Gaza desalination plant](#)