

Brussels, 23 June 2008

## **Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner participates in Berlin Conference on Palestinian Civil Security and Rule of Law**

***International support for improving Palestinian Civil Security and strengthening the respect for rule of law will be in the centre of a conference on 24 June in Berlin. Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner will be one of the keynote speakers during the opening session of this conference and confirm the high level of commitment of the European Commission in continued support for the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people.***

Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner said: "Increased security in the Palestinian Territory is one fundamental factor for reviving the economy and thus achieving tangible results for Palestinians in their daily life. I believe that there can be mutual reinforcement between Palestinian security efforts and increased Israeli trust. Continued efforts by the Palestinian Authority on the security sector reform are crucial. At the same time Israeli security cooperation is important for those reforms to be successful. Today's conference is proof of the readiness of the international community to provide continued assistance not only for instance through expert advice, training of judges, prosecutors and associated staff and the reconstruction of muqata buildings but also by strengthening the EUPOL COPPS mission. "

The European Commission is at the forefront of international support for judicial reform and has a wide range of ongoing projects in support of the Palestinian Security Sector and rule of law. Through its "Empowerment of the Palestinian Judiciary" programme for instance 50 judges, prosecutors and associated staff have been trained recently. The programme has also supported the compilation of a comprehensive database of Palestinian court judgments for the use of all legal practitioners.

EUPOL COPPS, the EU Police Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support, works closely with the European Commission in this area. The Commission just provided €5 million for urgently needed equipment support to the Palestinian Civil Police to be procured and delivered in the coming months. This includes vehicles, uniforms, and communication systems.

All international donors can also use the PEGASE mechanism, set up by the European Commission after the Paris Donors' Conference, to facilitate pooling of resources towards Palestinian Authority projects to channel their contribution, in a coordinated way, simplifying procedures for the PA.

The EU is the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority. At the Paris Donors' Conference in December 2007, more than half of the pledges (total pledges of US\$ 7.7 bn) came from the EU. The European Commission alone pledged €440 mio which it frontloaded following a request by Prime Minister Fayyad in order to support the Palestinian Authority on the recurrent expenditure.

More information at: [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/mepp/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/mepp/index.htm)