

## **Working together for a future Palestinian State**

**Throughout the years, the European Union (EU) has been the most consistent and reliable donor to the Palestinian people.** The EU has worked persistently to assist the Palestinian Authority (PA) in setting up the institutions of a future democratic, independent, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel and its neighbours.

**Palestinian state-building process is critical for any peaceful, workable and lasting solution.** This process has further intensified since August 2009 following the adoption of Prime Minister Fayyad's landmark statebuilding plan, which the EU has supported both politically and financially. In 2010 alone, the European Union has already contributed more than €430 million to the Palestinian people. For the last few years, the EU has been disbursing an average of €500 million yearly. An equivalent amount has been committed by EU Member States.

**Despite the difficult situation on the ground, EU's support has started to reap benefits.** The latest World Bank's report states that if the Palestinian Authority maintains its current performance, it is well-positioned for the establishment of a state at any point in the near future. Nevertheless, statebuilding does not take place in a vacuum. To be fully successful it needs progress on the political track. This is why courageous political steps are needed for the peace talks to succeed.

**Bilateral relations between the EU and the Palestinian Authority resumed in 2008.** Ever since, the Palestinian Authority has made remarkable progress and is now a fully-engaged partner within the European Neighbourhood Policy of the EU. Young Palestinian people are studying in European universities; Palestinian cultural organizations participate in Euro Mediterranean fora, while Palestinian organisations benefit from EU technical expertise.

**The EU is committed to helping the Palestinian economy stand on its feet** – hence our focus on private sector development, especially in Gaza, in line with EU's consistent stance aiming to end the blockade. In the coming months, we also expect to conclude an agreement that would grant duty free and quota free access for Palestinian products to the European Union. We are also committed to supporting the Palestinian participation in different international organisations.

**The EU stands ready to be amongst the first to welcome a future State of Palestine in the world's family of democratic nations.**

**Stefan Füle,**

Commissioner for Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy