

Info

## **Secure and stable environment for Palestinian development - a high priority**

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**The European Parliament sees a secure and stable environment for the development of the Palestinian people as a high political priority, Michael Gahler (EPP-ED, DE) told the Paris Donor Conference on Palestine this Monday. Speaking on behalf of EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering, he pointed out that Parliament had made funds available in the 2008 budget to meet the funding pledged by the EU, but also stressed the importance of efficiency effectiveness and transparency in spending the money.**

Mr Gahler said Parliament had continuously supported the EU political and financial commitment to the Middle East Peace Process and the establishment of a viable Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel. In adopting the 2008 budget last week, Parliament had made available the funds needed for the EU's €330 million pledge at the conference.

### **High priority to development of Palestinian people**

The Annapolis Conference had, he said provided a window of opportunity, and the EU was willing to contribute more in political and financial terms. "The European Parliament considers the realisation of this vision – a secure and stable environment for the development of the Palestinian people – a high political priority. This already means for 2008 a re-prioritisation and lower funding for other geographical programmes."

Mr Gahler added that EU financial commitment beyond 2008 would depend on the implementation of the political process and a solution for sufficient funds in the years to come.

### **Transparency, efficiency and effectiveness essential**

"The European Parliament is accountable to 500 million European citizens. That requires close and reliable monitoring over delivery mechanisms and final beneficiaries," he said. "Reasonable standards of efficiency, effectiveness and transparency must therefore be guaranteed. Accordingly, the destruction of projects and infrastructure funded by international donors must stop."

Finally, Mr Gahler welcomed the "strong commitment" of the Palestinian Authority "to establish good governance and the rule of law" in the Palestinian territories: "Under such conditions and with the help of the EU and other donors, the further empowerment and ownership of Palestinian institutions will contribute to the rebuilding of trust and stability in the region."

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Info – all >>