Dear Readers,

On the occasion of Europe Day 2012, the 62nd anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, on 9 May I would like to share this message with you.

Every year we celebrate Europe Day by looking back at the history of European integration and the things that Europeans have accomplished together.

But it should also be an opportunity to look forward. We read a lot in the press about the financial crisis and the economic problems the region is facing. But the basis of the European economy remains strong. And the common values that bring Europeans together are more important than ever. All 27 countries in the EU continue to work together to help solve problems.

The coming year will be crucial for Europe’s recovery – and for Europe’s future. Not only the steps taken internally in the EU on the economy and with Croatia joining in July 2012 but also how Europe engages globally.

Europe has always been outward looking and open. We have consistently influenced the way the world thinks – about trade, the environment, climate change, the death penalty, the International Criminal Court, and many other important issues.

I am convinced that the European Union must remain actively engaged around the world. And equally that our international work can help to underpin our economic recovery.

There has been a lot of progress since we marked Schuman Day last year.

The EU is building up the European External Action Service, including a fully joined up Crisis Management System, so that we can deliver comprehensive solutions on the ground across the globe.

At a time of budgetary austerity, the EU has led 16 Member States to increase their international aid and kept the position as the world biggest donor. As part of it’s recently launched “Agenda for Change” future EU development assistance will seek to focus its offer to partner countries where it can have the greatest impact, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs) such as Nepal.

The EU will re-energise it’s partnership with South Asia by offering to step up it’s collaboration with South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC); it will also continue to stand by Nepal as a committed friend, supporting the Government and the people of Nepal to move towards a new future.

In short, we will continue to do what the framers of the Lisbon Treaty -- and long before them, Robert Schuman -- intended; for Europe to play an active role in solving global problems.

There is much that Europe has achieved in the past year; but even more to be done.

Alexander Spachis
Ambassador
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal
EU with one voice

The ambition to build a credible EU foreign policy received a major boost with the launch of the European External Action Service (EEAS), a little more than two years ago. The EEAS, from the time of its inception, has been acting as a single platform to project European values and interests around the world and as a one-stop shop for partners around the world. In November, 2009, Catherine Ashton was appointed as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission. The High Representative is assisted by the EEAS in ensuring the consistency and coordination of the EU’s external action.

The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by all the 27 EU Member States formed the legal basis for setting up the EEAS, which was launched on 1st of January 2010. It was for the first time that the Member States were able to bring together diplomacy, political engagement, development assistance, humanitarian aid, economic cooperation and civil and military crisis management.

The aim in all this is to forge a better, more coherent common EU foreign policy. This could be achieved by developing European answers to complex global problems, working with partners around the world apart from ensuring a coordinated approach to put into place a common stance on major international issues.

The message from Europe to friends around the world is clear: Europe wants to work together to tackle some of the biggest challenges that the world faces. And with the EEAS in place the European Union will be a more capable partner.

The European Union remains the biggest donor and the largest trading power in the world. It has been supporting democratic reforms in Egypt and Tunisia, working with the international community on the future of a post-Gaddafi Libya and applying maximum pressure on repressive regimes in countries like Syria to force change.

It has been fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia and helping rebuild Haiti following the devastating earthquake in 2010. The EU has been mediating between Serbia and Kosovo for a lasting peace in the Western Balkans, and leading negotiations with Iran on their nuclear programme. The 136 EU Delegations around the world are trusted partners for their host countries on all aspects of EU policy, from foreign and security policy to energy and climate change. They have been working in close coordination with the EEAS to achieve the set foreign policy goals.

EEAS Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific reaffirms EU support to Nepal's peace process

Mr Vioro Ilicioia-Budura, European External Action Service (EEAS) Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific, arrived on Saturday March 17th in Kathmandu for a four-day high level visit. Accompanied by Mr Jean-Christian Remond and Ms Rensje Teerink, respectively Head and Deputy Head of Division for India, Bhutan and Nepal at the EEAS, his main purpose in Kathmandu was to conduct a series of political consultations with relevant stakeholders in Nepal’s peace and constitution drafting processes.

During the week end, accompanied by several staff members of the European Union Delegation to Nepal including Ambassador Dr Alexander Spachis, the group headed to the South-East of the Kathmandu Valley to visit a brick factory which uses a new EU-supported energy saving technology, thus reducing both the production and environmental costs of one of Nepal’s major and most polluting industries. Thereafter, it journeyed to the city of Bhaktapur, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a major cultural, historical and touristic attraction in the Kathmandu valley.

While Mr Ilicioia-Budura hailed these visits as constructive steps to learn more about Nepal’s past and present, the following Monday and Tuesday were firmly dedicated to his primary purpose in the country.

The visitors’ busy agenda began with a courtesy call on President Dr Ram Baran Yadav, who welcomed them to the country and stressed that the major political parties need to come together and compromise in order to achieve a timely conclusion to the peace and constitution drafting processes.

Thereafter, the group proceeded to visit the premises of the European Delegation and met members of staff, before attending a lunch meeting with Mr Ahmed Saleem, newly-appointed Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which is headquartered in Kathmandu. Finally, after meeting with acting Chief Election Commissioner Upreti, Chairman of the Constituent Assembly Namwang and Foreign Secretary Bhattarai, the
delegation concluded the day by attending a reception with representatives from the business community which was hosted at his residence by Mr Rajbandari, President of the European Economic Chamber of Trade, Commerce and Industry (EEC) – Nepal.

The next day was an early start, as the delegation invited leaders from the United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF) for a breakfast meeting, during which they reiterated their will to see the rights of the Madhesi people respected in the new Constitution, especially so in regards to the federal restructuring of the country. The group then made its way to the government headquarters at Singh Durbar, where Mr Istitiooa-Budura paid a courtesy visit on Prime Minister Bhattarai. In similar language to the other stakeholders, the Prime Minister regretted the slow pace of the constitution drafting process but remained positive in his outlook for the future. Indeed, he underlined that the process to integrate into the Nepal Army and rehabilitate into civilian life thousands of former Maoist combatants, is well and truly under way.

During the rest of the day, Mr Istitiooa-Budura met with a number of key individuals, including General Singh, the Chief of Army Staff of the Nepal Army, and leaders from the main political parties, including Mr Dahal, Chairman of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist, Mr Khanal, Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal – Unified Marxist-Leninists, and Mr Rijal, a central committee member of the Nepali Congress. After a last meeting during which the delegation discussed domestic, regional and international issues with Foreign Minister Shrestha, it finally headed towards the EU residence for a cocktail reception which had been preceded by a debriefing session with the resident Heads of Mission of both the European Member States and other strategic partners.

All present agreed on the fact that the previous two days’ political consultations had taken place at a most opportune time. Indeed, while high-level visits between the European Union and Nepal take place on a regular basis, the rapidly approaching expiry of the Constituent Assembly’s tenure meant that Mr Istitiooa-Budura could insist on a sense of urgency and encourage the parties to work together. Expressing hope that Nepal will soon emerge from drawn-out peace and constitution drafting processes, he ended his visit by reiterating the European Union’s long-standing support to the government and people of this country in an effort to promote lasting peace, stability and economic prosperity.

20 years of European solidarity for victims of crises and disasters

The year 2012 marks an important milestone for the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department – ECHO - as it celebrates 20 years of providing vital humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable victims in crisis situations worldwide.

Since its creation, the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department, ECHO has channelled around €14 billion to victims of conflict and disasters in over 140 countries around the globe. Since 2007, an average of €1 billion has been provided annually, helping nearly 150 million of the world’s most vulnerable populations each year. Together with the support provided directly by EU Member States, this makes the European Union the world’s leading humanitarian donor. Humanitarian aid is one of the two main tools at the disposal of the European Union (EU) to get relief assistance to people faced with the immediate consequences of disasters. The other is civil protection. 32 countries, including all EU Member States, participate in a civil protection mechanism offering assets such as search and rescue teams and equipment following a request from a country struck by disaster.

The appointment of Kristalina Georgieva as the first European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response in 2010 brought together these tools, reinforcing the coherence of EU disaster response operations. Beyond immediate relief activities in direct response to a crisis, the EU is also committed to funding disaster risk reduction and preparedness to make communities more resilient to disasters, especially in disaster-prone regions.

ECHO ensures that assistance arrives fast and is based on the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

In Nepal, ECHO through WFP is supporting the refugees from Bhutan who are in the refugee camps in Eastern Nepal. The principal objective of the humanitarian intervention is to secure access to food and safeguard the nutritional status of the refugees. The ECHO assistance to the refugees started in 2001 and the total disbursement to date has reached more than 21 Million Euros.

During Nepal’s internal conflict and till 2011, ECHO humanitarian actions supported thousands of conflict affected people especially in rural areas to have access to health, water and sanitation. Many lives
especially of children were saved during and after the conflict by ECHO actions on mine awareness. ECHO total contribution in Nepal for humanitarian action during the period was more than 35 million Euros.

The European Commission through ECHO is working on disaster risk reduction in the country. The main instrument used by ECHO is the DIPECHO funding line. Since 2001, ECHO contribution for DIPECHO in Nepal has been 11.7 million Euros.

The ECHO funded projects have helped rural communities strengthen their resilience by establishing early warning systems, capacitating them to protect themselves and their environment and respond in the event of flood and other disasters. On Kathmandu valley earthquake preparedness, ECHO is working with the UN agencies and NGOs to strengthen the health emergencies response of the capital. At policy level, the ‘National Strategy for Disaster Management in Nepal’ was formulated with ECHO support.

ECHO is a member of the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC) which supports the Government of Nepal in developing a comprehensive and effective Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plan.

In Nepal, the total ECHO contribution since 2001 has reached around 68 million Euros (NPR approx. 7.5 billion).

Mission East & KIRDARC improve hygiene and access to water in Karnali

In the mid and far west regions of Nepal only about 43% of the total population have access to tap drinking water systems, while sanitation facilities are nearly non-existent. Karnali Zone is one of the most isolated and remote areas of Nepal with very limited access to water and sanitation facilities. All the non-local materials required for the construction of such service provisions have to be brought from urban areas; either from Nepalgunj or Surkhet. On the one hand, the cost of transportation is very expensive while on the other hand due to poor institutional governance and poor workmanship, the constructed infrastructures are not functional.

During the ten years long armed conflict in Nepal, many male members from Karnali migrated to southern Nepal or India leaving behind women, elder people and children in their villages. As no attention was paid to building the capacity of women in water structure building, repair and maintenance, many structures became non-functional. Hence the access to the water could not improve in the conflict period. In general, hygiene behaviour of people in Karnali is poor due to a low literacy rate, lack of hygiene knowledge, poor access to water supply and availability of sanitation facilities.

Since the inception of Mission East WASH activities in 2008, access to clean water and better hygiene practices has significantly improved in the 13 target VDCs of Humla, Kalikot and Mugu. The creation of 35 Water User Groups and the lasting presence of our implementing partner KIRDARC in Karnali, in many development sectors and coordination platforms at district level, will guarantee sustainable access to water for the concerned communities.

Mission East has been adopting a holistic approach to meet the needs of rural people and change the life of marginalized communities that encompass improvements in health, water and food access with emphasis on inclusive and gender-sensitive approach, as well as mainstreaming risk reduction and adaptive measures from hazards and climate changes. It has been implementing Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) projects in remote villages of Karnali zone through local partner KIRDARC Nepal to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene promotion. Mission East is responsible for technical backstopping to the implementing partner, as well as quality control.

Since 2008, Mission East has implemented three WASH projects across 3 districts of Karnali, namely Humla, Mugu and Kalikot, encompassing a total of 18 VDCs.

1. **Clean water, improved sanitation and hygiene promotion in rural villages of Humla and Mugu, Mid-West Nepal:**

   The project was funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) and implemented in Humla and Mugu district of the Karnali Zone for a period of 14 months, starting in June 2008. The main objective of the project was “To improve the immediate living conditions of the conflict-affected rural population in Mid West Nepal through reducing vulnerability to waterborne/excreta-related disease’. The project encompassed four village development committees (VDCs) of Humla and one VDC of Mugu district. It focused mainly on water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion. Although it was a short term project, immense changes have been observed in the project area.

2. **Sustainable water supply, hygiene and health improvements for highly vulnerable communities in Humla District, Mid-West**

   The project was funded by the European Union (EuropeAid) with an overall objective to contribute to sustainable reduction in rural poverty in remote conflict affected areas of Nepal. The target groups of the actions were the vulnerable population of 12 VDCs in Humla district. The project started from January 2009 for a period of 36 months. The specific objective of the project was to improve the capacity of selected communities in Humla District, Karnali Zone, Mid-Western Nepal to
reduce their vulnerability to disease (with a primary focus on transmissible diseases, particularly water-related diseases), thus contributing to meet three MDGs (Goal 7 - halving the proportion without improved water, Goal 6 - halting and reversing the spread of HIV and TB, Goal 4 - reducing mortality of under-five-year-olds by two thirds)

3. Safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene behaviours in remote areas of Karnali, Mid-West Nepal

The project was also funded by ECHO for a period of 13 months, starting from November 2010. The project covered 5 VDCs of Kalikot district; Ramnagot, Nanikot, Thirpu, Khina and Dhoulagha. The principal objective of the project was to improve the immediate living and health conditions of the extremely remote and impoverished rural population in Mid West Nepal by reducing vulnerability to waterborne disease. The project action focused on guaranteeing that the beneficiaries had sustainable access to safe drinking water supply of sufficient quantity and quality through the design and construction or improvement of water schemes, considering their protection from natural disaster.

![Figure 1: WASH Project Coverage](image)

---

**EU and Rio+20**

Twenty years after the first ‘Earth Summit’, UN’s first Environment and Development conference, which was also held in Rio de Janeiro, the Rio +20 Conference on Sustainable Development is taking place in Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June 2012.

The EU Member States take a common position in Rio +20 negotiations. The EU and the Member States consider Rio+20 a unique opportunity for our mutually interdependent world to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development at all levels.

EU has submitted a 31 page document to the UN Rio+20 Conference Bureau with proposals for a Rio +20 outcome document. Central is the idea of a green economy roadmap with specific goals, objectives and actions at international levels.

On a voluntary basis, countries will act according to their green economy roadmap with assistance from the UN system and other actors such as World Bank, bilateral donors and the private sector. The green economy roadmap will encompass areas such as sustainable energy, water, sustainable land management and ecosystems, oceans and resource efficiency, in particular waste, food nutrition, sustainable agriculture, fisheries, forestry, sustainable cities and chemicals, as well as areas related to the sustainable management and restoration of natural resources. The road map will also include cross cutting issues such as elimination of subsidies with negative impact on the environment, green tax reforms, and capacity building.

The Rio+20 conference takes place during the Danish EU Presidency, Denmark will play a key role in ensuring ambitious results in Rio.

The European Council has underlined its strong support for an ambitious outcome at the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

It stressed the need for a strong participation from the private sector and civil society at the Conference. It set out some key principles that will guide the EU in its preparations:

- The Conference should advance the global transition towards a green economy, thus promoting environmental protection, contributing to poverty eradication and stimulating low carbon and resource-efficient growth.
- It should work towards clear operational targets and concrete actions at national and international level within agreed time frames.
- It should contribute to a strengthened global institutional framework for sustainable development which should include the upgrade of UNEP to a specialised agency.
- It should advance the work on global and coherent post-2015 goals for sustainable development, also having regard to the review process of the Millennium Development Goals.
EU funded AIDOS project brings positive changes to the lives of Nepali women

It is very common to see Nepali women burdened with household care and agriculture activities. The majority can just read and write, have married at young age and take care of their children, husband and parents in law. They often own no house and land and they are not allowed to go out of their villages and do other activities without the consent of their husband and mother in law. Often the income of their family is not enough to sustain the family and the women have to be engaged in wage work like carpet weaving, cotton /wool spinning or working in other people’s land.

Their working week is 7 days a week, 14 hours a day. It is not easy for them to access skill training, micro credits or literacy and numeracy classes because the community does not believe that a daughter and mother does need them. And these women are the lucky ones. Some women do not have any family to support them. They are widows or abandoned wives and in some cases even if they do have a husband they are forced to flee because of the violence meted out to them.

Sumitra Bista, a 35 year old resident of Sainbu village, is one of them. One and half years ago, she used to live in her uncle’s house and work in her sister’s tailoring shop. At that time she could only stitch but not cut fabric and believed that it was the kind of life that she would have to go through for a long time to come.

Knowing the situation of Nepali women like Sumitra and drawing from their successful experience in other countries, the Italian Association of Women in Development (AIDOS) with their implementing partner, the Federation of Business and Professional Women Nepal (FBPWVN), was successful in instilling confidence in Sumitra and other women with similar plight. AIDOS inspired them to take up training for added productivity and entrepreneurship.

Together they established a Business Service Centre (BSC) with the financial assistance of the EU and provided women like Sumitra, with business management, skill development trainings, market linkages, micro credit facilitation, product development, business counselling, business plan assistance and any other services they needed for establishing their own enterprises.

It was not easy to persuade husbands and mothers in law to give their consent and support their wives and daughters in law to set up a business. For some it has not been possible. It was also not easy to convince the women themselves of their own inner capabilities to be able to succeed in what they dreamt of doing.

But for women like Sumitra, it happened. With BSC support, Sumitra set up her own tailoring shop. She took a loan of NPR 100,000 to buy the shop where she used to work. She attended a business management and advanced tailoring skill training and nowadays she employs 3 women because she has many local customers. She is in the process to register her business under the Nepali law, she has already repaid the first loan and she took a second loan of NPR 50,000 to expand the business. Although Sumitra has the stigma to leave her husband’s home, she is an independent, confident woman and very respected by the local community. Her current annual turnover is NPR 700,000 and her annual profit is NPR 180,000. Since the support of BSC, her family income has increased by eighty percent.

Another 111 women have received support from BSC and women like Mandevi Maharjan of Kirtipur, Krishnamaya Lama of Kakani, Dhana Maya Titung and Sushila Tamang of Okharpauwa, Sabita Maharjan and Madhu Maharjan of Kirtipur have become very successful entrepreneurs and they have bought a

AIDOS beneficiary, Sumitra Bista
Photo Impressions

EEAS MD Asia & Pacific, Mr. Viorel Iștoicaia Budura, and Head of Delegation Dr. Alexander Späth, during a press conference on 28th March.

Nepal government officials with the EU Head of Delegation and WFP Country Representative Nicole Menage, after signing the contribution agreement for the Nepal Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System (NeKSAF) on 14th March.

Child Club members in Humla district sharing their impressions with Mission East and KIRDARC staff.

Mission East - KIRDARC WASH project in Karnali

Head of EU Delegation joins Nepal Vice-President Parmananda Jha at the regional SAARC Conference held in Kathmandu.

AIDOS beneficiary Sabita Maharjan from Kirtipur running her knitwear company ‘Kirtipur Knitting’ (www.kirtipurknitting.com)

Joint Denmark-EU media event to celebrate Denmark’s EU Presidency from 1 January 2012

Mr. Luis Navarro, Head of Operations (second from right) of the EU Delegation participating in the final sharing workshop of the EU funded ‘Acess for opportunities, Nepal’ project

Newsletter of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal