**Human Rights**

The European Union is itself a peace project in its origins. Therefore, citizens and leaders across the EU share a determination to promote peace and stability and to build a world founded on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These principles underpin all aspects of the internal and external policies of the European Union including those in the area of development cooperation.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the EU has an ongoing dialogue with Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and Civil Society in an attempt to help them in their work. Such dialogue fosters a fruitful collaboration with HRDs and sets out, in the interim, the priorities of their work. The abolition of the death penalty, the prevention of domestic violence against women and children, and the promotion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBTs) rights are among the challenging human rights issues in this country.

In this context, the EU has provided support of up to €40,000 in 2012 to HRDs to promote awareness and capacity building on issues such as the prevention of human trafficking; the modernization of the judicial system to treat victims of domestic violence; and the empowerment of girls from communities with a high rate of violence.

The European Commission is the EU’s executive body.

**Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

_Sagicor Financial Centre,_
16 Queen’s Park West, Port of Spain, Trinidad

Telephone: +1 868 622 66 28
Fax: +1 868 622 63 55

E-mail: DELEGATION-TRINIDAD-AND-TOBAGO-GENERAL@eeas.europa.eu

For more information on the European Union and our work in Trinidad and Tobago, please visit the EU Delegation’s webpage.

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/trinidad/index_en.htm
European Union development cooperation in Trinidad and Tobago

Despite the challenges that some countries in the European Union continue to face, the EU remains committed to achieving the global Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, the EU continues to be the biggest donor of development aid in the world, providing more than 60 percent of total Overseas Development Assistance. In Trinidad and Tobago, EU funding has surpassed €100 million (approx. TT$850 million) over the last 5 years. This funding contributes, among other things, to the development of an improved business environment – leading to less dependency on this country’s natural resources (oil and gas); support to local agriculture and fisheries; and to efforts to achieve a cleaner environment.

Enabling Competitive Business

The EU has allocated €16.34 million (approx. TT$145 million) in development assistance to support the Government’s Enabling Competitive Business (ECB) Strategy. This strategy focuses on improving the country’s regulatory framework, developing new business sectors, reducing red tape and providing better services to domestic and international businesses. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to build stronger and more efficient public service institutions that deliver better and more relevant services; increase the cooperation among different actors; and improve critical aspects of good governance such as accountability and transparency.

In addition to direct transfers to the Central Bank against the achievement of targets under the ECB strategy, the EU provides expertise in selected fields, for example, to strengthen the business support services provided by the National Entrepreneurship Development Company, or to establish a framework for developing green enterprise programmes.

Environment

Sustainable growth and the overall development of Trinidad and Tobago are dependent on good environmental management. The EU is therefore supporting the Government with €8 million to pursue a low-carbon development path through the sustainable management of environmental resources in the extractive, forestry and transportation sectors. In particular, the EU’s Environment Programme is aimed at improving environmental governance by:

- Introducing clean technologies, such as the conversion of public buses into Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), in an effort to mitigate greenhouse gases in the medium term;
- Promoting environmental awareness among fence line communities within the extractive sector, in order to increase transparency and highlight community concerns with regards to possible poor environmental practices;
- Establishing a new administrative framework for managing forests and protected areas, in an effort to strengthen administrative capacity and enhance regulatory enforcement of illegal quarrying, logging and destructive fishing practices;
- Increasing carbon sequestration though the rehabilitation of abandoned quarry lands.

Restructuring the former sugar sector and assistance to food production

Since 2008, the EU has been supporting the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the divestment and restructuring of the sugar industry. The EU’s contribution of € 75 million to Trinidad and Tobago’s agricultural sector is intended to bring social and economic development and diversification. More specifically, the grant is being used to develop infrastructure, such as access roads and irrigation systems; mitigate the possible negative environmental impacts of the divestment; diversify agricultural lands; and retrain and reintegrate those displaced by the closing of operations of Caroni 1975 Ltd. Through activities such as assistance with the establishment of large scale farms and also to farmers’ cooperatives, the overall objectives of this programme are to reduce the food import bill and improve farmers’ living conditions, in line with the Government’s National Action Plan for Food Production.

Regional Cooperation

In an effort to encourage regional integration and to implement the CARIFORUM – EU Economic Partnership Agreement, the EU is also supporting a number of initiatives that address issues of concern to the region. Trinidad and Tobago benefits from those projects. The EU Delegation in Trinidad and Tobago manages regional projects in the area of agriculture, crime and security and civil society engagement.

- With a goal of diversified production and sustainable food security, the EU has collaborated with and contributed € 8.6 million to the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), in its efforts to increase the capability of Regional Agricultural Development Organizations of the Caribbean to address the development needs of smallholders.
- Because we all want to eat healthy and safe food, another intervention amounting to €11.7 million assists the region to develop and establish effective and efficient national and regional Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regimes to overcome the challenges of limited regional/national administrative capacity concerning compliance with international SPS Measures.
- The EU also has a longstanding relationship with institutions in the Caribbean, assisting them in strengthening the region’s institutional response and capacity to combat illicit drug use and trafficking related to transnational criminal activity and financial crime.
- Civil Society Engagement: To advance the region’s key social and economic development goals of promoting regional civil society ownership and participation in the development, integration and cooperation processes, the EU has embarked upon the institutional strengthening and capacity building of regional civil society organizations.