

## **Remarks by EU Chargé d'Affaires Paolo Salvia at the Reception for Europe Day, 9 May 2018**

Honourable Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for joining us to celebrate Europe Day.

The video we just watched was not only an homage to Ambassador William Hanna, who played a key role in reinforcing the relationship between Europe and Ghana. It also shows our effort, in these last years, for better communication with all our stakeholders in Ghana.

We have tried to explain what the European Union stands for, what our interests in Ghana are, and our objectives for a strengthened partnership.

We consider that communication and access to information are key elements of transparency and accountability. This also explains our interest in Press Freedom and the Right to Information which this year, as in the past, got particular prominence during the EU week.

Communication is a two-way process. When we present our activities, objectives and the results achieved during many years of constructive cooperation with Ghana, we are also opening the door to receive difficult questions and sometimes criticism on our activities. But this is part of the game. As Mario Andretti, the famous Formula One pilot said: *"If things seem under control, you are just not going fast enough."*

The European Union Delegations in this part of the world started as development offices, focusing on action rather than communication. In some way, the 2007 Lisbon Treaty was the start of our own 'Beyond Aid' process. The focus is more and more on peace and security, climate change, job creation, trade, investment.

To build such a renewed partnership, there is need for constant discussion and understanding at all levels, using the 'traditional' tools as the Political Dialogue, the *demarches*, the dialogue with civil society but also inventing new tools, employing all means at our disposal.

A good example is the video-competition we organized. The resulting videos showcase how our partners in the field and their projects are '*changing lives*' (this was the title of the competition) for many citizens in Ghana. The videos have been shown during this evening and are on our social media. We will present awards to some of them later tonight, but I want already to thank those who took part in the competition for their valuable contributions.

Other videos presented tonight showed different facets of the EU Member States represented in Ghana. This is to recall that the EU is more than just the Delegation's people and offices; it comprises 28 countries with different traditions, habits, food and with common history, principles and objectives.

Diversity among our Members Countries is an asset, especially when we succeed in coordinating our action as we have done in Ghana by preparing the 2020 Joint-Cooperation Strategy.

During the year, we have collaborated with the Centre for European Studies at the University of Ghana on few public initiatives and are now planning a series of studies and lectures on key areas of our cooperation such as trade, climate change, gender. The series will start with a reflection on the purpose and functioning of the European Development Fund.

The Fund is one of the historic manifestations of the partnership between Ghana and the European Union and is the instrument, under the Cotonou Agreement, to co-manage and implement key development programmes for the future of the country.

Honourable Minister,

Indeed, the Fund is a crucial tool of our partnership with Ghana, but other aspects are progressively gaining importance, I will mention four of them. What ties them to our development cooperation is the common ultimate goal of promoting peace and prosperity for the Ghanaian people and advancing into a sustainable path to growth.

The first aspect concerns INVESTMENTS. The European Union, with its Member States, is already Ghana's biggest investment partner, and we aspire to sustain this position in future.

We appreciated the Government's commitment, confirmed by Vice President Bawumia at the Ghana-EU Political Dialogue, to improve the business and investment climate, striking a balance between support to local actors and competitiveness as an investment destination.

On our side, we launched a new European Investment Plan to encourage European investments in Africa and elsewhere. It is a new instrument and Ghana is a well-suited partner for maximising the opportunities it presents.

The second aspect is TRADE. The Economic Partnership Agreement means that 100% of Ghana's exports enter the European market, one of the biggest in the world, free of any duties and quotas. This includes manufactured and processed products; thus not only cocoa but also chocolate; wood but also furniture. This is for Ghana a unique trade agreement, unmatched by any other partner.

The third aspect of this renewed partnership concerns GLOBAL ISSUES: Security, Climate Change, Migration, but also Fisheries and Forestry. On Migration, our first preoccupation is the same of President Akufo Addo's: how to use at best our programmes and resources to create job opportunities for youth in Ghana. For all these matters, a reinforced dialogue with the Government and civil society is for us a priority.

And finally, GOVERNANCE. Important fields for our collaboration relate to public finance management, the fight against corruption and the decentralization process, where Ghana has the historic opportunity to build a consensual proposal for the direct election of local authorities.

This year we were encouraged by the creation of the Special Prosecutor Office and the appointment of Mr. Martin Amidu. We are looking forward to seeing the concrete results of his work as well as a reinforced engagement by the other institutions involved in this fight. The EU and Member States, with programmes such as ARAP, STAAC and others, stand ready to support your efforts in this domain.

Honourable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, on Europe day, we are celebrating our partnership with the Ghanaian Institutions and the Ghanaian People. But we also take the opportunity to reflect and look ahead.

The world is changing and we must adapt our relations and determine a way forward based on our mutual interests and shared values, building on the strong foundations we have laid.

I believe that with renewed commitment and energy from both the European Union and Ghana, our partnership may become a reference in the context of the post-Cotonou debate.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Ghanaian institutions and in particular the colleagues at the National Authorizing Office for their open and fruitful collaboration.

I would also like to thank our interlocutors from the Ghanaian civil society that were always available for discussion. They were generous with information and ideas and at times we have the impression that we give little in return.

Thank you also to EU Member States Ambassadors and staff and to all colleagues at the EU Delegation for their sincere commitment to building a stronger and more fruitful partnership with Ghana.

May I now ask you to join us in raising a toast to the President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, to the People of Ghana, and to a Reinforced Partnership between Ghana and the European Union .....