

*Address by Mr William HANNA,
Ambassador of the European Union in Ghana,
on the occasion of the European Business Organisation Reception
31 May 2017*

Your Excellency Mr Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors of EU Member States,

Honourable Ministers, Members of the Government,

Honourable Members of the Parliament,

President of the European Business Organisation in Ghana, Mr Olivier Van Parys,

Colleagues from EU Embassies,

Representatives of the European and Ghanaian Private Sector,

Friends from the press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Welcome to the European Union Residence.
- We are here this evening for dialogue and partnership: Dialogue between the European Union and Ghana, but also dialogue between the public and the private sector.
- We have a common interest to work with Ghana to step up investment – the EU is already the first investor in this country = and to do more business here.
- Today we are celebrating the second anniversary of the European Business Organisation in Ghana which was officially launched in May 2015.
- Ladies and Gentlemen, in the past two years we have seen some significant developments.

- Last year, Ghana signed and ratified the interim Economic Partnership Agreement. The Agreement entered into force on 15 December following its ratification by the European Parliament.
- Why is it important to have an EPA?
- The EU is the largest market for Ghana's agricultural produce. And the EPA protects those exports and jobs in the export sector. But the EPA is also about creating, creating new jobs through new investment and new opportunities for business and trade.
- We are now working with the Government and the private sector to implement the EPA for our mutual benefit.
- The other big change since last year is of course the result of the elections and the change in Government.
- Vice-President we are delighted to have you with us this evening. Thank you for accepting our invitation. Your presence shows your government's commitment to working together with the European Union.
- We welcome the Government's commitment to macroeconomic stability, to fiscal discipline, and business reforms, together with dynamic export and investment promotion.
- We welcome the fact that your government has placed the private sector at the heart of its development strategy.
- Today we need a new partnership for business between the EU and Ghana – a new economic partnership.
- We now have the legal tools to do this, and we have the commitment on both sides. Now let's work together to make it a success.
- I would add that we have recently seen the President visiting many ECOWAS countries and reaffirming his commitment to regional integration.

- The European Union is fully supportive of ECOWAS, both politically and economically, and our aim is still to reach an agreement with all the ECOWAS countries on an economic partnership.
- We are fortunate today to have a short video message from our Director for Trade at the DG Trade of the European Commission, Mrs Sandra Gallina. She sent this message from Argentina where the EU is currently negotiating with Mercosur – the Common Market of South America
- Let's listen to her.
- Thank you for your attention. I would now like to ask His Excellency the Vice- President to address us.