

**Speech delivered by Ambassador Mikael Barfod
Head of the European Union Delegation to Barbados and the Eastern
Caribbean
Europe Day 9 May 2013
Fort Young, Roseau, Dominica**

His Excellency Eliud Williams President of the Commonwealth of Dominica,
The Hon. Roosevelt Skerrit, other cabinet ministers, other members of
Parliament, members and representatives from local, national, regional
institutions, diplomatic corps, civil society, media and other distinguished guests,

Good evening.

First let me thank the government of Dominica for agreeing to accommodate the
European Union as we celebrate Europe Day. I would also like to acknowledge
the presence of ambassador and representatives from the EU Member States,
France and the United Kingdom as well as other European countries honorary
consuls.

I also want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the vital contributions of the
officials of various Ministries who together with the NAO office are working on
a daily base to materialise the EU-Dominica cooperation. They have also made
possible the round of events taking place this year around Europe Day: field
visits to the West Coast Water Project, to the geothermal project and to the neo-
natal facility of the Princess Margaret Hospital, the launch of a new Banana

programme at La Plaine this morning and the final commissioning of the Waitukubuli national trail tomorrow at Pont cassé.

This programme gives, in a snapshot, an idea of the diversity and richness of the EU-Dominica cooperation. Besides punctual efforts such as our assistance to the reconstruction efforts following tropical storm Ophelia and other dramatic climate events, various programmes of no less than 50 millions Euros have underpinned during the last five years the continued European Union commitment to strengthen and extend its partnership with the Government of Dominica as it seeks to deliver its development agenda through significant investments and the Implementation of its Growth and Social Protection Strategy.

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Today is the 63rd anniversary of the Robert Schuman Declaration that marked the founding of the European Union. Sixty-three years ago, on 9 May 1950, the then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman made the first move towards the creation of what we know today as the European Union. He read a declaration to the international press in Paris, calling on France, Germany and other European countries to pool together their coal and steel production as "the first concrete foundation of a European federation". It is remarkable that only five years after the end of a most dreadful conflict, the Second World War, R. Shuman proposed the creation of a supranational European institution, to take charge of

the coal and steel industry, the very sectors that had supported so much the war. The countries which he called upon had almost destroyed each other, and reconciliation was a brave thing to imagine at that time.

Every year we celebrate Europe Day by looking back at the history of European integration and the things we have accomplished together. But it is also an opportunity to address future challenges.

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We read a lot in the press about the financial crisis and the economic problems Europe and others are facing. But the basis of the European economy remains strong. And the common values and interests that bring us together are more important than ever. Europe Day is a good opportunity to remind ourselves of the EU's achievements in promoting democracy, human rights, peace and prosperity. For these efforts, the EU was awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize. We see this great honour as a call to not only commemorate our past achievements but also to look forward to how we can take this work further in the future.

The coming year will be an other crucial one for Europe's recovery – and for the future of Europe and the world, not only the steps that are taken internally on governance of finance and budgetary matters; but also how we engage globally.

Europe has always been outward looking and open. We have consistently influenced the way the world thinks – about trade, the environment, climate change, disarmament, human rights, fight against death penalty, sexual and racial discrimination, the International Criminal Court, and many other important issues. In this respect, the special relationship between EU and the Caribbean is and will be extremely valuable. We hope to develop it further to new domains of common interest such as security and in international fora as exemplified by the recent success of the adoption of an arms trade treaty.

We are convinced that Europe will remain actively engaged around the world, with hopefully more success stories such as the recently brokered deal between Serbia and Kosovo. Equally, our international work can help to underpin the global economic recovery.

The European Union with its 27 (28 with Croatia on July 1st) Member States remains the largest grant aid donor in the world, something which we are very proud of. At a time of austerity, 16 of our Member States have increased their international aid, which has contributed to the EU maintaining its leading position.

It is no secret that the last four years have been very challenging for developed countries, let alone developing ones, in particular the small vulnerable island states such as Dominica. One can assume that Caribbean leaders and others in the region who observe these events would have wondered, at some time, about the future of the development co-operation with the European Union. Yes, the EU has difficulties, but the European Union will continue to deliver on its commitments to Dominica and the region. As Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, recently said: "In times of crisis, the EU must not forget the most unfortunate in the world and it is this policy which over the last ten years has pulled millions of people out of poverty and saved countless lives".(unquote)

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It is interesting to note that despite the challenges facing Europe, the model of integration amongst European countries is still looked upon with admiration by others outside of Europe.

Indeed we observe with pleasure the ambition of the leaders of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States – of which Dominica is an active member – in their quest to forge a stronger union. We commend them for the steps taken within the last years in moving towards an economic union. EU has given some

financial and technical support to this crucial and lengthy process. We are now happy to announce that official diplomatic relations will be established later this year.

Let me conclude by saying that the EU 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.

The decision to have this Europe Day celebration here is testimony to the fact that the European Union delivers.

Be assured that the EU will continue to support its friends, in particular in these tough times.