



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

STATEMENT

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EU-Egypt: reviewing on-going cooperation and priorities for the future

Commissioner Štefan Füle met with Mr Nabil Fahmy, Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The meeting was an occasion to review the state of on-going cooperation between the European Commission and Egypt, and discuss priorities for the future in the context of the transition process in Egypt.

Commissioner Füle restated the Commission's intention to support Egypt and its people, in particular with a view to improving the socio-economic situation of the population, addressing the needs of the poorest and tackling pressing structural issues that are hampering growth and investment, in line with council conclusions of Foreign Affairs Council of 21 August 2013.

In this context, the Commissioner and the Minister discussed how to improve the implementation of EU funded projects so that they would meet their mutually agreed objectives while respecting the EU financial regulations. They agreed on the need to ensure that a focus should be put on capacity building activities for the preparation of structural reforms towards more inclusive sustainable growth and good governance. They also discussed the priorities for bilateral cooperation during 2014-2015. Commissioner Füle stressed the need to reach an agreement soon in order for the EU to be in a position to start the preparations of programmes for Egypt. In this context, he decided that a mission of the Commission services would rapidly travel to Cairo to try and reach agreement on all pending cooperation issues.

Commissioner Füle and Minister Fahmy also discussed the more general issues related to EU financial cooperation with the partners of the Neighbourhood. The Commissioner explained the new features of the European Neighbourhood Instrument, pointing in particular to the increased resources available to those partners engaged in difficult and demanding reforms, in line with the 'more for more' principle. He noted that progress in the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms was of fundamental importance for the EU, including when determining the level of engagement. The Commissioner also pointed out to the opportunities offered by the Neighbourhood Investment Facility in support of investment in Egypt as well as the support from European-based financial institutions.

Contacts :

[Peter Stano](#) (+32 2 295 74 84)

[Anca Paduraru](#) (+32 2 296 64 30)

For the public: **Europe Direct** by phone **00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11** or by [e-mail](#)