



# P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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*For Immediate Release*

## **Europe Day 2010 celebrates partnership and cooperation in Europe and the World**

***60 years ago, on 9 May 1950, a declaration of the then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman laid the ground for a united, stable and peaceful Europe, that would emerge from the ashes of two devastating world wars. This historical declaration and its great significance continue to lead the integration project on the European continent and inspire partnerships that the European Union (EU) forges beyond the borders of Europe.***

'Europe Day' is traditionally celebrated on or around the 9<sup>th</sup> of May by Europeans and friends and partners of Europe all around the world. Both within Europe and beyond, this anniversary has become the symbol of a new beginning, of a free and successful way of peaceful cooperation between sovereign nations, based on shared values and common interests such as peace, solidarity, democracy, welfare of people and the rule of law.

Speaking at the official Europe Day function at the Novotel in Suva, Ambassador van der Goot emphasized the high importance that Europe gives to its partners around the world and said that the EU was willing to take the fundamental ideas of solidarity, cooperation and mutual assistance which characterised the European integration process beyond its borders and apply it also in its foreign relations with other regions of the world, including – and in particular – the Pacific.

"Our partnership and cooperation with the Pacific island countries is long standing, based on shared history as well as common values and interests. In short: the EU is a true partner of the Pacific!" he said.

"Today's cooperation between Europe and the Pacific takes many forms and covers a wide area of different policies and initiatives. Mutual priorities for partnerships at a regional and national level include pivotal issues such as political dialogue, human rights and gender equality, natural resources and environment, regional economic integration and effective development cooperation. True to the EU's motto 'Equal rights, equal opportunities and progress for all', we support the Pacific island countries in their efforts to promote good governance and security and create sustainable economic development for their citizens".

To this end, the EU allocated a total of over 470 Million Euros (more than 1 Billion F\$) in national and regional development funding to the Pacific region for the period 2008-2013, he said.



In his speech marking Europe Day celebrations, Ambassador van der Goot further emphasised the issue of climate change, saying that it was at the heart of current EU-Pacific cooperation, both in the region and at international fora.

"This environmental goal is of utmost importance, for the EU, for the Pacific and for the whole world. We are presently working with the Pacific and its institutions for the world to adopt an ambitious legally binding multilateral agreement on climate change, while at the same time are we increasing our assistance 'on the ground', to help the Pacific islands adopt to the changes that have already occurred due to the effects of climate change," he said.

Since the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December last year, the EU relies on a new legal framework as well as two central innovations, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service (EEAS), allowing for a clear and coherent voice in relations with its partners worldwide.

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