



ADDRESS BY
AMBASSADOR PAOLA AMADEI
HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO BELIZE
At the renaming of the Agualta Vale roundabout to the Robert Schuman roundabout
On the occasion of Schuman Day, May 09, 2013
St. Mary

I would like to start by thanking the Government of Jamaica for having organised this fabulous event on this very special day.

We are gathered here today to celebrate the completion of a major component of Jamaica's road infrastructure, critical for the social and economic development of the North-Eastern parishes and for the safety of its road users. This is the largest infrastructure project ever carried out with grant funding support of the EU, corresponding to a contribution of approximately 10 billion JMD at today's exchange rate, or 80 millions EUR, and serving an estimated 400,000 people.

The 9th of May is a very special day for all Europeans: it marks the end of World War II and it commemorates the declaration delivered on 9th May 1950 by French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman marking the initial appeal for the construction of Europe. The anniversary of this declaration is celebrated annually across Europe as Schuman or Europe Day.

For centuries intellectuals have dreamt of a peaceful, unified Europe. For centuries this dream has been thwarted by the forces of narrow nationalism and wars. It finally took the experience of two devastating world wars resulting in close to 100 million fatalities and immeasurable destruction for bringing sense to the politicians across Europe and the rest of the world to ensure such calamity would not happen ever again.

In the years following the end of WWII, a small group of political visionaries, among them Robert Schuman, were dedicated to bring to an end the cycle of mutual destruction that had plagued Europe for over a millennium. On 9 May 1950, in what has to become Europe Day, Robert Schuman proposed to Germany and the rest of the European countries to work together towards a merger of their economic interests. His conviction was that in an economically united Europe war would become '*not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible*'.

The supranational structure and the principles of cooperation, inter-dependence and solidarity between countries envisioned by Robert Schuman in his Declaration have been the foundation of the peace that has been lasting between the Member States of the European Union since World War II. Even at the present population of half a billion, EU citizens enjoy a higher standard of life than ever before and even more importantly a lasting peace.

Built successfully on the legacy of its Founding Fathers, the European Union grew stronger by promoting solidarity and cooperation among each member states especially during difficult and challenging times as we face today. The ideas of Robert Schuman have also infused the cooperation beyond European borders guiding the EU development policy and relations with partner countries such as Jamaica, or region such as the Caribbean Community, in which the EU has been supporting initiatives aimed at enhancing solidarity between countries and promoting actions that are best carried as a group rather than individually in order to address challenges that are common to many. In 1949, Robert Schuman stated prophetically:

"The European spirit signifies being conscious of belonging to a cultural family and to have a willingness to serve that community in the spirit of total mutuality, without any hidden motives of hegemony or the selfish exploitation of others. We must attempt and succeed in reconciling nations in a supranational association. This would safeguard the diversities and aspirations of each nation while coordinating them in the same manner as the regions are coordinated within the unity of the nation."

Since the establishment of the European Commission Delegation in Jamaica in April 1976 to facilitate the implementation of the First of the Lomé Conventions, Jamaica has always enjoyed close economic and political ties with Europe. In the following decades the process of European integration has brought a constant enhancement of the political and economic relationships between the Jamaica and what is now the European Union.

In recognition to the European Union commitment over the last 3 decades for the sound and sustainable development of this country, on behalf of the European Union I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Jamaica for deciding to name this roundabout after Mr Robert Schuman, today on Europe Day, in honour of his pioneering work towards a united Europe and for his invaluable contribution in building a more peaceful world.

I wish that this critical road infrastructure linking the capital Kingston with the beautiful North coast will be seen and stand as a permanent symbol of the good relations and cooperation between the people of Jamaica and Europe, and as a vision that a better world can be given to our future generations if people unite in building it.

I thank you for your attention.