

**REMARKS BY THE HEAD OF DELEGATION
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO
THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO,
H.E. Mr HANS DUYNHOUWER,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2014
EUROPE DAY CELEBRATIONS**

MASERU, 8 MAY 2014

Greetings to you all - Lumelang bo'm'e le bontate -

Allow me firstly to pay my respects to:

His Majesty King Letsie III;

the Right Honourable the Prime Minister,

the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister,

the Honourable President of the Senate;

the Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly;

Honourable Ministers;

Their Lordships, Judges of the Appeal Court and the High Court;

Colleague Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Representatives of
International organisations;

Dignitaries here present;

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocol observed.

It is again a great pleasure receiving you here at the occasion of Europe Day. This is the fifth time that my wife and I host the Europe Day reception here in Maseru. It is an honour and privilege to receive ministers, the judiciary, members of parliament, officials from government, traditional leaders, representatives from civil society, service providers and more particularly, friends of the European Union. I thank you all once more for honouring this reception with your presence.

As in previous years, this year's Europe Day celebrations were held around a specific theme. With this year's theme of 'the European Union to the Districts', we wanted to go beyond Maseru. In the last one and a half week all ten districts were visited by the staff of the Delegation and the National Authorising Office of the Ministry of Finance. Europe was introduced and explained to schools in the districts. European Union funded civil society organisations showcased their projects. With this programme we underlined that the European Union's engagement with Lesotho is an engagement with the entire country, urban and rural, men and women, boys and girls, rich and poor. Local authorities took the opportunity to share with us their development challenges. We are very appreciative for the warm welcome extended to us in all ten districts; this has been the

biggest communication effort ever by the European Union here in Lesotho. We reached out to over 2,000 Basotho!

Districts, the people in the districts are important. That is also why we support the Government's decentralisation efforts. The European Union supported new decentralisation policy makes progress. It is promising that the first payments to 5 districts under the pilot local development grants scheme are expected to be made shortly. We look forward to its further development.

[...] One month ago a very successful EU-Africa Summit was held in Brussels. 61 Heads of State and Government attended this important event. We saw the participation of a very strong Delegation of the Government of Lesotho led by Prime Minister Dr Thomas Thabane. The theme of the summit: "Investing in People, Prosperity, Peace" reflected the comprehensive nature of the European Union's partnership with Africa. A partnership rooted in history. But I also stress: a partnership of equals and a partnership of shared values. Moreover, an evolving partnership. There was shared recognition that Africa's favourable growth performance creates new opportunities and that, here I quote from the EU-Africa summit declaration: *"it is time for a fundamental shift from aid to trade and investment as agents of growth, jobs and poverty reduction"*. Hence the importance of concluding the negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement.

We welcome very much the positive atmosphere of the summit. Translating the good intentions of the summit's conclusion into reality is now our common task. Lesotho can contribute to this in a very meaningful way.

[...] 2013 has been a good year in the European Union's co-operation with Lesotho. Building on the results of previous years, our co-operation progressed satisfactorily in 2013. Total disbursements amounted in 2013 to more than LSL 500 million (EUR 34.7 million); this brought our total disbursements since 2010 to almost LSL 2.5 billion (EUR 170 million).

The year 2013 was also the last year under the so-called 10th EDF. We must now look ahead and prepare for the 11th EDF. The 11th EDF covers the period 2014 to 2020. Good progress has already been made. We reached agreement with the Government on the three priority sectors for our cooperation under the 11th EDF. These are water, energy and governance. We intend to make available under the 11th EDF total funding for an amount of LSL 2 billion or EUR 142 million. We expect the new National Indicative Programme 2014 to 2020 to be co-signed shortly.

Allow me to make a few remarks on the agreed sectors of cooperation for 2014 to 2020.

The importance of water is obvious. Our support aims at making access to drinking water and improved sanitation for all Basotho a reality **within the foreseeable future**. I call on the Government to underwrite this ambition.

Working together on access to water and improved sanitation for all. In urban areas and in rural communities. In the low lands and in the mountains. Access to potable water for all Basotho is within reach; it calls for an efficient management of scarce water resources. That is another important objective of our support under the 11th EDF.

Sustainable energy will play a key role in shaping countries' competitiveness in the global market. While Lesotho's potential for alternative sustainable resources of energy is beyond doubt (solar, hydro, wind), harnessing this potential requires a concerted and sustained effort. That is what we would like to contribute to with our support. It will serve the country's industrial development but it must also have a direct impact on addressing energy needs of the poor. I stress that access to sustainable energy for the poor is an important objective of our future cooperation. Here we think about sustainable energy for heating, cooking and lighting. New technologies are available; let's work on spreading the benefits of these to the districts, to the rural areas.

Finally **governance**. We are glad that the Government gives such a high priority to governance. Our work on better public finance management was given a boost by the Government's public finance reform action plan. But there is more than public finance; also the justice sector, capacity building for the civil service, a stronger and well-equipped LIPAM will be the focus of our future support.

[...] Allow me to repeat what I stressed last year: the European Union's support to Lesotho goes beyond development co-operation. We also work together on trade, private sector development and political co-operation.

Our **political relations** with Lesotho are evolving. The political dialogue has become an accepted feature of our cooperation. To my satisfaction, we have seen an excellent participation from EU Member States to the annual political dialogue held, the last one held in November 2013. I wish to put on record my appreciation for the cooperation that we have enjoyed in organising these meetings from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations.

Last year we held for the first time a successful governance dialogue. A second one is planned for next month. It shows that our relationship is based on trust and confidence. We encourage the Government to accelerate the legislative work on the Human Rights Commission. Lesotho cannot afford to lag behind in establishing such an important body. A Human Right Commission that respects internationally agreed principles in terms of mandate and autonomy. A fully funded and resourced Human Rights Commission has our total support. We hope that by 2016, the African Year for Human Rights, Lesotho's Human Rights Commission will be up and running. This calls for an early parliamentary adoption of the Human Rights Commission Bill.

[...] Europe Day is the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration. This declaration of the 9th of May 1950 paved the way for the European Union as we know it today. Starting from the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community with six signatory countries in 1951, today's European Union of 28 Member States is an important actor on the world stage. We promote solidarity; we promote global solutions for global problems. We are a partner that engages with all countries in the world. Hence our network of more than 130 European Union Delegations across the globe. Hence our presence in Lesotho.

[...] It is with regret that we learnt the decision of the Irish Government to close the Irish embassy here in Maseru. The Irish embassy has been a more than very valuable partner to the EU Delegation. With the closure of the Irish embassy, the European Delegation will be the only resident European Union diplomatic representation in the country. The staff of the Delegation, international and local staff alike, assumes this responsibility with conviction and dedication. The EU Delegation in Maseru is your bridge to Europe, to the 28 Member States, to the markets and businesses of Europe, to our institutions of learning, to the 500 million people of Europe.

[...] In three weeks' time, elections for the European Parliament will be held. 751 Members of Parliament will be elected by voters in the 28 Member States. These are the eighth elections since 1979 when for the first time the European Parliament was directly elected. Europe can be

proud that its voters directly influence its policies. The Lisbon Treaty entered into force in 2009, gives the Parliament now also an important role in the appointment of the President of the European Commission. We can therefore expect a more assertive and active Parliament. I encourage Lesotho's authorities to nurture relations with the new European Parliament.

'Working together' is our motto. Our visits to the ten districts were only possible because we worked together. Allow me therefore to thank in particular the staff of the Delegation and the Ministry of Finance. Their efforts and commitment throughout the year, but in particular to the organisation of our visits to the districts were crucial. I thank them for that.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Rea Leaboha.

Khotso, Pula, Nala!

I now invite you all to raise your glasses in a toast to His Majesty the King, the Government and People of the Kingdom of Lesotho.