

fluence on other sectors – it will improve healthcare and education links, enhance job opportunities and slow down the emigration of skilled Seychellois.

In parallel, **the project will also benefit from a 4 million euro grant from the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund** to support shareholding in the project by the government of Seychelles. A statutory dividend from this equity stake will be used to provide free internet access for schools, libraries, hospitals and other social development-related services.

Interim Economic Partnership Agreement

The Seychelles signed the interim EPA in Mauritius at the end of August 2009. It has been ratified by the National Assembly in May 2010. Seychelles is amongst the countries which show a great level of interest and commitment towards a full, comprehensive, EPA.

The Agreement includes no duties/quotas for Seychelles imports into the EU and no duties/quotas for 98% of EU imports into Seychelles.

Visas—Schengen visa waiver

The Seychelles is one of the pilot countries which benefit from Schengen visa waiver—the Agreement for a Short-Stay Visa-Waiver that enables Seychellois to travel to the EU without Schengen visa was signed in mid 2009.

As from 29th May 2009, the citizens of

Seychelles may enter and stay without a visa in the territory of the European Union for a period of stay not exceeding three months. This also applies to citizens of the EU Member States visiting Seychelles.

Rome Statute

The Seychelles ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in July 2010, prior to the Kampala Summit. The Statute entered into force for the Seychelles on 1 November, 2010, bringing the total number of States Parties to the Rome Statute to 112.

"This ratification, bringing the number of ICC States Parties to 112, marks a significant step forward in the international community's efforts to combat impunity. Following the ratification by Seychelles, thirty one African countries are now parties to the Rome Statute."

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

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European Union - Seychelles

Relations beyond Development Cooperation

Relations between Seychelles and the EU are very good and have remarkably improved over the last two years with a high number of very good results achieved in terms of development cooperation and beyond.

The EU supports the process of economic reform underway in Seychelles. It backs Seychelles' transition towards a more open society based upon the rule of law and respect for human rights, and believes this will benefit Seychelles development and social stability.

Fight Against piracy and promotion of maritime security

The Seychelles plays a very pro-active role and has a leadership role in the international fight against piracy and for the promotion of maritime security. The EU and the Seychelles are in close policy dialogue over this challenging subject.

The Seychelles covers a large area—115 islands within an EEZ of 650,000 km². Therefore, despite successful economic reforms, its economy is reliant on tourism and tuna fishing, both of which can be affected by piracy attacks. It is also heavily dependant on imported goods, including foodstuffs. The combination of these factors and its proximity to Somalia make it vulnerable.

Discussions began between the Seychelles and the EU (represented by EU Member States permanently resident in Seychelles: FR and UK) in June 2009 to establish a transfer agreement for pirates captured by EUNAVFOR and a status of forces agree-

The programme works in the following areas:

- **Prisons** – training, management support, building/increase in beds
- **Judiciary** – training, equipment, prosecutors
- **Police** – investigators, training, equipment
- **Coastguard** – equipment, training and technical assistance from visiting EU and other naval assets, equipment.

ment (SOFA). An exchange of letters covering transfer arrangements was signed in September 2009 and a SOFA in November 2009.

The EU and individual member states have also provided funding through the UNODC for a capacity building programme which is designed to increase the ability of the Seychelles to prosecute and imprison pirates. The UNODC programme includes

780,000 euros from the EU. This financial support is going to be further scaled up via the 3 million euros additional grant aimed at mitigating costs financed directly by the Government of Seychelles.

On 14 June 2010 the Foreign Affairs Council meeting agreed to extend the mandate of the Atalanta mission by two years from 31/12/2010 to 31/12/2012.

The Seychelles has organised major international fora facilitating **policy dialogue in the fight against piracy and for the promotion of maritime security.**

In May 2010 the Seychelles hosted the first regional Ministerial Meeting, co-chaired by Minister Morgan and the EU HR/VP. In July 2010 the Seychelles held an international symposium and after that hosted the meeting of regional organisations in the ESA-IO

"The scourge of piracy in the Indian Ocean has affected maritime tourism, shipping and fisheries, which are the major sources of income for Seychelles."

Alessandro Mariani, Head of Delegation and Ambassador



European Naval Force Somalia - Operation ATALANTA (EU)

region to launch the preparation of the regional strategy and regional action plan, which were endorsed by the 2nd Ministerial Meeting held in Mauritius on 7 October 2010.

Climate Change

The Seychelles' position on climate change is in line with that of the EU as clearly highlighted in all the high level speeches delivered in New York during the UN General Assembly and Copenhagen.

The Seychelles is one of the few countries which arrived to the conference in Copenhagen with its climate change strategy already approved by Cabinet.

The policy dialogue is very close and the Sey-

chelles have been selected in 2009 as one of the countries which could benefit from the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) budget line of the EU.

Financial support comes in line with the EU's recognition of all the efforts done by Seychelles in terms of valuable sustainable development reforms. Moreover, the EU further encourages the Seychelles Government to sustain efforts towards implementation in 2011, notably the preparation of a new energy framework legislation.

Fisheries

Policy dialogue between the EU and the Seychelles on fisheries matters is very close and dynamic.

The Seychelles has a leadership role in the fishery sector. The country is hosting international tuna conferences and has very dynamic participation in international fisheries regional organisations and projects. The Seychelles undoubtedly ranks amongst the coastal states adopting best practices in line with responsible and sustainable fishing.

In June 2010, the EU and the Seychelles initialled a new protocol under the Tuna Fisheries Partnership Agreement in line with the reform of the EU's Fisheries Policy and the Seychelles's fisheries legal update.

The European purse seine fleet makes almost 25 % of their total catches in the Indian Ocean in the Seychelles Exclusive Economic Zone. Most of these highly specialized vessels operate from Port Victoria which offers a wide range of services. Their landings supply the local canning industry and the industry of the whole region (Mauritius, Madagascar and Kenya) with high quality products.



Tuna boat

European Investment Bank (EIB)

Following the launch and implementation of the economic reform programme, relations with the EIB have been invigorated. In March 2011 the EIB agreed to provide an **8 million euro loan to the Seychelles Cable Systems Company (SCS)** for the installation and operation of the first submarine fibre-optic cable for international connections to the Seychelles.

The loan will fund a 1,930km **cable from the main island of Mahe to the existing Eastern Africa Submarine Cable System in Tanzania** and is expected to come into operation by the second half of 2012. The fibre-optic cable is expected to improve not only telecommunications and internet access in Seychelles, but also to reduce the costs of international transmissions. As a result, it will also have a positive in-

