



## EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to  
the Philippines

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### **EU Commissioner visits Philippines to strengthen development co-operation and provide new support for peace process**

European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, will visit the Philippines for the first time from 10 to 12 November 2013 to explore ways on how to further advance bilateral development co-operation between the European Union and the Philippines. During his visit, the Commissioner will hold high-level meetings with Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Secretary Teresita Deles, Socio-economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balicasan, Energy Secretary, Carlos Jericho Petilla and Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Evans Garcia.

Ahead of the visit, Commissioner Piebalgs stated: "I am pleased to see rapid economic growth in the Philippines in past few years. However it is now important to deepen the economic reforms and make this growth more inclusive. The EU is ready to support the Philippines on its path to reduce poverty, strengthen the rule of law and support Mindanao's Peace Process."

The Development Commissioner will visit the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture supported by the EU Trade Related Technical Assistance (TRTA) project. The EU TRTA support of €18 million over a period of 12 years aims at improving laboratory facilities, enhance the control system for fisheries products, training of Fish Health Management and Quality Assurance on export requirements to the EU, etc. With the support of the project harmonized Sanitary and Phytosanitary regulation, in conformity with EU and internationally accepted standards, it has been implemented ensuring continued exports of fish products to the EU and securing many jobs in poor areas. Other components include support to trade integration, customs reform and competition administration.

The agenda of the Commissioner's visit also includes a meeting with the President of the Asian Development Bank to discuss how to enhance collaboration between the EU and the Bank in Asia, Central Asia and the Pacific.

#### **Background**

Over the last two decades, the EU has been a major development partner of the Philippines and has contributed € 640 million (Php 37 billion) of grants to combat poverty.

EU development assistance provided to the Philippines is closely aligned with the Philippines Development Plan 2011-2016 and delivers annually about €40 million of grant funding.

The main sector of the EU country strategy is health, with the EU providing budget support to the Universal Health Care Agenda of the Government providing free health care to the poorest Filipinos and improving facilities and health services. Some of the results include:

- 85% of Filipinos are already insured (including the poorest 40%)
- Child mortality halved over the last 15 years which was a focus of EU assistance over the same period.
- Life expectancy has increased.

The EU is working jointly with the Department of Health to address remaining challenges particularly on maternal health and access to health services for indigenous people.

Other priority programmes support directly the Good Governance Agenda of President Aquino, Trade Integration and Job creation and a particular emphasis is put on conflict -affected Mindanao. The EU supports the peace process in Mindanao as well as community development on the ground.

The bilateral EU-Philippines programme is complemented by additional funding - most of the time channelled through civil society organisations - to address specific priority issues such as social issues, the environment, attention to indigenous peoples, human rights and migration. There are more than 30 grant projects currently ongoing with civil society.

For more information

Website of the European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs:

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/piebalgs/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/piebalgs/index_en.htm)

Website of DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid – cooperation with the Philippines:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/country-cooperation/philippines/philippines\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/country-cooperation/philippines/philippines_en.htm)

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