



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to
the Philippines

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EU Ambassadors visit Cotabato City to reiterate the commitment to support the peace process and development in Mindanao.

EU Member States Ambassadors Thomas Ossowski of Germany, Massimo Roscigno of Italy, Josef Muellner of Austria, Roland Van Remoortele of Belgium will, together with EU Ambassador Guy Ledoux, visit Cotabato City on 25-26 April to reiterate the EU's commitment to the Mindanao peace process and development in the region.

Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the United Kingdom Embassy Trevor Lewis and Romania Embassy Mihai Sion, deputy Ambassadors of France Hugues-Antoine Suin and of Czech Republic Jan Vytopil, and Senior Program Manager of Spanish Cooperation in the Philippines Carlos Gallego, will also join the Ambassadors.

"Our visit to Mindanao demonstrates the EU's continuous support for the Mindanao peace process and development in the region. After the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) and the completion of the draft of the Basic law a peaceful transition in Mindanao is essential for the Philippines' economic and social development, and we commend the GPH and MILF panels on their efforts", Ambassador Ledoux said.

Many challenges still remain to ensure that peace in Mindanao is lasting. EU and Member States representatives are visiting Cotabato to promote the culture of peace that has marked the very creation of the European Union which is based on efforts to overcome divisions and promote peace – a fact which was recognized when the EU received the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize not long ago.

During the tour, the group of Ambassadors will meet MILF Chairman Al Haj Murad, ARMM Executive Secretary Laisa Alamanian and will have dinner with the members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission. The group will also attend a consultation meeting with a group of local business person organized by the NGO "Conciliation Resources", an education training event on mine risk organized by the NGO "FSD" as well as a livelihood project implemented by the World Bank (co-financed by the EU) under the Mindanao Trust Fund.

Over the years the European Union has adapted its funding programs to the changing needs of the Peace Process. Today, the funding is targeting support for increasing inclusiveness through various information and consultation activities, demining and education related to mine risks, monitoring through the Third Party Monitoring Team and protection of human rights. Funding is also provided for income generating activities particularly through the Mindanao Trust Fund, to ensure that peace dividend are perceived by the population.

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Annex

EU development aid and Humanitarian assistance to Mindanao:

Since 1990, Mindanao has benefited from Php 9.5 billion in development assistance from the European Union.

Beyond multiple grants to local NGOs for the promotion of good governance and human rights, the specific focus of the support is nowadays on delivery of peace dividends, reconstruction and development through the support to the Mindanao Trust Fund-reconstruction and Development Programme (MTF-RDP) managed by the World Bank that coordinate official development assistance in conflict-affected communities in Mindanao.

Additionally the European Union is funding the project worth about Php 354 Million (€ 6 Million) implemented by the World Food Programme "Enhancing the Resilience of Internally Displaced Persons in Central Mindanao by Strengthening Livelihoods" whose purpose of the action is to support the smooth resettlement of IDPs who have returned or resettled by effectively addressing the livelihood needs and improving their food security status.

In recent years the European Union has also provided the following Humanitarian assistance to Mindanao: as to help mitigate the immediate consequences of conflict, the EU has been providing Php 1.3 billion worth assistance for the socio economic recovery of internally displaced people (IDPs) and more than Php 1.4 billion worth of humanitarian aid for populations affected by the conflict and natural disasters: in December 2012, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and civil protection Department (ECHO) made available Php 590 million (€ 10 Million) in emergency funding to help communities in the areas of Mindanao struck by Typhoon Bopha (Pablo), and in October 2013, Php 18 Million (€ 300.000) for the victims of the Zamboanga conflict, 100.000 beneficiaries of non food supplies, camp management and other services.