

**Speech of Ambassador Michele Cervone d'Urso**  
**EU Special Envoy for Somalia**  
**Europe Day in Mogadishu – 15 May 2013**

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Kuso dowada malenta Europe

It is a great honour to have Europe day in Mogadishu after 23 years with the presence of H.E. President Hassan Sheikh.

Today we celebrate the Europe we created after the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war and a new Somalia. The incremental building of a new Europe has made "*war not only unthinkable but materially impossible*" to quote Robert Schuman – one of the founding fathers of the EU. This is ever so relevant for the new Somalia!

Somalia is on the move – we are witnessing changes every day that were unthinkable just a few months ago and there are huge expectations that the new political dispensation led by you Mr President will deliver a better life to the ordinary Somali.

In all these 23 years the European Union has been at Somalia's side through thick and thin. We want to be closer to you and accompany you in this new journey. We have now decided to shift gear and respond Mr President to your call in Brussels last January to normalise relations between the European Union and Somalia. This is not only in words but in deeds. Yesterday we witnessed the successful launch of the New Deal process in Somalia which will pave the way for a Compact to be presented at Brussels in September. The New Deal enshrines very much the new thinking – Somali leadership and ownership and responding to your needs. The challenge Mr President is to ensure that Somali citizen, civil society and regional authorities all feel part of an inclusive process led by your Government.

We are the largest donor for Somalia but we are not here today to trumpet our support – we have to ensure it is relevant and can make a difference – that is the challenge. We do not

work on Somalia but **with** Somalia. Gone are the days where there was a scramble for Somalia! This morning's event - the formal launch and move of EUTM from Uganda to Somalia represents a further example of the dramatic shift in the way we are operating in Somalia. We also intend to ensure our other civilian and military missions also move as soon as possible into Somalia.

In this context, it made no sense to continue having such ceremonies as Europe day outside Somalia. Today's event is very symbolic but **symbols in this case are also substance**. I assure you Mr President of the unwavering support of the European Union and its Member States. I am delighted that we have today by my side the Ambassadors and Charge' d'affaires of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and United Kingdom. All of them are accredited now to your Government and Denmark will be the next one. It shows the scale of EU commitment on Somalia. I would like to say a word on our colleague Ambassador Matt Baugh who is not here today and is leaving us soon. Thank you Matt for your tireless efforts for Somalia as witnessed at the London conference. I would also like to pay tribute and welcome our friends from the various Embassies here in Mogadishu who are already operating in the capital – and I hope that we can join you very soon. I feel this is really important for our standing and credibility with your people.

Today is also Youth day for Somalia and there is no better message of hope than to empower youth and allow civil society voices to be heard and following the lunch we will gather together for a round table on the role of youth and civil society in building peace and livelihoods.

Mr President, my Somali friends, let me assure you that my colleagues and I have your same hope and desire for lasting peace and solidarity and the rebirth of a new Somali nation in peace with itself and its neighbours. We will try to be innovative, seek new opportunities and help you make a difference. Time is short and we need to act now.

Last but not least I would like to thank the efforts all those partners that made today's event happen from FAO that have arranged these beautiful pictures that portray our partnership visibly more than any words to AMISOM whose role in pushing the security space in Somalia is unequalled in Africa. Without our partners, the EU will not be able to deliver.

We hope to be able to host you in the near term at our future home in Mogadishu.

I raise my glass and would like us to toast to the new Somalia!