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EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY- EUROPEAN UNION

PRESS RELEASE

The EU and the EAC launch the 11th EDF Regional Electoral Support Programme

Wednesday, 11 February 2015, Arusha: His Excellency Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi, Ambassador of the European Union to Tanzania and to the EAC and his Excellency Dr Richard Sezibera, Secretary General of the EAC signed today a Financing Agreement committing € 5 million in support to a Regional Electoral Support Programme (RESP).

The European Union and the EAC share the principle of democracy, respect of fundamental rights and overall development, of which political elections are important milestones. The EAC Secretariat is committed to free, fair and peaceful elections in the region – starting with Burundi and Tanzania in 2015.

The RESP Programme, financed by the European Development Fund (EDF) will support the EAC capacity to follow-up the elections to be held in the Partner states between 2015 and 2018. It is intended to enhance democratic governance and political integration in the East African Community. The Programme will therefore support the EAC Secretariat in establishing its Democracy and Election Unit (DEU), in charge of overseeing and conducting electoral observation according to internationally recognized methodology.

The EAC Forum of Electoral Commissions and other regional fora and knowledge-sharing platforms will be reinforced to encourage peer-learning among Partner States Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), as well as to generate, share, disseminate and apply evidence and research-based electoral knowledge.

EU Ambassador to Tanzania and the EAC, Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi said: *"Election observation is a vital component of European Union activities to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law worldwide. Election observation can contribute to strengthening democratic institutions, build public confidence in electoral processes and help deter fraud, intimidation and violence. Through this project, the EU is partnering with the EAC Secretariat to achieve these shared goals in the region".*

On his part the East African Community Secretary General Amb. Dr Richard Sezibera noted that *"For the EAC to attain its Vision of a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa; this support is important and timely".*



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For more information, please contact:

Ms Luana Reale, Head of Political Press and Information Section, Delegation of the European Union to Tanzania

Email: Luana.reale@eeas.europa.eu

Direct Line: +255 22 2164503

Website: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tanzania/index_en.htm

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanUnionTanzania>

Mr Owora Richard Othieno, Head of Department; Corporate Communications and Public Affairs, East African Community Secretariat

Direct Line: +255 784 835021

Email: Oothieno@eachq.org

Website: www.eac.int