



PRESS RELEASE

The EU Steps Up Efforts to Fight Crime and Boost Security in the Region

February 1, 2016, Port of Spain: The European Union (EU) today announced the signing of a EUR3.3million (TT\$23 million) grant to CARICOM IMPACS to fight crime and boost security by enhancing border security systems and provide training for security officials, ballistic experts and firearm users. This project is part of an overall EUR12 million regional "Crime and Security Programme" and is a continuation of the EU's partnership in programmes on crime prevention and justice in the region.

The Programme was developed to address the acute and urgent challenges posed by widespread crime, high rates of lethal violence and the overall deterioration of citizen's security in the region. These challenges stem from key "threats" related to drug production, trafficking and consumption; transnational cartels and gangs; human and arms smuggling; money laundering and cyber-crime.

The framework for this programme is the EU's Strategy for Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean, which is aimed at strengthening governments' capacity to tackle insecurity and foster regional and international cooperation to deal with the transnational dimension of security threats. The EU strategy also complements CARICOM's Regional Strategy on Crime and Security which forms the basis for regional cooperation and calls for greater international support.

Daniela Tramacere, Charge d'Affaires of the European Union Delegation in Trinidad and Tobago commented: "This strategy adopted by the EU is part of our overall refocusing of bilateral aid, including Justice and Security Sector Reform assistance. We are attempting to target assistance in a smarter way in order to disrupt transnational, regional and sub-regional criminal networks. As a result, EU aid is being directed more and more toward supporting regional programmes and institutions."

Under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), the Caribbean Regional Indicative Programme, 2014-2020, has been increased substantially, from EUR164 million to EUR346 million, and the region will benefit from cooperation funds that will be used for a number of thematic areas including the fight against crime and insecurity.

Another grant of EUR1.23 million is expected to be disbursed to the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) to boost the capabilities of CFATF members and Financial Investigative Units (FIUs) in financial investigation and intelligence to assist in the fight against crime.

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