



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

Harare, 9 May 2013

Op-ed by Ambassador Aldo Dell'Ariceia on Europe Day 2013

Today is Europe Day – a wonderful opportunity for Europeans to celebrate the EU's achievements in promoting democracy, human rights, peace and prosperity on the European continent. For these efforts, the EU was awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize.

As Europe today celebrates the 63rd anniversary of the decisive declaration by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, which initiated the European integration adventure, Africa is preparing for the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Organisation of the African Unity, which initiated the African integration process, evolving into the African Union in 2002.

Cooperation, convergence and concord between the EU and the AU have been driving peace and prosperity in both Europe and Africa. Africa and Europe are close neighbours. We have a shared geography, a shared history and a shared future.

The EU salutes and supports Africa in the achievement of its huge potential. 6 out of the world's 10 fastest growing economies are African; they are fuelled by a rapidly emerging middle class, and a young, dynamic, fast growing population that is expected to double by 2050. Africa's economic and social development benefits first and foremost the people of Africa. But peace and prosperity in Africa is also the interest to its neighbouring Europe. What is good for Africa is also good for Europe.

There are still significant challenges ahead. Eradicating poverty and making sure that growth and wealth benefit the largest number of people, while preserving the environment is a priority. With less than thousand days to reach the Millennium Development Goals, we need to make a decisive push to achieve the targets.

The European Union is the biggest provider of development assistance to Africa. In Zimbabwe alone, we have contributed with over 1 billion USD since 2009 to the health, education and agriculture sectors, as well as to democratic processes and institutions in the GPA.

The European Union is also the biggest trading and investment partner on the African continent. In Zimbabwe, trade has more than doubled since 2009 and the EU is the second largest trading partner after South Africa. The interim Economic Partnership Agreement with Zimbabwe provides for a better and more predictable trade environment, thus multiplying the opportunities for trade and investment in a win-win situation.

The partnership between Africa and Europe is based on core values and principles. Democracy, respect for human rights, rule of law, good governance and sustainable development are foremost among these. In Zimbabwe the EU is engaging in close partnership

with SADC to support national efforts to implement the Global Political Agreement and prepare for credible, peaceful and transparent elections.

In an increasingly interdependent world the future of Africa, Zimbabwe and Europe are closely interlinked. What affects you affects us, and vice versa. We must work together to improve the day-to-day lives of all our citizens. Our agenda is about future peace and prosperity, and achieving this through building strong partnerships.

Let's celebrate!

- **H.E. Ambassador Aldo Dell'Ariceia is the Head of the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Zimbabwe.**