

## JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

### SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE EC-YEMEN JOINT COOPERATION COMMITTEE, BRUSSELS, 27 OCTOBER 2009

1. The sixteenth meeting of the Joint Cooperation Committee established under the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Yemen took place in Brussels on 27 October 2009. The Yemeni delegation was headed by the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister of Planning and International Co-operation HE Mr Abdulkarim Al-Arhabi. The European Commission delegation was headed by Mr Tomás Duplá del Moral, Director Middle East and Southern Mediterranean at the External Relations Directorate-General.
2. The Parties stressed the need for strengthening of the bilateral relations between the EC and Yemen in a period where Yemen faces increasing challenges. The Parties noted with satisfaction that the pace of cooperation and the level of engagement provides good ground to further enhance the relationship. They also stressed the need for a coordinated response to Yemen's development challenges involving the regional partners and the international community.
3. The Parties exchanged views on political issues. Yemen gave an overview of the key elements of the reform agenda and the progress made since last year and indicated the next steps in that process. The Commission stressed the need for the development of a comprehensive vision for change to address popular grievances, with a clear focus on key reforms and determined actions to address the most urgent issues. It confirmed its willingness to support Yemen in these efforts.
4. The Commission reiterated the EU's attachment to human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy in its development cooperation. It voiced its concern regarding the postponement of the elections and called for the implementation of the recommendations of the 2006 Election Observation mission. Regarding the conflict in the North the Commission reiterated the EU call, on both sides, for a peaceful political solution and for an end to military actions. It also called for access, for the EU and international community, to the affected population to deliver humanitarian support.
5. The Parties stressed the crucial role of GCC countries for Yemen's stability and economic prosperity. They discussed the latest state of play in Yemen's relations with the GCC and Yemen identified opportunities for further expansion and integration in the region.
6. Parties agreed on the need to address the issue of migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa. Apart from direct cooperation between Parties, ways will be explored to help addressing this issue in a regional context, also involving Yemen's neighbours in the larger framework of cooperation with the Gulf States.
7. The Parties exchanged views on Yemen's key economic reforms and the ways the Government of Yemen is addressing them. They mentioned in particular the declining oil production and the impact on Yemen's budget and subsequently on the poor populations. The EU underlined the importance of transparent budgeted practices. The

EC confirmed its commitment to assisting the Government in its economic reform endeavours.

8. The Parties noted with concern that total bilateral trade diminished from € 1.298 million in 2007 to € 1.011 m in 2008 and remained unbalanced. In order to reverse this trend they identified potential patterns for improving the trade balance, and exchanged views on the necessary diversification of Yemen export production, in view of EC support to private sector development in the years to come.

They took note with satisfaction that bilateral EC-Yemen negotiations in view of Yemen's WTO accession were concluded in May 2009. The Commission reiterated its support for a rapid accession of Yemen to the WTO in 2010.

9. The Government of Yemen informed the Commission of its development priorities in the framework of the Development Plan for Poverty Reduction, the Public Investment Plan and the National Reform Agenda.
10. Parties agreed on the necessity to optimise donor coordination and the leading role the Government of Yemen will play in this respect. They also agreed on the need to enhance aid effectiveness for which both clear Yemeni sector strategies as well as an improved EU joint strategy and programming are essential elements.
11. The Commission informed the Government of Yemen that it intends to step up its efforts to respond to the increased challenges, this also through upgrading its presence in Yemen to a fully-fledged Delegation. It stressed the need for continued and enhanced reform efforts with a clear focus on key priorities. EC assistance as outlined in the 2011-2013 Multiannual Indicative Programme will increase in financial terms and concentrate on well defined areas within the sectors of governance, economic development and livelihoods, and basic social services. The GoY will also continue to be eligible for assistance from EC thematic budget lines.
12. The GoY urged the EU Member States to consider Yemen as priority country for ODA.
13. The Parties agreed on the following **concrete steps to take**:

- Agreed to continue and deepen dialogue on the GoY priorities on the reform agenda in Sana'a before the end of the year.
- EC assistance for the year 2011-2013 will focus on:
  - i. governance (democratisation, state/institution building including public financial management);
  - ii. social sectors (public health, social welfare fund including gender equality);
  - iii. economic development and livelihoods (development of a sustainable revenue base).
- Within these sectors the two Parties agreed to get together rapidly to reach agreement on focused activities to be supported in line with the GoY priorities for reform.
- The GoY undertook to get back to the EU with a proposal for a donor coordination mechanism in Sana'a, including all relevant donors, notably the GCC.

14. Both sides agreed to **convene the 17th meeting of the EC-Yemen Joint Cooperation Committee** in Sana'a in the second half of 2010.

Done in Brussels, 27 October 2009



Mr Tomás Duplá del Moral  
Director Middle East, Southern Mediterranean  
External Relations Directorate-General  
European Commission



Mr Abdulkarim Al-Arhabi  
Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs/Minister of Planning and International Cooperation  
Government of the Republic of Yemen