

SPEECH BY MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
HON. DOMINIC NITIWUL (MP), AT THE RECEPTION FOR EUROPE DAY
ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH MAY, 2018

Your Excellency, Paolo Salvia, Chargés D’Affaires of the European Union to Ghana,

Members of the Council of State,

Colleague Ministers of State,

Honourable Members of Parliament,

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Religious and Traditional Leaders,

Distinguished Members of the EU Delegation to Ghana,

Nii Mei, Naa Mei, Nananom,

Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am honoured to join you today as the leader of the Government delegation on this august occasion of Europe Day Celebration. I wish to take this opportunity to convey on behalf of the President of the Republic, H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the Government and people of Ghana to extend warmest congratulations to all member countries of the European Union.

1. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Ghana and the European Union have enduring relations rooted in our mutual commitment to peace and democratic values. The current cooperation between Ghana and EU began after the Lomé convention in 1975. We have since then enjoyed fruitful socio-economic and political cooperation.

As you rightly indicated, the EU is Ghana’s largest multilateral development and trade partner, offering free access to the EU market via Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA).

We also acknowledge the EU's €175 million financial agreement with the Government of Ghana for a stipulated period of seven (7) years to support the implementation of specific development projects in the areas of Public Financial Management (PFM), the Stepping Stone Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), Sustainable Agricultural Development in the Savannah Ecological Zone, decentralization and climate change.

2. Your Excellency, the interim EPA was ratified by the Parliament of Ghana and the European Parliament in 2016. Ghana's access to the EU market has thus been secured. The EU delegation has been a keen supporter of "Ghana beyond Aid" and thus has worked to ensure that the remaining EU Aid is effectively delivered, with new commitments signed in February, 2018, mainly for Agriculture in Northern Ghana as already alluded to. In the wider development partner community, the Head of the EU delegation played a key role as one of the members of the small group which regularly met the Economic Management Team to ensure that Ghana is on the right path of its socio-economic development.

3. Excellencies, on the issue of investments, the Government is committed to streamline our investment regulations and procedures to ensure that the business and investment climate is improved to attract more investment from Member States of the European Union. It is also to enhance our competitiveness to take advantage of the EPA ratified by our two Parliaments in 2016 to access EU market free of any duties and quotas.

4. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is obvious that the Government's desire to improve the country's Public Financial Management (PFM) goes hand in hand with the need to fight corruption. Initiatives in this sector require accountability, prudent use of resources and transparency in public fund management. It is in this vein that the Special Prosecutor's office had been established. The office is expected to ensure accountability as well as effective and efficient use of the resources of the state. I want to assure you that the Special Prosecutor will discharge his duties without hindrance even from the Government. This is an important step to manage our public finance.
5. Excellencies, I reaffirm the commitment and determination of H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and the Government of Ghana to strengthening the existing excellent bonds of cooperation and friendship that so happily exist between Ghana and the EU. We are confident that Ghana can continue to count on the EU as a valuable development partner in finding solutions to current global challenges such as irregular migration, insecurity and human right violations, radicalism and terrorism, human and drug trafficking, piracy as well as climate change and its attendant impact on the environment and livelihoods.
6. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on this note, May I now invite Your Excellency, Distinguished Members of the EU Delegation, Ladies and Gentlemen, to raise your glasses and join me in a toast to the continued relations of Ghana – EU Partnership and to the further strengthening of our bilateral relations.

Long live Ghana!

Long live EU!

Long live Ghana – EU relations!

I thank you all for your kind attention.