

# ERITREA– EUROPEAN UNION PARTNERSHIP:

20 years of **EU** presence in **Eritrea**



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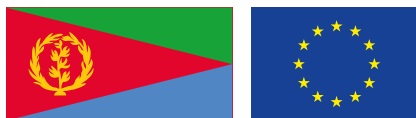
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A message from His Excellency,  
**Dr Giorgis Teklemichael**  
Minister for National Development

The 30-year-long war of liberation (1961-1991), and again that of 1998-2000, have left Eritrea with about 100 000 of its young people killed, with tens of thousands of its people disabled and with a significant part of the population which has left the country altogether.

The social and economic infrastructure was almost completely destroyed, but the Eritrean people — including those of the diaspora — are determined to consolidate their hard-won independence and are marching on the road of sustainable development and to ensure social justice.

Eritrea, however, has important development partners whose commitment is steady and expanding, and one such partner is the European Union (EU) — a partner from the very first years of independence. The EU partnership for development is covering more and more areas of cooperation, such as cultural, social, economic and political dialogue, and it is very effective. The impact on the daily life of the people is significant and has been reflected in the achievement of certain millennium development goal (MDG) targets, as evidenced during a meeting in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2014.

The Ministry of National Development expresses its appreciation to the EU delegation and is confident of further cooperation.



A message from His Excellency,  
**Ambassador**  
**Christian R. Manahl,**  
Head of the Delegation  
of the European Union to Eritrea

Eritrea is a country with a complex and turbulent history, with a determined, creative and resilient people, proud of its achievements and enjoying a rare social harmony among its diverse communities. But it is also a country still struggling to overcome the legacy of a long and devastating liberation war and of the disruptive border conflict with Ethiopia, which has not only caused immense human suffering in both countries but has also required the economic and commercial reorientation of Eritrea.

The relationship which the EU has developed with Eritrea since the country's independence tries to look beyond the stereotypes and to work towards common long-term interests, based on mutual understanding and in a spirit of partnership. The European Union strives to contribute to Eritrea's social and economic development, to help its people face the challenges of drought and desertification and to support the government's decision to shift from costly and polluting hydrocarbon-based electricity production to renewable sources of energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal, which is in line with the EU's global climate change policy. The EU has also consistently advocated for peaceful and mutually beneficial neighbourly relations based on international law in the entire Horn of Africa.





# The **European Union's** relations with **Eritrea**

Relations between Eritrea and the European Union go back to the first years of Eritrean independence. The European Commission opened its delegation in Asmara in 1995, one of the first diplomatic missions to be established. Throughout the last 20 years, the EU has actively worked in cooperation with Eritrean authorities to improve the livelihoods of the Eritrean people. During all of this period, the EU has been advocating for the promotion of dialogue between Eritrea and its neighbours, as well as supporting Eritrea's integration into regional institutions.

In the first decade, development cooperation between the EU, its Member States and Eritrea focused on reconstruction following the devastation during the war of independence. The European Development Fund (EDF) is the main EU instrument for development cooperation with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, including Eritrea. Its funding is provided by voluntary donations by EU Member States. The past EDFs for Eritrea aimed at restoring macroeconomic stability and viability.

The war with Ethiopia (1998-2000) and the resulting destruction of physical and social capital led to new needs in terms of post-conflict rehabilitation, which became the focal area of cooperation during the decade from 2000 to 2010 and emphasised both the reconstruction of physical infrastructure and the demobilisation of combatants. The current EDF has been supporting projects that are directly linked to the basic needs and livelihoods of the Eritrean population. It is focused on strengthening food security, as well as good governance.

In the future (2015-2020) the EU will continue to address these issues, but a strong emphasis will be put on energy with a view to providing Eritreans with better access to clean and renewable electricity. These sectors are and will be addressed also through EU financial instruments outside the EDF country allocation for Eritrea (e.g. through the ACP–EU Energy Facility, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the global public goods and challenges programme or the ACP–EU Water Facility).

The EU's relationship with Eritrea is based on the Cotonou Agreement, which provides for a development partnership and a political dialogue with ACP countries. Regular political dialogue in line with Article 8 of the agreement is important to exchange information and to convey messages, as well as an opportunity to develop or deepen cooperation on specific issues. The EU–Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (Khartoum Process), launched in 2014 during the Rome ministerial conference, started cooperation on migration between the EU and the countries of origin and transit of migrants. In close cooperation with regional and international organisations, especially the African Union and the United Nations, the EU is seeking to foster further regional integration and regional cooperation to address the challenges of irregular migrations, as well as other issues of common concern.

In 2011 the EU appointed a special representative for the Horn of Africa whose task it is to actively contribute to regional and international efforts to achieve lasting peace, security and development in the region.

# European Union-supported sectors (1999-2015)

Sector	Timeframe	Locality	Amount (EUR)
<b>1. Post-conflict rehabilitation/reintegration</b> — rehabilitation — reintegration — food provision — mine clearance.	1999-2010	countrywide	97 662 000
<b>2. Education</b>	2002-2007	countrywide	52 304 000
<b>3. Water and sanitation</b>	ongoing	countrywide	8 718 000
<b>4. Agriculture and food security</b> (includes photovoltaic systems in irrigation and food processing)	ongoing	countrywide	101 531 000
<b>5. Energy</b> — photovoltaic (stand alone, grid connected).	ongoing	Northern Red Sea region, Debub region	13 770 000
<b>6. Governance</b> — auditor general — public administration — access to justice (community courts) — grassroots organisations and social dialogue (e. g. National Confederation of Eritrean Workers, National Chamber of Commerce, Eritrean Women in Agribusiness Association).	ongoing	countrywide	15 625 000
<b>7. Technical cooperation</b> — (studies, training, programming, capacity building).	ongoing	countrywide	4 299 000
<b>Total</b>	—	—	<b>293 909 000</b>
<b>In the pipeline/11<sup>th</sup> EDF</b> — energy for development (photovoltaic, wind, geothermal) — governance.	2016-2020	countrywide	

## Cultural exchange

The EU delegation is organising various events that enable cultural exchange between Eritreans and Europeans and promote civil society and human rights.

Already firmly rooted in the calendar is the annual celebration of **Europe Day** (9 May). This event is usually accompanied by concerts and a **European film week**,

co-organised by the EU delegation and embassies of EU Member States present in Asmara (Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom), as well as by the non-resident EU Member States' embassies.



Winning works from the art competition

The delegation of the European Union regularly organises an **art competition**, the theme for the past years having been 'I dream therefore I am'. The drawing and painting competitions have attracted hundreds of submissions from more than 100 Eritrean artists in various age groups, among which the best works are selected and rewarded with prizes that support these talented individuals in their artistic careers.

In the area of human rights, the delegation has built on the successful experience of annual celebrations of **Human Rights Day** (10 December). In 2014 the celebrations were followed by the screening of a human rights-related film, which attracted more than 300 visitors.

## Agriculture and food security



Harvesting work near Mendefera

Eritrea possesses more than 2 million hectares of arable land, 600 000 of which could be irrigated all year round. However, low domestic crop and livestock productivity and production, combined with adverse climatic conditions, remain problems that undermine the country's food security. Eritrea has 1 200 kilometres of coastline on the Red Sea with substantial, yet largely unexploited, fishing potential.

Agriculture is currently employing approximately 70 % of the Eritrean population on a full-time basis. It also accounts for more than 20 % of Eritrea's

gross domestic product (GDP) and 20-30 % of its merchandise export, mostly in the form of livestock. Therefore it is not surprising that agriculture is currently the largest sector of the EU's development cooperation with Eritrea. EU interventions in this sector are in line with the national strategy for agriculture, with the goal of shifting from extensive, rain-fed agriculture to intensive, irrigation-based agriculture, as well as increasing the contribution of fisheries to national food production and security. This government strategy of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change through improved irrigation systems, use of high-value crops and use of renewable energy is fully compatible with the EU goals related to global climate change and poverty alleviation. In the last 5 years, the EU, in partnership with the government, has supported various agricultural projects worth more than EUR 40 million.

# Energy

The electricity consumption in Eritrea is one of the lowest in the world, around 60 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per person annually, while the African average is 600 kWh. Around 40 % of the Eritrean population has access to electricity, and the lack of energy presents a major bottleneck in the country's development. The

current energy situation is jeopardising development objectives for households in their daily life and the provision of key social services and hampering the productive sectors, in particular manufacturing, agriculture and fisheries. Energy is therefore an absolute priority for the government, and the EU supports projects that bring electricity to Eritrean households, schools, hospitals and factories.

Currently, Eritrea relies largely on biomass fuel, which accounts for about three quarters of all energy consumption. The country is dependent on imported fossil fuels for all modern commercial energy supplies. This heavy dependence is unsustainable. Reliance on biomass fuels causes a considerable degree of environmental damage: land degradation because of deforestation and decline of agricultural soil fertility due to the use of agri-residue and animal droppings for fuel. Using biomass for cooking also causes severe health issues, such as chronic respiratory diseases. The importation of large amounts of fossil fuels annually requires large allocations of public funds. Due to the current under-exploitation of sustainable indigenous energy sources, growth in energy consumption requires increasing petroleum product imports, further compromising the country's energy independence and affecting the security of its supply.



Solar panels in Geleb



An improved fuel-efficient stove

Eritrea is gifted with an excellent location when it comes to the potential for renewable energy. The country has solar resources accounting for around 5 to 6 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/day, which ranks it among the areas with the highest levels of solar radiation in the world. Moreover, Eritrea has large wind energy prospects, especially

in the coastal areas, and the government is making efforts to utilise this opportunity. The EU supports projects that will provide Eritrea with clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy. These projects will not only support the development of Eritrea, but also help to fight global climate change. In the future, the energy sector will become the largest sector of Eritrea–EU cooperation. Funding for energy-related projects will come not only from the 11th EDF, but also from other financial instruments, especially from the ACP–EU Energy Facility.

# Governance

Good governance drives and maximises the achievements of development results. It is essential for economic growth and public participation. To improve the livelihoods of the population it is crucial to invest in developing human capacities and efforts that help maintain an effective public sector and a business-friendly environment.

The Eritrea–EU partnership in this sector builds upon the EU principles and experience in this area, as well as on the Eritrean sustainable development goals for the upcoming years. The Eritrean national indicative development plan (NIDP) 2014-2018, in fact, underlines the importance of a conducive economic, legal, institutional and social environment and recognises the need to address the ongoing challenges in order to foster socioeconomic development, as well as to improve the business climate and labour market development.

The NIDP also underlines the need for improved capacity for planning and implementing development programmes, as well as improved statistics and research on economic indicators and dynamics. The European Union understands the importance of supporting good governance and working with Eritrea in this key area. The cooperation focuses in particular on strengthening the rule of law and access to justice, on building the capacity of the Eritrean public service and on enhancing economic governance.



Community court in Keren

# A SELECTION OF **EUROPEAN UNION-** SUPPORTED PROJECTS



# Support for the agricultural sector/ food security

(EU contribution: EUR 40 million)

Agriculture and food security are currently the largest sectors of intervention of the European Union in Eritrea. The programmes in this area are expected to directly contribute to improving household food security and the livelihoods of several hundreds of thousands of Eritreans and to increasing the production of high-value crops by up to 10 %.

Within the scope of this complementary programme, numerous existing dams with advanced solar irrigation systems will provide irrigation to hundreds of additional hectares of land, guaranteeing three harvests a year. More than 70 Ministry of Agriculture facilities and agro-processing sites (such as those for milk collection and cooling) will be equipped with stand-alone solar energy systems, in line with the Eritrean policy to utilise sustainable and renewable energy.

Seeds, fertiliser, tools and agricultural machinery are procured to boost productivity and production. Animal health is improved through the construction of several veterinarian clinics and a veterinary laboratory. The livelihoods of Eritreans are improved thanks to the distribution of young chickens to 2 000 farmers annually. Soil and water conservation is addressed through the distribution and planting of millions of tree seedlings and the production and distribution of thousands of improved, fuel-saving stoves.

The programme also supports sector governance through the revision of sector policies and regulatory frameworks, as well as enhancing the capacity of the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI).



Milk collection centre in Mendefera

# Improved food security and sustainable livelihood development in the Geleb sub-region

(EU contribution: EUR 940 000)



Dam at Geleb

For some years, EU funds have been contributing to a food security project in the Geleb sub-region. This area, with its 30 000 strong population, located in the Anseba region (approximately 100 kilometres northeast of Asmara), is regularly affected by drought. Average yearly rainfall here is less than 300 millimetres

and most of this precipitation falls as strong, seasonal rains from July to September, which transform the local Chemorat River into an uncontrollable torrent. Another problem that the local farmers face is the limited availability of resources, which hinders the exploitation of the agricultural potential in the area.

For years, farmers in the region have had only limited access to important production factors such as agricultural credit and supplies, adapted technology, technical assistance, market information, roads and transport. The goal of common Eritrea–EU cooperation is to contribute to poverty reduction through sustainable natural resource conservation in Zoba Anseba and enhanced sustainability of rural livelihoods.

It is particularly interesting to witness the community participation and the efforts of the local authorities, which go hand in hand within the scope of this project. Two large dams were built which renew groundwater supplies so that wells which had fallen dry now carry water again, which can be used to irrigate

nurseries and private agricultural plots. Moreover, more than 37 kilometres of hillside terraces have been constructed to fight soil erosion and prevent siltation of the new dams. New crops are introduced, such as fruit trees, which will diversify income and improve the nutritional status of households in the Geleb area.



Community works to curb erosion

# Food Facility initiative

(EU contribution: EUR 13,56 million)



Cowshed near Mendefera

World food prices increased dramatically in 2007 and 2008, creating a global crisis and causing social unrest in various parts of the world. Following this dramatic increase, the objective of the facility was to increase agricultural production between 2009 and 2013 in order to overcome the challenge of global soaring

food prices by strengthening the production capacities and the governance of the agricultural sector in the most affected countries.

Several projects were implemented within this (global) initiative across various Eritrean regions under the guidance of the Ministry of Agriculture and in cooperation with international and non-governmental organisations.

The implemented activities aimed at increasing the production of cereals and improved seed varieties and the stabilisation of vegetables and fodder crops, as well as increasing livestock availability. The projects also aimed at improvements in the marketing process of food, the increase of technical skills of agricultural producers and fishermen through training courses and the promotion of and support for the constitution of associations/cooperatives of agricultural producers and fishermen.

# Expansion of liquid petroleum gas storage capacity in Massawa

(EU contribution: EUR 4.4 million)

Liquid petroleum gas (LPG) is a fossil fuel for households and industries. Its major advantage is its relative affordability and cleanliness compared to other hydrocarbon energy sources. LPG is imported to Eritrea by ship through Massawa port. However, in the past, the storage capacities in Massawa were insufficient to satisfy

the demand. Moreover, due to limited capacities only small LPG transport ships were bringing LPG to Eritrea, which increased the price.



LPG tanks in Massawa

The costs of this project were shared equally by the Eritrean government and the EU. The project was implemented by the Ministry of Energy and Mines in 2012. The biggest part of the project presents the construction of two new LPG spherical tanks and the refurbishment of the old ones. This intervention improved the livelihoods of Eritrean urban and rural populations not only through increased access to LPG, which serves as an efficient and affordable fuel for cooking, but also through the mitigation of the environmental damage caused by excessive woodcutting.

# Installation of a photovoltaic solar mini-grid system in the Debub region

(EU contribution: EUR 8 million)



A village located in the Debub region which is to be provided with electricity

In November 2014 the EU signed an agreement with the Eritrean government regarding the installation of a solar energy facility in Areza and Mai-Dima sub-zones, which are located in Eritrea's Debub (southern) region. The objective of the project is to provide a clean, affordable and sustainable supply of electricity for 40 000 people in 28 rural and semi-urban communities that are far from the national grid and have limited or no access to modern energy. Apart from providing electricity for households, the action will also promote commercial and manufacturing enterprises and generate new jobs and income for the beneficiary communities.

Although the demand for electricity by communities living in the Debub region is high, many have yet to be connected to the main grid due to their remoteness. This project is a joint venture for the Eritrean government, the United Nations development programme and the EU. A capacity of 2.7 megawatts is expected to be available by 2018. The system will be constructed as a stand-alone facility but with the possibility to connect it to the national grid at a later stage.

# Support for community courts

(EU contribution: EUR 4.8 million)

Community courts are the first level of jurisdiction in Eritrea. Some 85 % of all court cases are dealt with at this level. Community courts were set up by the government via Resolution No 132/2003 with the objective of institutionalising the traditional dispute resolution system. Their creation and design are justified by the capacity shown by grassroots communities across the country to solve litigation cost-effectively on the basis of their customary procedures in compliance with national and international law. The elected judges of these courts are mandated to solve disputes of a civil and criminal nature, within a limited jurisdiction, whenever possible by conciliation.



Community court in Dekemhare

The project 'Support to the community courts in Eritrea' is implemented by the Ministry of Justice and has the objective of supporting the government's efforts to facilitate access to justice for the Eritrean population through improvements in the services provided by the community courts. In particular the project aims to address the challenges of 403 community courts that are currently operating in the whole territory of Eritrea, especially in remote areas.



Court in session

The project includes a capacity-building component and an infrastructure component. In the framework of the capacity-building component the programme aims to fully integrate the traditional systems of the community courts and customary law with the formal rule of law. Approximately 1 200 community

court judges, 370 clerks and 700 support staff are trained. The improvement of the working conditions of the courts, through enhancing the physical environment of the 403 community courts across the country, is also targeted by the intervention. In particular, the infrastructure of the community courts is modernised: selected courts are supplied with photovoltaic stand-alone systems for power supply. This allows community court operators to use informatics for reporting, archiving, issuing of judgements and certificates to the public and to better coordinate with headquarters and with other courts.

# Capacity building for public administration

(EU contribution: EUR 3.1 million)

Capacity building plays a great role in upgrading and developing the skills required for the provision of better services. The Eritrean Centre for Organisational Excellence (ERCOE) is tasked to provide training, research and consultancy services to the public sector.

The project is intended to support ERCOE with capacity enhancements, including the provision of modern facilities and skilled human resources. After its completion, ERCOE's abilities in making public institutions more efficient, effective and responsive to clients' needs will be significantly strengthened.

The project enshrines the establishment of ERCOE knowledge and research networks and a strengthening of the capacity of public administration. This will happen through ERCOE staff capacity building and the creation of links with similar institutions in ACP and EU countries. Moreover, ERCOE's infrastructures and logistics located in Embatkala, 40 kilometres east of Asmara, will be upgraded by a photovoltaic system with a total value of EUR 1 million. Thanks to the simultaneous and coordinated use of photovoltaics, batteries, diesel generators and an intelligent interface, this system can also supply the national grid with any surplus of electricity produced.



Training of public servants in Embatkala

# Improved sanitation coverage in peri-urban communities

(EU contribution: EUR 1.12 million)



Water source in Tessenay

Access to sanitation facilities is a key issue in order to reduce household vulnerability. In this context, the engagement of the local communities in the management of their water resources and infrastructure is a key component to increase resilience to environmental risks and shocks.

The project is implemented by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in partnership with the Red Cross Society of Eritrea. The overall objective of the project is to improve the health

and the quality of life of the peri-urban populations of the six regions (zobas) of Eritrea by expanding access to sanitation and hygiene.

Within this initiative, sanitation facilities in peri-urban areas are constructed with the aim of increasing accessibility to adequate and safe sanitation. Moreover, the capacity of the communities and of the national Red Cross staff to plan, manage and operate sanitation and hygiene promotion is enhanced. Training sessions and sensitisation campaigns are organised.

This project includes infrastructural activities such as the building of public latrines and related water facilities for schools and health facilities and the construction of pilot eco-sanitary toilet blocks. The project also has a capacity-building component, including training in the community-led total sanitation approach and the community-based health first aid household visits to provide information about sanitation and hygiene-related diseases and monthly cleaning campaigns for the targeted peri-urban areas and schools.



# The European Union and Africa



Europe and Africa are two continents bound together by a common history, culture, geography and, not least, by the very close exchanges which they entertain at a human, economic, cultural and political level. The partnership between the EU and Africa reflected early on the rich and diverse nature of the relations between both continents, while also keeping up with global economic and political developments.

Two grand frameworks govern EU relations with African countries: one is the long-standing partnership established with (sub-Saharan) ACP countries, enshrined in the 1975 **Lomé Convention** and updated in 2000 by the **Cotonou Agreement**; more recently, a continental approach gained ground with the adoption of the **Joint Africa–EU Strategy (JAES)** by 80 African and European Heads of State or Government in 2007. The Africa–EU partnership, enshrined in the JAES, embodies a new forward-looking vision for relations between Europe and

Africa and sets out the overarching political framework defining relations between both continents. Going beyond development, it seeks to establish a partnership among equals, determined to tackle issues of common concern together.

The latest **EU–Africa Summit** took place in Brussels in April 2014. It brought together more than 60 EU and African leaders and 90 delegations to discuss the future of EU–Africa relations and reinforce links between the two continents. Discussions at the summit focused on the theme **‘Investing in people, prosperity and peace’**. Topics included education and training, women and youth, migration flows, ways to stimulate growth and create jobs, investing in peace and ways to enhance EU support for African capacities to manage security on the continent. The Eritrean government was at the event represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and supported the adoption of the summit declaration. This reference text today acts as a guiding document for the Eritrea–EU partnership.

# What is the European Union?

The EU is a unique economic and political partnership bringing together 500 million citizens of 28 European countries. The EU was created in the aftermath of the Second World War and expanded in progressive waves of voluntary accession, now encompassing much of Europe. What began as a purely economic union has evolved into a union spanning multiple policy areas including agriculture, the internal market, environment, education, research and development, employment, health, justice and home affairs, as well as external relations, including development cooperation, security and humanitarian aid. The EU is based on the rule of law and its basic treaties, as well as its rules and regulations, are democratically agreed by all Member States.



The European Union has various institutions such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Council. In order to enhance international relations and implement cooperation policies, the EU has set up a network of EU delegations in non-EU countries, currently numbering 141. These are managed by the EEAS and act in complementarity with the bilateral embassies of EU Member States. Delegations incorporate EEAS and European Commission staff, as well as diplomats seconded from EU Member States and staff of the Council Secretariat.



For more information please visit our website:  
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