

# The European Union and Ethiopia step up their partnership and cooperation

On this occasion, President **Juncker** said: *“The partnership between Ethiopia and the EU is particularly strong and the meeting with Prime Minister Abiy today allowed us to exchange on how to further deepen it. The EU supports the ambitious reform agenda in Ethiopia and is committed to step up its support to the country”*.

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica** and Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu Negewo furthermore signed [three new programmes](#) to promote sustainable economic growth and job creation in the country for a total amount of €130 million.

Commissioner **Mimica** said: *“Today’s cooperation package worth €130 million is proof of our support to Ethiopia’s economic development and job creation, which will help build new opportunities for its people. With this additional funds we are also supporting the better access to sustainable energy and the development of the agro-industrial sector in the country”*.

The 3 new programmes signed today are part of the implementation of the [‘Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs’](#), which aims to deepen the economic and trade relations between the two continents, in order to create sustainable jobs and growth. These financing agreements between the EU and Ethiopia support job creation (€50 million), sustainable energy (€35 million) and the establishment of agro-industrial parks in Ethiopia (€45 million).

During Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s first visit to the EU institutions, he also met with High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini**, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, as well as Council President, Donald **Tusk**.

## **Background**

Ethiopia is a key partner for the European Union and they have a long standing partnership. In 2016 the EU and Ethiopia signed a “strategic engagement”, which implies close cooperation in areas ranging from regional peace and security, to trade and investment, and including migration and forced displacement.

EU development cooperation portfolio in Ethiopia is one of the largest in Africa and in the world (€715 million for the period 2014-2020); and the country is also one of the major beneficiaries of the [EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) (€257.5 million for 2015-2018). The EU is also providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced people in the country. EU humanitarian assistance to the country amounted to €381 million for the period 2014-2018.

The EU supports Ethiopia in the implementation of its development strategy, notably in the areas of food security and agriculture, health, and governance. In recent years, the EU has increased the focus in areas related to job creation, industrial and agro-industrial parks, export and trade promotion and private sector development.

Ethiopia has also become a destination of choice for investors. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) level has surged in the past years. The EU accounts for 23% of exports and 25% of imports, remaining the second trading partner. There are over 300 EU companies present in Ethiopia, most members of the [EU Business Forum for Ethiopia \(EUBFE\)](#), a fully-fledged chamber of commerce set up in 2016.

#### **For more information**

[Factsheet – Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#)

[Development cooperation with Ethiopia](#)

[Delegation of the EU to Ethiopia](#)

[Humanitarian aid to Ethiopia](#)

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## **First-ever International Day of Education: Statement by Commissioners Christos Stylianides, Tibor Navracsics, Neven Mimica, and Marianne Thyssen**

*“Today marks the first International Day of Education. This is an important occasion to celebrate education’s fundamental role in giving people the skills, values and knowledge to build their futures. Education also drives economic growth, social cohesion and fosters our European values such as democracy, equality and the rule of law.*

*Universal education will also play a crucial role in resolving the challenges humanity faces. Only through education will we succeed in eradicating poverty, fighting climate change, and achieving a fairer society enabling people to develop their own projects.*

*Today, we should recall the fundamental principles. First and foremost education is a human right for everyone, wherever they live. Moreover, compulsory education should be free everywhere. Finally, education should*

*benefit each individual and strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.*

*The reality often is different. 262 million children and youth do not go to school. 617 million children and adolescents cannot read and know maths. Less than 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa complete lower secondary school while 4 million children and youth refugees are out of school. This is also why the world is far from achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education.*

*The EU is committed to investing in more and better education within the Union and worldwide.*

*In Europe, the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights recalls the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning for everyone. Moreover, the Commission is advancing work to build a European Education Area by 2025 to enable all young people to receive the best education and training, and to create a sense of belonging. In addition, the EU's flagship Erasmus programme is more successful, inclusive and international than ever before. In 2017, Erasmus+ provided support for almost 800,000 people to study, train or volunteer abroad – a record.*

*The EU has now also become a world leader in supporting education in emergencies for children caught up in humanitarian crises. For these children, education is a shield against radicalisation and a chance to live a normal life despite difficult circumstances.*

*But we need to do more, especially for girls, migrants and displaced persons. Not to reach any benchmarks, but out of an obligation, as education is a public good and a public responsibility."*

## Background

On 6 December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 24 January as International Day of Education, in celebration of the role of education for peace and development.

The European Union is funding education cooperation both in Europe and in partner countries to support education initiatives and to share good practice worldwide.

More information

[Erasmus+: a tool for international education cooperation](#)

[European Education Area by 2025](#)

[Erasmus+: Another record year in 2017](#)

[European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

[Education in Emergencies](#)

[Communication on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises](#)

## **Dairy market: 99% of skimmed milk powder public stocks now sold**

**The stocks have been prudently released, maintaining market balance and supporting the recovery of the dairy sector, following the 2015-2016 market crisis.**

In total, 380,000 tonnes of skimmed milk powder (SMP) have been bought by the European Commission between 2015 and 2017 through public intervention to stabilise the market and support farmers' income. A process of monthly and later bi-monthly public tenders was opened by the Commission at the end of 2016 to carefully sell the products back into the market.

Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Phil **Hogan** said: *"The latest tender is a clear vindication of the Commission's prudential approach to the management of the stock of skimmed milk powder, 99% per cent of which has now been successfully placed back on the market. My objective, at all times, has been to use public intervention as a measure to protect farmers' incomes and, to that extent, we resisted calls over the last three years to reduce stocks through a number of ways or even by simply destroying the stocks. None of these options would have achieved the outcome we have now achieved. Instead, our patient approach ensured that not only were European dairy farmers' incomes protected, but so too were the interests of the European taxpayer. Public intervention of skimmed milk powder has proven to be an effective tool, especially when used in a responsible and effective manner and today's and previous tenders are a clear demonstration of the European Commission's commitment to support European farmers when the circumstances demand it. It also illustrates that the Common Agricultural Policy contains an effective safety net in the event of such market disturbance as we saw in the years 2014-2016."*

Two years into the process, the warehouses have emptied and the milk price is higher at 36 cent per kg compared with 26 c/kg in the summer 2016.

The tender process is [documented in full transparency online](#) in the [Milk Market Observatory](#) portal. With today's sale of 18,514 tonnes, 1% of the original, overall stock of SMP is now left, with 4,000 tonnes remaining out of the original 380,000 tonnes. Out of the 14 Member States that were storing skimmed milk powder on behalf of the Commission, only 4 of them are now left with small stocks.

The next tender will take place on 7 February.

**More information**

## [Commission takes Spain to Court for failure to act on protection against flooding](#)

The European Commission is referring **Spain** to the Court of Justice of the EU over a failure to comply with EU rules on flood prevention under the Floods Directive ([Directive 2007/60/EC](#)). The Directive aims to reduce and manage the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, economic activity and cultural heritage. It does so by defining objectives for Member States and setting out the right measures to achieve these objectives. The Flood Risk Management Plans lay out in detail how the reduction of flood risk is to be achieved.

Although floods occur naturally, human activity increases their likelihood and the adverse impact of extreme flood events. The scale and frequency of floods are likely to increase due to climate change. In addition, the risk rises in places where the number of people and economic assets located in flood risk zones continues to grow or the capacity of soil to absorb flood waters reduces.

Under EU law, Member States had to complete and publish flood risk management plans, and notify them to the Commission by 22 March 2016. Spain failed to inform the Commission of the flood risk management plans for the river basin districts of the Canary Islands. Therefore, the Commission opened an infringement procedure against Spain by sending a letter of formal notice to the country in [March 2018](#). The Commission urged the Spanish authorities to complete, publish and communicate flood risk management plans for all seven river basin districts in the Canary Islands (El Hierro, Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, La Gomera, La Palma, Lanzarote, and Tenerife).

Since Spain did not address the inconsistencies, the Commission then sent a reasoned opinion to Spain in [July 2018](#). As the situation persists today in the seven river basin districts in the Canary Islands, the Commission has decided to bring Spain to the Court of Justice of the EU.

### **Background**

The EU Floods Directive ([Directive 2007/60/EC](#)), which entered into force in 2007 requires Member States to assess the risk from flooding, to map the

flood extent and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk. EU rules apply to inland waters as well as all coastal waters across the whole territory of the EU.

The Directive requires Member States to first carry out a preliminary assessment by 2011 to identify the river basins and associated coastal areas at risk of flooding. For such zones they would then need to draw up flood hazard and risk maps by 2013 and establish flood risk management plans focused on prevention, protection and preparedness by 2015.

The Commission is currently finalising its assessment of the Member States' first Flood Risk Management Plans and will publish a report in the coming period.

#### **For More Information**

- On the key decisions in the January 2019 infringements package, see full [MEMO/19/462](#).
- On the general infringements procedure, see [MEMO/12/12](#).
- On the [EU infringements procedure](#).

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## **[Energy efficiency in buildings: Commission refers Czechia and Slovenia to Court for failure to ensure proper display of energy performance certificates for buildings](#)**

Today, the European Commission decided to refer **Czechia** and **Slovenia** to the Court of Justice of the EU for failing to comply with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive ([Directive 2010/31/EU](#)). Under this Directive, Member States must establish and apply minimum energy performance requirements for all buildings, ensure the certification of buildings' energy performance and require the regular inspection of heating and air conditioning systems. In addition, the Directive requires Member States to ensure that all new buildings are so-called nearly zero-energy buildings by 2021.

The Directive also requires Member States to ensure that energy performance certificates are displayed in certain buildings frequently visited by the public. This rule should create public awareness of the importance of efficient energy consumption and provide incentives for renovations.

The Commission drew the attention of the national authorities to the incorrect transposition of this requirement in 2015 and sent official letters to both Member States in the course of [2017](#) and [2018](#). However, to date the Member States legislation on this issue have not been brought in conformity with the Directive.

## **Background**

The EU is aiming for a 20% cut in Europe's annual primary energy consumption by 2020. Buildings account for about 40% of the EU's total final energy consumption and more than one third of its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. By properly transposing and implementing the legislation on [energy efficiency](#) in buildings, Member States can achieve a significant amount of cost effective energy savings and avoid related greenhouse gas emissions.

## **For More Information**

- The Energy Efficiency in Buildings Directive ([Directive 2010/31/EU](#))
- [EU energy efficiency policy](#)
- On the key decisions in the January 2019 infringements package, see full [MEMO/19/462](#).
- On the general infringements procedure, see [MEMO/12/12](#).
- On the [EU infringements procedure](#).