

## **VI EUROPEAN UNION – CARIFORUM HIGH LEVEL MEETING**

**Brussels, 11 June 2015**

### **JOINT PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. Heads of State and Governments of the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) and the President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy held a Summit in the margins of the II European Union-CELAC Summit in Brussels, on 11 June 2015.

2. The meeting provided an opportunity to welcome and exchange views on the implementation of the Joint Caribbean-European Union Partnership Strategy, adopted in November 2012, which offers a facilitating framework for the further strengthening of the bi-regional partnership. The Leaders reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter, respect for and compliance with human rights obligations; democracy and rule of law, at the national, international level; good governance; inclusive social, environmental and economic development; and sustainable growth. They committed themselves to include these and other relevant issues in the upcoming reviews of the Partnership Strategy, including at the next Political Dialogue which should take place as soon as possible during the current year.

3. The European Union and CARIFORUM signed an important regional cooperation programme of €346 million, a significant contribution to Caribbean development efforts, focusing on regional integration, climate change, sustainable energy and environment, and crime and security, and including allocations to the Caribbean Investment Facility, aimed at stimulating further investment in the region, and multi-country initiatives. The overall amount of €1 billion allocated to the region for the 2014-2020 period illustrates the continued high level of EU commitment to the region. The European Union and CARIFORUM will continue to work towards effective implementation of projects financed by the European Development Fund. They have embarked on a 5-year review of the CARIFORUM-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), with a view to improving its performance. While recognising the challenges in its implementation, the Leaders agreed that the EPA can offer important opportunities for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

4. The Leaders welcomed the signing of bilateral visa liberalisation agreements between the European Union and The Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015, which represents a major step towards freedom of movement between our two regions, united by the strongest historical, human and cultural bonds. The Leaders looked forward to the eventual inclusion of all CARIFORUM countries in the visa liberalisation scheme of the European Union.

5. The European Union and CARIFORUM discussed challenges and opportunities for further integration and more inclusive development in the region; reconstruction and development in Haiti; the fight against poverty; environment protection, disaster risk reduction and the fight against climate change, including the enhanced use of clean energies; improving governance in both regions; crime and security; and cooperation in bi-regional and multilateral fora and on global issues. They decided to step up efforts to implement the Joint Strategy and agreed to pursue

concrete operational actions towards cooperation in other priority areas. They recognized the efforts made in the Caribbean region to integrate the European Union Caribbean Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) into the developmental processes in the wider Caribbean, and committed to building on new opportunities and initiatives such as the European Union territorial cooperation programmes for 2014-2020, and other joint initiatives related to regional security, sustainable livelihoods and climate change as referenced in the 2015 Martinique Call for Action.

6. The Leaders noted that CARIFORUM States are Small Island and Low Laying Coastal Developing States and, like the Caribbean ORs and OCTs, are characterised by special needs and vulnerabilities, including the reality of the high level of indebtedness and the difficulty in accessing concessionary sources of financing for some SIDS. In this regard, the Leaders welcomed a reference to SIDS among the countries most in need, by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, at its High Level Meeting in December 2014, to be taken into account in the further elaboration of international development policy as it relates to SIDS. Leaders also underscored the importance of supporting resilience-building efforts of the SIDS of the Caribbean and committed to pursuing dialogue and initiatives on the challenges of development for SIDS. The Leaders agreed that the European Union will continue promoting SIDS issues in global fora, based on the commitments, actions and recommendations of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway), adopted at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, and stressed the importance of building on the outcome of previous international conferences on SIDS.

7. The Leaders stressed their intention to further strengthen cooperation in the context of the United Nations, which constitutes a priority of the Partnership Strategy. The Caribbean and the European Union share an interest in achieving a comprehensive, ambitious, fair and legally-binding outcome of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference/COP21. The particularly negative effect of climate change and the increase in the number of natural disasters that affect the Caribbean SIDS should be taken into account in any contribution aimed at increasing their climate-resilience. In this regard, they underscored the need to scale up climate finance to provide adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources to support adaptation and mitigation measures. More generally, the Leaders stressed their commitment to step up efforts to achieve common positions at the United Nations and other relevant international fora.

8. The Leaders stressed the importance of European Union-Caribbean collaboration towards a transformative and inclusive Post-2015 Development Agenda. In that regard, they reiterated their commitment to the eradication of poverty including extreme poverty, and to employment creation. They also stressed the need for adequate financing to support the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and underscored the importance of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development for the mobilisation of resources for sustainable development. The European Union and the Caribbean reaffirmed their determination to jointly explore possible further avenues for cooperation on health, including the fight against non-communicable diseases, HIV/AIDS and vector-borne diseases, as well as on other priority areas for international cooperation, such as higher education, research and innovation, technology transfer and youth entrepreneurship

9. The Leaders recognised the importance of social and economic development to the attainment of citizen security. . They acknowledged the European Union Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean as an important contribution to the further promotion of regional and international cooperation in this field. They stressed, however, the importance of incorporating the human development dimension into public safety strategies, which must adhere to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for human rights. Such principles include protection of the status of citizenship and the presumption that persons shall not be rendered stateless. Proposals to set up appropriate benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms, to be presented by CARIFORUM, will be considered. They welcomed the collaborative approach of the European Union to its cooperation and engagement with both regions on the enhancement of citizen security. They agreed to consider partnering with Leaders from Central America to address the security threats which the Caribbean and Central America both face, as well as their root causes. They took note of the advances by the EU in defining its Lines of Action on the European Union Strategy on Citizen Security, which was presented by the European Union and discussed the next steps for strengthening the cooperation and for exploring with the Caribbean the convening of a high-level Central America-Caribbean meeting on Citizen Security, with the support of the European Union.

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