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THE C COURIER

THE MAGAZINE OF AFRICA - CARIBBEAN - PACIFIC & EUROPEAN UNION COOPERATION AND RELATIONS



REPORT

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DOSSIER

G20 and developing countries

DISCOVERING EUROPE

EU meets East in Ploudiv

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Table of contents

THE COURIER, N.15 NEW EDITION (N.E)

PROFILE

- Mohamed Ibn Chambas, newly-appointed Secretary General of the ACP Group **2**
Andris Piebalgs, new EU Development Commissioner **3**

EDITORIAL

5

TO THE POINT

- Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis, Former prime minister of Haiti: An architect of Haiti's difficult renaissance **6**

ROUND UP

8

DOSSIER

The G20 and developing countries

- From a G20 of the poor to a G20 of the rich **13**
In search of a global governance organisation involving developing countries **14**
G20: 5 out of 10 for financial reform; 3 out of 10 for support to poor nations **15**
International Finance Corporation branches out "I believe we should have a G180": Interview with Luxembourg MEP Charles Goerens **20**

INTERACTION

- Fiscal reforms in developing countries **21**
"Trade talks must reflect a new global consensus on hunger" **23**
Overhaul of EU fisheries agreements in 2012? **24**
'Green' Ghanaian timber for Europe **25**
Overseas Countries and Territories receive the emancipation cure **26**
EU funds for 13 ACPs to cushion the impact of the economic crisis **27**
Opinion: Newcomers to ACP-EU partnership draw on 30 years of ties **28**
Cultural policy: Operators engage in networking activities **29**
Securing a role for local authorities, the third party **30**

CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE MOVE

- Greenpeace sets up in Africa **31**
ACP civil society adopts networking approach **32**

TRADE

- Global crisis chips Africa's gem **33**
Eastern Caribbean farmers slate "done deal" **35**

ZOOM

- Gloria Mika, supermodel: Flight of the 'Guardian Angel of Democracy' **36**

OUR PLANET

- Copenhagen climate summit: Darkness before dawn **38**

REPORT

Cape Verde

- Cape Verde: A hub connecting three worlds **40**
Unique and proud: A nation born of the first globalisation **41**
Setting the standard for development **43**
Becoming a bridgehead for continental Africa **45**
Sound management that got us through the crisis **47**
The government is a long way from achieving its objectives **49**
"Djunta-Mó!" **50**
"Saudade" and natural beauty **51**

DISCOVERING EUROPE

Plovdiv

- Plovdiv: New ventures for Europe's oldest inhabited city **52**
Waiting to be discovered **53**
From Dionysus to the damask rose – Plovdiv's riches **55**
How to integrate and end discrimination of the Roma? **57**
Bulgaria's development programme on the launch pad **58**

CREATIVITY

- A Meeting Place for African Culture **60**
A Window on Contemporary Photography: The 8th Bamako Encounters **61**

FOR YOUNG READERS

- Haiti in black and white and colour **63**

YOUR SAY/CALENDAR

64

Debra Percival and Hegel Goutier



Mohamed Ibn Chambas. © ACP Secretariat

Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Newly-appointed Secretary General of the ACP Group

A strong leader open to dialogue

The new Secretary General of the ACP Group, who is to take office on the 1st March 2010, is Mohamed Ibn Chambas from Ghana and President of the ECOWAS Commission (Economic Community of West African States) since 2007. He was previously the regional body's Executive Secretary, a post he held from 2002. In ECOWAS, Chambas has taken a firm stance in relation to abuses committed against democracy in the region, most recently in Guinea and Niger.

The new SG is expected to continue his firm stance towards this type of abuse in all ACPs. In particular, it is the view of Chambas that, a "zero tolerance" policy should continue to be applied as regards the coup d'état carried out by the Guinean military regime, which seized power in 2008 in the aftermath of the death of President Lansana Conté. "We wish to make it absolutely clear that as long as it is the army

that is overseeing the transition, it will remain difficult for ECOWAS to work with the government", he declares. Chambas has shown the same firmness in relation to the de facto government in Niger which enacted in 2009 its own agenda for elections, making it explicit that the organisation will refuse to recognise the results of these elections.

In both cases, however, Chambas also employed a great deal of ingenuity to seek out a means of ensuring an honourable way out for the guilty parties.

These actions are the mark of a man who understands the need for a firm hand, but also appreciates the need for dialogue, and these qualities will prove extremely useful to the ACP Group. The cohesion of the Group depends in no small measure on the firm leadership of the Secretary General. This is especially so as he accedes to the post at a crucial time for the ACP Group. Strong leader-

ship is required in view of the challenges to the unity of the ACP Group posed by ongoing negotiations on the various regional trade packages between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions. The Cotonou agreement (2000-2020) governing relations between the EU and ACP states remains intact. A mid-term review of the agreement is now taking place and will complete by the end of February 2010.

Chambas is multi-skilled having previously held posts as a lawyer, diplomat, politician and academic. He has degrees in Political Science from the University of Ghana, Legon and Cornell University at Ithaca, New York (MA 1977, PhD 1980) and a law degree from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.

He has previously worked in teaching positions in the United States and practised law with the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland (US) before returning to Ghana where he

became a schools administrator. In 1987, he became Ghana's Deputy Foreign Secretary.

He served as Member of Parliament for Bimbilla (Ghana), 1993-1996, for the National Democratic Congress party and between 1993-1994, he chaired the Foreign Affairs Committee in Parliament. He became a mediator between warring parties of the Liberian Civil War of the 1990s and subsequently the Ivorian Civil War. He lost his seat in Ghana's parliament in 1996 but returned to government as Deputy Minister of Education 1997, a post he held until 2000.

On regaining his parliamentary seat in 2000, he worked within parliament to facilitate the transition to constitutional governments respectively in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. In 2002, he became the Executive Secretary of the ECOWAS Commission ahead of the body's restructuring and the creation of the new post of ECOWAS President in 2007.

Anne-Marie Mouradian

Andris Piebalgs, New EU Development Commissioner

Development policy not to be manipulated by foreign policy

“It may seem strange to have selected a development commissioner from a state that recently joined the EU”, the Latvian Andris Piebalgs noted with a certain humour and modesty in his speech at the European Parliament. Speaking alternately in English, French and German, however, the new Development Commissioner, formerly a European Energy Commissioner, demonstrated a full command of his new projects and explained his motives for championing them, despite all the obstacles.

> Member states must meet their commitments

Andris Piebalgs' first priority will be to face the challenge of meeting the Millennium Development Goals and poverty eradication objectives that have been jeopardised by the impact of the economic and financial crises. “At the Brussels Summit in December, EU heads of state and government confirmed their commitment to devote 0.7 per cent of GDP to public development aid from the year 2015. They will need to be reminded of this, and I will not hesitate to point the finger at states that fail to fulfil their commitments,” the Commissioner made clear, following in the footsteps of Louis Michel. Specific aid for developing countries exposed to the devastating effects of global warming will be funded sepa-

ately with additional finance, specified Piebalgs, who favours the idea of a Tobin tax (a tax on international currency transactions) and also declared his support for the inclusion of the EDF within the budget, stating that this “should have been done several years ago”.

> Improved handling of EPA negotiations

Andris Piebalgs will continue efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of aid by taking advantage of the new opportunities offered by the Lisbon Treaty. As “there is no point giving money with one hand and taking it back with the other”, he will ensure that the goal of eradicating poverty worldwide is not compromised by other European Union policies, particularly in the fields of fishing, agriculture and trade. Piebalgs claims that, should it be necessary, he will draw the attention of the EP Foreign Affairs Committee to any inconsistencies, taking advantage of the fact that he, as Development Commissioner, now represents the Commission on this body. As far as the controversy about Economic Partnership Agreements with ACP countries is concerned, Piebalgs admitted that “to start with the negotiations were difficult”, attributing this to “our many errors in communication, for which we then had to pay the price”, and insisting that we must “explain more clearly to our African partners how the EPAs constitute an opportunity for development”. The fact that the current Trade



Andris Piebalgs. © EC

Commissioner, Karel De Gucht, was formerly responsible for development should facilitate this dialogue.

> Encouraging political dialogue

The Commissioner showed significant diplomatic skills and a refreshing desire to avoid political cant. How does he intend to respond in cases where aid is diverted by regimes that violate human rights? Imposing new conditions on our partners would be counterproductive, believes Piebalgs, who prefers the use of political dialogue and, in cases where democracy is threatened, the suspension of cooperation through the implementation of the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement. While he hopes never to find himself in the situation of Karel De Gucht, banned from entering

the Democratic Republic of the Congo in December for expressing his doubts over the proper use of aid, he assured the public that he would not hesitate to “speak the truth”.

There is, however, one potentially difficult issue about which the Commissioner was still unable to provide details, namely the precise division of roles within the new structure of European foreign policy, including within European Union delegations. He did guarantee, though, that all decisions would be “made in close consultation with the High Representative, Catherine Ashton”, and also reassured Members of Parliament keen to see the Development Commissioner exert his authority: “Don’t worry. Development policy will not be manipulated by foreign policy!”



Haiti, Cité Soleil, 1994, after hurricane. © Hegel Goutier

Can good sometimes come from misfortune?



The *Courier* had to make a last-minute change to the contents of this issue to include an article on the hell that descended on Haiti on 12 January. During the weeks since the earthquake, more information has circulated on this country, its people, its history and its culture than ever before.

The works and citations of all those who had sought to present this Caribbean republic in a more just light, generally without success, were all invoked. From André Malraux, André Breton or Jean-Paul Sartre to Sergueï Mikhaïlovitch Eisenstein, director of ‘The Battleship Potemkin’ and whose screenplay ‘Jean-Jacques Dessalines’ on the author of Haitian independence he never succeeded in bringing to the screen, to his great chagrin, although it remained a reference in the university courses he later gave. From Santana to Anaïs Nin, from Aimé Césaire or Léopold Cedar Senghor to Bill Clinton ... they all, in one way or another, considered Haiti’s contribution to the world to be exceptional. We discovered the violence to which Haiti had been subjected, the first country in the New World to experience the very first globalisation after 1492 and two years before it occurred in Cape Verde, the subject of this issue’s report. Haiti experienced torments and the most barbarous form of slavery that began with the arrival of Christopher Columbus, inflicted by constant threats from various powers throughout the 19th century and occupation by the Americans in the early 20th century. Also the struggles for freedom, including its support for the United States for independence in 1776, before its own independence, and the massive aid in terms of men, money and munitions for Bolivar and the liberation of South America.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the familiar clichés of Haiti were repeated; this accursed land that has known nothing but chaos. All the governments were tarred with the same brush, forgetting the elections and democratic governments dating back to the 19th century: from Nissage Saget in 1870-1874 to Tiresias Simon Sam from 1896 to 1902 – admittedly sometimes alternating with the most uncompromising of regimes – not to forget the period of enlightenment under Dumarsais Estimé from 1946-1950.

Then the intellectuals and a growing number of journalists started to tell the true story of this land, its people, its riches, its modest but not insignificant contribution to humanity, its many great writers, and its artistic heritage. Also highlighted are the beginnings of a renaissance in recent years, including 13 international prizes for literature and its writers in 2009 alone. The country’s progress too has been exemplified in terms of the political governance of recent years that has largely convinced the international community. Michèle Pierre-Louis is testimony to this fact, still prime minister before the earthquake when she granted *The Courier* the interview published in this issue. But for many it was the disaster that gave the opportunity to discover the truth about Haiti.

Were it not for this improved governance the solidarity on the part of the world community may not have been so great. Meeting in Montreal on 25 January, the donor countries may not have been so unanimous in deciding that the Haitian Government was best placed to manage the funds to rebuild the country, following the lead of the European Union that had already granted its support in the form of budgetary aid, a kind of mark of approval.

The Haitian Government says it is ready to begin reconstruction on more solid bases. One example of this is the Haitian president’s urging of the World Food Programme in particular that emergency food aid should not destabilise local production and be used mainly to constitute stocks. This is not so removed from the problem raised in our articles on the global consensus against hunger or fishing agreements or even climate change. The reason the choices made by Haiti at this point in time have the backing of donors is that global governance has made notable progress in recent times, despite major apprehensions that remain justified. Our dossier on the G20 and developing countries illustrates this.

Does this mean that good can come from misfortune? It depends. Only time will tell.

Hegel Goutier
Editor in chief

Hegel Goutier



Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis
Former prime minister

An architect of Haiti's difficult renaissance

Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis. © EC

*One of the political notables to attend the European Development Days in Stockholm in October 2009, Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis is above all a symbol of the recovery of Haiti's credentials as a democratically-governed country. Our interview with the former prime minister took place before the earthquake which destroyed Haiti and put in danger the country's renaissance which had begun to take place over the past 2-3 years. Among other activities at the EDD event, she was invited to hand over one of the European Commission's prestigious Natali Prizes for Journalism, a true sign of the times for a country that not long ago was itself plagued by human rights violations.**

Michèle Pierre-Louis was prime minister of Haiti from September 2008 to the end of October 2009, and was particularly noted for her implementation of the reform policy put into place by President René Préval. One element of this policy was to furnish the country with a new image as a tourist destination. Note that it was between Miami and Labadee in Haiti that the new largest liner in the world, *Oasis of the Seas*, property of the *Royal Caribbean Cruise Line* with a capacity for 6,500 passengers, made its maiden voyage.

Duvivier Pierre Louis has spent a large part of her working life outside politics in civil society and is acutely aware of the collateral effects of reform on the most vulnerable.

Is the worst now over for Haiti, or does the country still suffer from an image problem?

The country remains extremely fragile despite the progress made. As regards the uncertainties, I prefer to focus on day-to-day problems, and as far as image is concerned, I think one of the key events of

recent times was the forum for US investors, organised in Haiti by former President Clinton as special UN envoy for Haiti. This attracted 250 participants.

What do you see as your government's achievements and, more widely, those of the three years of the René Préval presidency?

First of all, security and stability. When President Préval came to power in 2006, the country was still in the grip of gang violence, with the 'Baghdad operation' plunging the

country into terror, including kidnappings, killings, rape and arson. The president adopted a strategy that produced positive results, namely appealing to the opposition to form a kind of government of national unity.

The help of Minustah** made possible both the reform of the police, with an increase in manpower from 5,000 to 10,000, and the fight against the corrupt practices of police officers involved in the gangs and in drug trafficking. Serious progress was made in dealing with these gangs. Nightlife has returned to Port-au-Prince today: before it was like a graveyard after eight in the evening.

Doesn't the situation of extreme poverty in itself pose a threat to security?

Absolutely. Haiti receives humanitarian aid, and it is not through humanitarian aid that a country is developed. That is why, in Washington at the donors' conference in April 2009, I proposed a change to the cooperation paradigm. It is private, public, for-

‘In 2006, the country was still in the grip of gang violence, with the ‘Baghdad operation’ plunging the country into terror.’

eign and Haitian investment that will make it possible to kickstart the development process. We are criticised for creating low-paid jobs, but we are still paying the price today for having invested so little in education. We do not have the technical capacity to build a road infrastructure or to protect our coconut or banana crops against infection. These are truths that are sometimes not what we want to hear, but I prefer to state things as they are even if it pains me to do so.

We took essential measures which were linked to conditions required to access external financing. When Aristide left office, the ratio between the taxes on income and goods and GDP was 6.5 per cent, and today it is 10.9 per cent. In the wider Caribbean region, the norm is around 15 per cent or even 18 per cent.

Over the past two years we have managed to fund our operating budget out of the public treasury, that is, from income tax and taxes on goods combined, and it has been a



Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis and US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton speak to reporters at the US State Department. © Reporters/AP

very long time since this has been the case. Unfortunately, between 65 and 70 per cent of the budget's public expenditure continues to be met by international aid. Our work is making it possible to build up confidence among citizens, but we are now at a crossroads. By that, I mean we could just as easily take a step backwards as a step forwards.

I can perfectly understand impatience on the part of the population and elected representatives. I took office at a time when four hurricanes in a row had destroyed everything. The international community estimated the losses at a billion US dollars, or 14 per cent of GDP, and the UNDP launched an emergency appeal to raise \$US107M. At the donors' conference in April, we received promises of around \$US400M, but since then – and it is now eight or nine months ago – we have not even received \$US100M.

Wasn't the Haitian Government 'more Catholic than the Pope' in pursuing reforms when one sees the latitude that the rich countries have allowed with regard to liberalism in the face of the economic crisis?

The countries that adopted such latitude had the capacity to do so. What measures could we take? We bore the full brunt of opening up our markets, and it was very hard. When, at the request of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, we deregulated all imports into the country, we killed off a large proportion of national production. Rice from Miami was selling at a tenth of the price of local produce. But that was the price to be paid. The Paris Club cancelled \$US1.2bn of the Haitian debt.

We know that investment is the only way to bring about genuine development. The textile industry is on the right track. We are also working to promote tourism, in the entire country and not just in hotspots like Labadee where the huge liners of the *Royal Caribbean Cruise Line* bring in thousands of tourists every week, particularly among the Haitian diaspora. For example, we are creating infrastructure to attract them to visit the Citadelle Laferrière, a national treasure

‘But we are now at a crossroads. By that, I mean we could just as easily take a step backwards as a step forwards.’

and a UNESCO world heritage site. The Taiwanese are also now investing in the south of the country. But it will be difficult to compete with Cuba and the Dominican Republic as a mass tourism destination, and I am not even sure I regard this as desirable.

* See also article on aftermath of Haiti earthquake: 'Africa mobilises for Haiti', p. 8.

** French acronym – The United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti.

Keywords

Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis; Haïti; EU Development Days; René Prével; Oasis of the Seas; Labadee; Royal Caribbean Cruise Line; Citadelle Laferrière; Hegel Goutier.



Left and Right: © Hegel Goutier, Middle: © Reporters/AP

Hegel Goutier

Africa mobilises for Haiti

To an unprecedented extent as far as a humanitarian cause outside the continent is concerned, Africa has rallied to the aid of Haiti since the earthquake that laid waste to the country on the 12th January 2010 and caused probably more than 200,000 deaths, leaving millions more wounded and homeless. Even those countries suffering a very difficult economic situation themselves have made their contribution to this display of generosity.

South Africa has been at the forefront of the continent's effort, reacting with great speed not only in announcing financial assistance but by rushing rescuers and health professionals to Haiti to help to tackle the immediate emergency, closely followed by specialist expertise, including experts in the identification of bodies, and finally the humanitarian aid teams themselves. On the morning of the 14 January, only a little more than 24 hours after the earthquake, a team of 40 rescuers specialised

in different fields called "Rescue South Africa" took off from Waterloork Airforce Base, where President Jacob Zuma had gone personally to see them off, expressing his gratitude for the work they are now doing in the name of South Africa. Zuma also appealed to every South African to contribute help in one form or another to the Haitian people. The telephone company *Vodacom*, South Africa, has financed this rescue team to the tune of 1.5M rand (US\$202,000), and another team of ten specialists in trauma and different types of

surgery, "Gift of the Givers", left for Haiti on the 14 January, taking with them a variety of material, including tents, water purification tablets, energy supplements and medicines, to the value of 5M rand (US\$655,500). The South African Red Cross has also launched an appeal for 30M rand (US\$4M).

South Africa's example has been widely followed elsewhere on the continent, and with similar speed. On the 15 January Gabon, too, announced the sending of substantial aid, accompanied by a statement from the Council of Ministers specifying that this was "emergency aid of US\$1M for our brothers, who have only just recovered from both a long and murderous civil war and terrible and deadly flooding".

> Senegalese parliament votes in favour of right of settlement in Senegal for Haitians

The president of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, has decided to allocate US\$500,000 to Haiti, and captured the headlines by announcing that Haitians would be welcome in his country. "Africa should offer Haitians the right to return to their home. This is a question of rights, and we must not be grudging in our giving". It is likely

EMERGENCY AID FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the EU released €3M of emergency aid from ECHO, the European Commission's humanitarian office, swiftly followed by a further pledge on 18 January of €429M. of short and long-term assistance. On 25 January, the current Spanish Presidency of the EU announced the dispatch of a 300-strong

gendarmarie force to Haiti, operating under the European flag, to help maintain order following the quake. At the same time, EU Foreign Ministers agreed to create a coordination cell, *EUCO-Haiti*, to exchange information about the civil and military resources contributed by individual EU states.



Top-left: © Reporters/Laif, Top-right: © Hegel Goutier, Bottom left and right: © Reporters/AP

that Mr Wade hopes that the costs of this "repatriation" of Haitians would be taken care of by the international community. Criticised by an opposition party which labelled his proposal as "absurd", Wade pointed out the example of Liberia, populated by black people from North America, and he had the backing of the Senegalese parliament, which voted unanimously on the 22 January for this "right to return" for Haitians, and in addition promised US\$100,000 to Haiti from its own resources, exhorting the whole Senegalese population to offer the equivalent of a day's pay to the aid efforts in Haiti. The parliament also lent its support to plans for a major national telethon to help the Caribbean nation.

Nigeria has made available to the United Nations mission in Haiti a contingent of 121 soldiers, to provide assistance with operations to rescue victims. The vice-president, Goodluck Jonathan, underlines his country's commitment: "As the international community mobilises in aid of Haiti, it can count on Nigeria's support", and backed this up by releasing an initial sum of US\$67,000 of aid for Haiti.

Benin, a nation ruled by a royal family which produced the architect of Haitian independence, Toussaint Louverture, also

launched a telethon in aid of Haiti, and in addition its government has decided to provide assistance for 50 Haitian students who attend university in Benin, and to increase the number of its police officers serving in MINUSTAH (United Nations Sabilisation Mission in Haiti), as well as sending soldiers to take part in the MINUSTAH mission.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has contributed up to \$2.5M to the special fund set up by the United Nations, a very generous amount considering the difficulties which the country is undergoing. This offer has also received the support of the opposition party "Union du Congo", though this was not entirely unanimous. Many Congolese, however, support the gesture of their president and the words of Mgr Ilunga Mutuka, who made clear in a statement on behalf of the Church of Christ in Congo (CCC) that "the Democratic Republic of the Congo still has a vivid memory of the contribution of many Haitians to the education of Congolese youth in the wake of the independence of the country in 1960".

Equatorial Guinea has released US\$2 of aid for Haiti, to be administered through the United Nations fund, while Congo has announced a contribution of one

million dollars, matching the respective offers of Gabon and Namibia. Mauritius, on the other hand, has donated an additional US\$500,000 to the fundraising operation set in motion by Caritas Mauritius. Botswana has contributed up to US\$150,000, Rwanda and Namibia US\$100,000 each, and Liberia US\$50,000, and other countries such as Zambia and Gambia, have also shown their solidarity with generosity. The list of donors continues to grow.

SOLIDARITY OF THE ACP GROUP

The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States has decided to dedicate to Haiti €60M for natural disasters provided for by the European Union. It also plans to ask the EU to mobilise for Haiti's benefit an even more significant portion of so far unused European aid earmarked for the ACP Group.

Debra Percival and Marie-Martine Buckens

“Special attention will be devoted to West Africa, a priority region for Spain”

In the rotating EU presidency Chair from 1 January to -30 June 2010, Spain’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé, replies to our questions on ACP issues.

La Puerta de Alcalá square, Madrid, marking the start of the Spanish rotating EU Presidency. © Reporters/AP

What are the Spanish Presidency’s priorities towards ACP countries?

The major priority of the Spanish Presidency regarding ACP countries will be the 2nd Revision of the Cotonou Agreement. Negotiations for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) will continue. Special attention will be devoted to West Africa, a priority region for Spain, emphasising here development measures. Two major meetings will be held under our Presidency with ACP countries: the Joint EU-ACP Parliamentary Assembly (Tenerife), and the Joint ACP-EU Council (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso).

How important is it to put the Doha round on track?

The EU’s trade policy is characterised by its support for free trade, within the framework of international rules supported by all. The reference point for the drawing up of trade policies is the World Trade Organisation and, in particular, the Doha Round of multilateral trade talks. The Spanish Presidency attaches great importance to unblocking this negotiation process and is committed to reaching an agreement on issues for negotiation in the first half of the year. This objective is also shared by the EU. Under its Common Commercial Policy (CCP), it gives priority to a multilateral approach, which does not discount, however, other forms of negotiation such as free trade areas on both bilateral and regional scales.

Would you like to see Cuba become a member of the Cotonou Agreement?

This is a possibility that has already been considered in the past, but the decision to apply for adherence to the Group rests with the Cuban authorities. Our goal is, in any case, to foster relations between the EU and Cuba.

The European Commission is to put pen to paper on reform of the EU’s Fisheries Policy. What changes would the Spanish Presidency like to see, particularly with regards to illegal fishing in ACP waters?

From 1 January 2010, Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008, of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, came into force and is applicable not only in Community waters but also in waters subject to the jurisdiction or sovereignty of third countries. This is the main tool of the Common Fisheries Policy to combat and eliminate illegal fishing. The Spanish Presidency is aware of the importance of the economic, social and environmental viability of fishing activities and emphasises that it will be attentive towards the exploitation of fishing resources based on sustainability criteria both at the Community and at international levels.

Will you launch any initiatives in the area of gender equality in EU development policy?



Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé. Courtesy of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

Apart from promoting the adoption of an EU position in view of the special session to revise the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to hold in New York next September, during its Presidency Spain will promote progress in European policy with reference to certain MDGs, for instance, MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women. We shall support the approval of the ‘EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment’ which aims to enhance the effectiveness of EU gender policies and programmes to promote equality and the empowerment of women in developing countries. In March, in Valencia, we are hosting the 4th Europe-Africa ‘Women for a Better World Meeting’.

Lisbon Treaty: the new order of cooperation

Banner announcing Lisbon Treaty. © Reporters/AP

Anne-Marie Mouradian

The Lisbon Treaty took effect on 1 December 2009. In the coming months its implementation will make it possible to answer certain questions concerning its impact, including on relations with the ACP countries.

One of the treaty's principal innovations is the creation of the post of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the holder also being Commission Vice President responsible for Foreign Affairs. The incumbent, Catherine Ashton will conduct and coordinate political dialogue with non-EU countries and ensure a coherent foreign policy. The Development Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, and Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Response, Kristalina Georgieva, will work closely with her. It remains to be seen how these different posts will interconnect in practice.

The treaty widens the common priority objectives of the EU's external action to include reducing and eradicating poverty. This is proof, say some observers, that development will be a policy in its own right. Others underline the risk of it becoming no more than an instrument in the service of external relations. "I remain confident until we see otherwise. I am not saying that development has nothing to do with external policy, but the question I ask myself is whether the autonomy of development policy will be maintained", warned Louis Michel.

➤ Preserving the *acquis**

The disappearance from the Lisbon Treaty of any reference to the ACP Group, which had existed since the Maastricht Treaty (1992), caused some concern. This was expressed in the letter sent on 23 November by Eunice Kazembe, President of the ACP Council, to the Presidents of the European Commission and Council. For his part, Wilkie Rasmussen, ACP Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly,

considered such fears to be premature, while adding: "But I am not naïve. We must fight to preserve the *acquis* of our relations."

One of the principal challenges facing the High Representative will be to set up the European External Action Service, a genuine European diplomatic service under her authority. This colossus will ultimately, by around 2014, consist of the 10,000 civil servants of the Council, Commission and diplomatic services of the Member States. A first visible sign of the change is that, since 1 December, some 130 European Commission external delegations have become EU delegations. These will grow progressively with the addition of representatives of the Council and the Foreign Ministries of the Member States. Questions are naturally being raised regarding the impact on delegations in the ACP countries where the granting and pro-

gramming of aid is currently managed by the Development Directorate-General.

Another innovation is that for the first time the treaty introduces a specific legal basis for humanitarian aid. For its part, the European Parliament will have increased budgetary powers and wider competences in fields such as humanitarian aid and immigration.

In this new configuration of the EU's external action, the personality of the High Representative and of the Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioners will clearly play a major role in determining their relations in practice.

* The 'essence' of the agreement.

Keywords

Lisbon Treaty; development cooperation; ACP.

THE NEW KEY FIGURES IN EUROPEAN COOPERATION

Catherine Ashton: High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice President of the European Commission. Born in 1956, British, a member of the Labour Party, she first worked for non-profit organisations. A member of the House of Lords since 1999, she was junior minister, successively, at the Ministries of Education, Constitutional Affairs and Justice. In 2008, she very capably took over from Peter Mandelson as European Trade Commissioner, being much appreciated for her willingness to listen during trade negotiations with the ACP.

Andris Piebalgs: Development Commissioner. A qualified physicist, aged 52, he was successively Minister of Education and Minister of Finance in Latvia before being appointed Ambassador to the European Union and Undersecretary of State for EU Affairs. Appointed European Energy Commissioner in 2004, his responsibilities included the Africa-Europe Partnership for Energy.

Kristalina Georgieva: Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response. Just as *The Courier* was going to press, Bulgaria appointed a new Commissioner to replace Roumiana Jeleva, who withdrew as Commissioner-designate after failing to impress when she appeared before the European Parliament. The new Commissioner is Kristalina Georgieva. Currently Vice President of the World Bank, she has a Ph.D. in economics and an M.A. in political economy and sociology from the Sofia University of Economics. She has also carried out research and studies on environmental policy and economics at the London School of Economics and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her new portfolio covers humanitarian aid, which was co-managed with development under the former Commission, and the new field of civil protection originating from a competence created by the Lisbon Treaty.

EU-ACP

cooperation at
a turning point

Unsurprisingly, the introductory speeches at the 18th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, held in Luanda from 30 November to 3 December, raised many questions regarding the future form of ACP-EU cooperation. The Assembly adopted a closing declaration that is a genuine plea to strengthen the objectives for combating poverty and for preserving the acquis and solidarity of the ACP Group.*

The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the completion, in 2010, of negotiations for a review of the Cotonou Agreement will be two new turning points, stressed Louis Michel, European Co-President of the Assembly. For his part, Wilkie Rasmussen, then the ACP Co-President, argued for the Economic Partnership Agreements to include measures to help the ACP countries face the future opening up of their markets.

The Assembly adopted three reports. It calls for improved representation for the developing countries, especially in Africa, within international institutions and on the IMF and World Bank governing bodies. It recommends that the impact of the financial crisis on the ACP countries should be reduced by seeking new sources of funding for development, such as the introduction of an international tax on financial transactions. Finally, the report on social and cultural integration and the participation of young people calls for guarantees of improved access to education and jobs for the 15-24 age groups.

► Madagascar and Niger

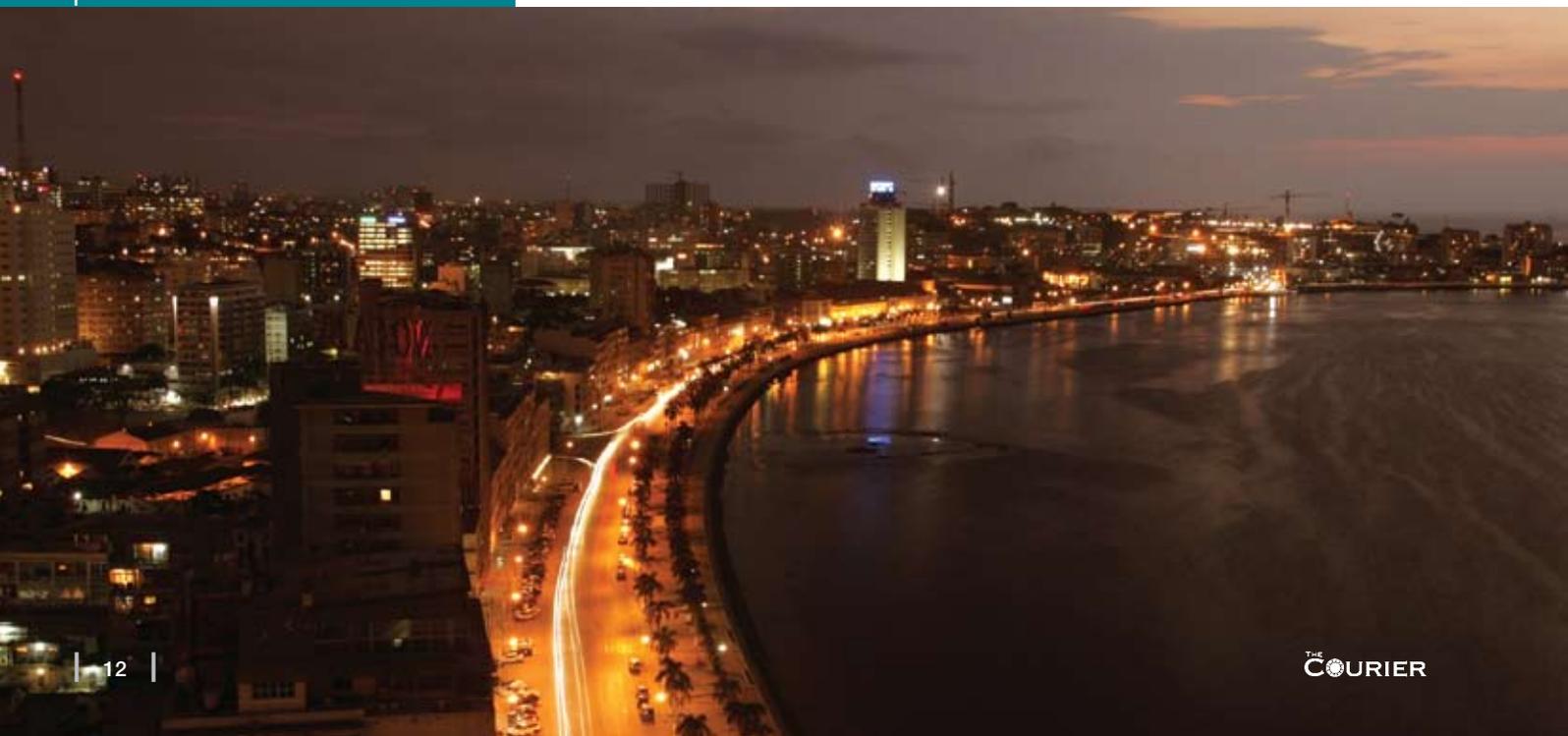
The JPA also condemned the coup d'état in Madagascar and called for the return to constitutional order by all the parties coming together in a spirit of consensus to put an end to the crisis. It regretted “the intransigence of Mr. Rajoelina, who seems to be the hostage of his clan” and “the demands of the exiled president, Mr. Ravalomanana, who shows an inappropriate lack of realism”. It recommended individual sanctions in the event of failure to respect the undertakings given in Maputo and Addis-Ababa.

The JPA also called on the authorities in Niger to “return to constitutional order as soon as possible and release all political prisoners, including Members of Parliament and opposition leaders”. The delegations from Madagascar, Niger and Guinea-Conakry were only present at this session as observers without voting rights and not as full members of the Assembly. **A.M.M.**

* The ‘essence’ of the agreement.

Keywords

Joint Parliamentary Assembly; Luanda; new European Commissioners.





Hegel Goutier

Plenary session, Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy, Washington DC, 2008. © Reporters/AP

From a G20 of the poor to a G20 of the rich

In the aftermath of the world financial crisis towards the end of 2008, the G20, made up of the Finance Ministers of rich and emerging nations, set itself up as a potential regulator of world finance. At the time of its creation in 1999, the G20 was conceived as a simple forum for consultation aiming to promote international economic and financial stability. Once the crisis was over and its evolution into a forum for heads of state, it became an embryonic organ of world economic government. The year 2003 saw the formal establishment of another grouping, also

called the G20, which had begun as an association in 2000. This organisation was quite different – it was essentially an association of poor countries, with an additional group of emerging ones, and its sphere of action was fundamentally the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Certain members of this group, such as Brazil, China and India, were to use this as a jumping-off point, and they now form part of today's G20. In the interim their economies had grown significantly, positioning them in some cases closer to the rich countries than to the poor.

The G20 (developing and emerging countries) was essentially a consortium of nations in different stages of development which believed that their interests were not sufficiently taken into account by world financial institutions.

The 4th Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Doha threw up a surprise in the emergence of a bloc of developing countries, members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), the African Union (AU) and the group of Least Developed Countries

(LDC). Initially this was an alliance against 'green room' negotiations, the secret meetings between major powers at the former General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and WTO talks from which these countries were generally excluded. Among the objectives of these nations was to obtain WTO exemptions, in particular as regards non-reciprocal trade benefits, which most of them enjoyed in their relations with the European Union. In some areas their interests and aims coincided with those of a number of Asian and South American countries.

Just before the 5th Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Cancún, a G20 of "developing and emerging" countries was formally announced, with 23 member countries (five from Africa, six from Asia and twelve from Latin America)*. Their declared goal was to prevent a hidden agreement between rich countries before the Cancún conference and to open the way to wider agricultural negotiations in the WTO. While the Cancún results were considered a disappointment, the group continued its work, coordinating its actions

with different organisations of developing countries, namely the ACP, LDC, SVEs (Small, Vulnerable Economies), Cotton-4 (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali), G-33, NAMA-11 (Market Access for Non-Agricultural Products), Caricom (Caribbean community). This new formation set itself the initial objective of working to ensure that the development agenda be endorsed by the multilateral trade system.

After the eruption of the world financial crisis, the epilogue to a series of crises which had seriously affected developing nations, the lobbying of the G20 of “developing and emerging” countries helped to lead to an enlargement of the G20 of developed nations and the creation of a larger group of emerging nations. Six countries are members of both groups: South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, China, India and Mexico.

* Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe; China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand ; Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Keywords

G20; financial crisis; WTO; ACP; LDC; SVE; Cotton-4; G-33; NAMA-11.

In search of a global governance organisation involving developing countries

In their study ‘The G20 and the regulation of the world economy’ Catherine Mathieu and Henry Sterdyniak of the OFCE (French Economic Observatory), an economic and political science research centre in Paris, hold the view that developing countries, with the exception of the very poorest, had initially benefited from financial globalisation, before coming to experience its downside. The authors went on to explore possible channels for the creation of a new form of world financial governance which is fairer on poor countries.*

The study’s view is that all but the very poorest developing countries benefited from the strong growth in the world economy from 1990 until just before the eruption of the financial crisis in 2008. Paradoxically, the third world debt crisis of 1982 and those of Brazil and Argentina which broke out between the end of the 1990s and in the years immediately after the turn of the century, also all occurred around the same period. Financial globalisation is a source of instability which places nations and people in competition with one another, and it may be surmised that the effects of this process are at their greatest in the young republics of Africa in particular.



From left: British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Liberian President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Nigerian Finance Minister Mansur Muhtar. © Reporters/AP

> A combination of G20 and IMF?

A number of existing institutions will have to be adapted and others set up if an improved framework for global governance is to be established. There will be a need for a central organisation to provide leadership and guidance to specialised bodies, and while this central institution does exist in embryonic form in the G8, G20, and IMF, none of these is at present sufficiently resourced

to take on the role required. To function successfully, this organisation must have effective sanctions at its disposal. The WTO alone is capable of performing this role, but in practice sanctions have been applied almost exclusively to small countries. The IMF is too dependent on the US and the UN lacks the power required, while the G7/G8, for its part, implies the dictatorship of the rich nations.

The G20 is more in accordance with the new power relationships in the world, and its members constitute 90 per cent of GDP and 65 per cent of world population. Its

weakness, however, is what the authors of the study call “the great absentees”, such as Spain, Iran or Nigeria, and indeed whole regions of the world play no role in it. Neither has the organisation so far produced a great deal in terms of significant specific results.

An economic and financial committee under the combined leadership of the IMF and the G20 could be one solution to this conundrum. Such a committee would include the countries of the G20, but would also be enriched by representatives of regions which are at present under-represented, especially Africa. While “the G20 has travelled a long way in the right direction”, the study wonders whether “the leaders of the G20 will have enough will and constancy to carry out reform in the face of the many challenges ahead”. **H.G.**

* Notes presented at the ENA (Ecole Nationale d’Administration, Strasbourg, France), 9 December 2009.

Keywords

Catherine Mathieu; Henry Sterdyniak; OFCE; ENA; globalization; world financial governance; Africa; G20; Hegel Goutier.

Interview with Ngaire Woods,
Oxford Professor

G20 5 out of 10 for financial reform

3 out of 10 for support to poor nations

Courtesy of Ngaire Woods.

In an exclusive interview with The Courier, Ngaire Woods (pronounced Nyree), a New Zealand-born British academic who is Director of the Global Economic Governance Programme and Dean of Graduates at University College, Oxford, gives a short history of the G20 and assesses its relevance and successes to date. She concludes that the G20 serves a useful purpose in placing crucial subjects on the agenda of World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and United Nations (UN) meetings. But she gives it 5 out of 10 for reform

of the global financial system and only 3 out of 10 on its ability to ease the impact of the crisis in developing economies. Ngaire Woods's recent publications include; The Politics of Global Regulation Inequality, Globalization, and World Politics**, Explaining International Relations since 1945***, The Political Economy of Globalization****, The Glo-balizers: the IMF, the World Bank, and their Borrowers*****. Her expertise in global governance covers a wide range of subjects from the global economy to climate change.*

Is the G20 just papering over the cracks or does it offer a real way forward in dealing with the global financial crisis?

To imagine that the G20 offers reconstruction of the system of global governance is in my view completely wrong. People look upon it as a complete revolution in global governance. This isn't so: it just recognises a power shift in the world and the need to have a different informal group of great powers making strategic decisions.

The G20 has no formal authority to make decisions. It has no implementing capacity to make decisions and few of its members would agree to it being used in that way.

When former US President George Bush called the first G20 leaders' meeting in November 2008 (ed: in Washington), it was through the recognition that the financial crisis required an immediate global coordination of policies which would be credible to the market and investors. This initial meeting successfully gathered leaders very quickly. The first G20 Summits came out with action plans which charged different institutions and governments to do specific things. The G20's Finance Ministers have been meeting for 10 years. After the financial crisis in 1997, the G7 already recognised that they had to have a wider group which would come up with global solutions to the financial crisis.

The London Summit in April 2009 followed up the action plan of the first G20 meeting and pushed it forward. Its main achievement was to get an agreement that major economies would contribute credit lines to the IMF. They collectively agreed to inject money into the global economy to stop the crash. The first thing was to stop the world economy from seizing up; the second was to start thinking immediately about how to regulate finance in order to prevent another crisis becoming a major one; the third was to find ways to mitigate or to reduce the impact of the crisis on developing countries; and the fourth was to reform international institutions because the very fact that they had to meet at the G20 as opposed to meeting within the IMF, for example, was to put out a signal that reform of international institutions was necessary.

At the third meeting in Pittsburgh, there was much more of a focus on jobs because the industrialised countries feared that unemployment would become more acute. So it went back to the number one point on the agenda: stopping the economy seiz-

ing up. There was less focus at the G20 in Pittsburgh on how the crisis was affecting developing countries. The major agreement to come out of Pittsburgh was that Brazil, China, India and Russia (the BRIC), would contribute to credit lines of the IMF in return for more reform of the IMF.

As you said, the IMF moved slowly. Do you think the IMF and World Bank have got to grips with the crisis?

Inside the IMF and World Bank there is tremendous motivation and determination

What does the future hold for the G7 and G8?

I think the G8 at the leaders' level is dead. It can keep on meeting but it is fairly irrelevant as an institution. The G7 Finance Ministers' group is probably going to survive because it is the powerful way for the G7 countries to coordinate their position within the G20. They give it more power than the G20. But if the G7 Finance Ministers continue to meet, what they risk is pushing the emerging economies into a similar counter group. That is what we saw at the G20 Finance Ministers' meeting in London earlier this



Ngairé Woods and Donald Kaberuka, African Development Bank President. © EP

to try to get as much money as possible to developing countries. What is slowing the IMF and World Bank down is that the powerful countries, the member countries, have been slow to give these institutions the resources and mandate to act, to move quickly particularly in respect to the poorest countries. The WB has been left trying to deal with this crisis by simply front-loading speeding up already agreed loans. So it has not been given the additional resources to pump into developing countries. The IMF was directed by powerful countries to deal with the financial crisis in countries in the European area and that means that some 80 per cent of the money that the IMF has lent since the crisis began has gone to countries in the European area, and only between about two or three percent has gone, for example, to African countries.

year where the G7 countries had met to prepare their own position. The BRIC also met to prepare their position. It could polarise the G20 in two camps.

If the G20 has no real authority, what is the main interest of countries such as China or Brazil in being part of this club?

Their interest is to ensure that they can influence strategic decisions and I think the fact they have participated to the G20 Finance Ministers' group in the last ten years has given them an experience of how to use this kind of grouping, which is proving interesting. The crisis in 1997 was a crisis in emerging economies; it was South Korea, Brazil and so forth and Russia who were in crisis. But this crisis is different. The crisis itself is a crisis in the G7, in United States, Great Britain and Europe. At

the end of the day the emerging economies are very well placed, not least because they have already been in crisis themselves and are hence able to better protect themselves against this crisis. When the 2008 crisis arrived, these countries were in a much stronger position because they had reserves; they had taken measures which have prevented the crisis from hitting them too hard; they have had experience in engaging in the G20 Finance Ministers' group. We have also seen emerging economies become more assertive; which had not been the case in the global network before then.

Are China, India and Brazil really standing up for the developing nations?

You are right. They say that they are but what strikes me in the G20 leaders' summit, is that the main voice for developing countries has actually probably come from the presidents of the WB, the Managing Director of the IMF and from the African Union representative. They have been saying, "Look this is a development emergency, we have to do something about it". But in my view, the G20 has not performed well vis-à-vis developing countries. They have done very well in preventing the wealthy economies from seizing up. They coordinated quickly and they took some decisive cooperative action. I think they get high marks for that. They have done a little bit we can give them 5 out of 10 on financial regulatory reform. But when it comes to easing the impact of the crisis on develop-



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Chinese President Hu Jintao and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan. © Reporters

ing economies, I would probably give them 3 out of 10 because they have been high on promises but low on delivery.

How important was the role played by South Africa and African Union in the G20 leaders' meetings? Were they merely spectators?

They were not in a great position of power particularly because in these first three meetings the wealthy country governments have been so focused on their own crisis. The Pittsburgh summit was focused on the unfolding economic crisis inside United States and inside Europe. It has been quite difficult, particularly for African governments who are facing a real crisis as a result of the financial crisis. It has been very dif-

ficult for them to put their needs on the agenda and have them given priority. **H.G.**

* Mattli, W. and Woods, N. (co-Author), *The Politics of Global Regulation*, Princeton University Press March 2009.

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Keywords

Ngairé Woods; economic governance; Oxford; G20; Hegel Goutier.



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International Finance Corporation branches out

Rachel Kyte is Vice-President of Business Advisory Services for the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the arm of the World Bank (WB) that provides finance and advice for private investment in developing countries. She joined the Washington-based organisation nine years ago as an ombudsman, investigating complaints about projects, moving on to become Director of the Environment Department before her current posting.



Rachel Kyte. © IFC

In the following interview with The Courier in Brussels, she tells us that the IFC is seeking new partnerships with bilateral and multilateral partners because there is now little money sitting around in public coffers. Rachel Kyte says that these are “interesting times for international financial architecture” with a need for an even sharper focus on the poor the least resilient in the crisis and for more innovative instruments.

In the wake of the crisis in October 2008, a lack of finance for infrastructure quickly emerged and at the end of 2008, the IFC also calculated a \$US1.8bn shortfall of financing for the microfinance industry. Kyte says that since the big trade banks had repatriated most of their capital back to Europe instead of putting it into credit services in emerging markets, the IFC’s Board immediately tripled its trade financing to \$US3bn. A microfinance facility was also created with the Germans, with a first

tranche of a \$US500M which helped extend finance to 30 highly successful commercially-based micro-finance institutions around the world, a special initiative the IFC now wants to repeat.

What was the IFC’s remit following the Pittsburgh G20 meeting?

In its financial inclusion paragraphs in Pittsburgh, the G20 expressly asked us to help. The question was, how do you extend financial inclusion even at a time of a retreating global economy? How do you make sure that the poor do not suffer more? We are nearly five years away from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and are a long way from achieving them, so how do you keep fighting poverty at a time when there are far fewer resources to go around? One issue is how to increase the amount of smart regulation that allows finance to be accessible to the poor. This

is a discussion about how to extend access both by making smart regulation (such as a collateral register). Secondly, if more money were put on the table, it’s a matter of helping Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) best channel this through supply chains by assisting big companies in extending their backward linkages to create more jobs in SMEs and also looking specifically at the needs of women who are owners of SMEs, but have problems getting access to markets and credit.

Have you brought in any new instruments in the wake of the crisis?

There are three big innovations. One has been to create more funds for our own account; setting up equity accounts with more people on board, for example the equity structure fund with Germany’s participation. All co-operation partners now sit down, agree on the problem and co-create.

GIIF: AN IFC/EC INNOVATION

The Global Index Insurance Facility (GIIF) is a new joint initiative between the IFC, European Commission (EC) and the Dutch Government. It provides funds to insure against certain catastrophic events, depending on their severity. For example, insurance will be paid out in the event of a wind storm of a certain category, or an earthquake registering a certain magnitude on the Richter scale. Jean Philippe Prosper, IFC Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, says, “The Global Index Insurance Facility will help protect farm-

ers and vulnerable communities against natural disasters that can wipe out their livelihoods and trap them in poverty. IFC is committed to helping extend financial products and services to places where the private sector is at the early stages of development, creating more opportunities for people that need them the most”. The EC has put €24.5M into GIIFs trust fund which is also supported by the Netherlands.

Find out more: www.ifc.org

The second is the global trade liquidity pool; it is not a new instrument in itself but the number of partners and the ambition are very new. Thirdly, we have created an asset management company. This is not on our own account. It is a wholly-owned subsidiary. This allows us to leverage sovereign funds, public pension funds and privately-managed pension funds to invest alongside us. We provide the flow and these funds will be able to take 50 per cent of equity. It is another way of bringing more capital into emerging markets in a responsible way at a time when it is just not flowing on its own. We understand there is at least \$US5 trillion worth of public pension funds assets under management in Europe that have some kind of requirement of sustainability, as well as pension funds that need to grow in order that we can all have our pensions. They have to produce a return to the beneficiary and they have to be green which means that over time they need to be invested more in emerging markets and in sustainable companies.



Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh speaks at the 2008 India-Africa Forum Summit. © Reporters/AP

Can you tell us more about the IFC's initiatives to promote women's business activities?

We are helping banks invest in them as entrepreneurs because it's smart business. We are also about to launch what I call a new 'public good' – that actually helps

people understand how to ensure that when they reform the regulatory environment for SMEs, it is done in such a way that women in business benefit as well. We have traditionally been very gender blind in regulatory reform for SMEs. For example, you can set up a collateral register but in countries where women are prevented from raising collateral, how do you create such a register that takes into account the ability of a woman to collateralise movable assets such as jewellery, or a fixed asset that might mean a change in the law around ownership of land? If you go in with your eyes wide open, you can have much more effective regulation. Over 60 per cent of SME owners in Africa are women. We will be launching this work over the next few weeks. I am hoping it will be taken up by everybody who is in the SME business.

Do you forecast a second global crisis?

We see a long, hard road out of this with complete restructuring of certain supply chains in some industries that had overcapacity – including downsizing as a result of recession, for example, in the apparel industry. We are concerned about how to stimulate credit in emerging markets and how to enable good firms to access credit. It is not going to be easy. The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is not the only source of investment. We have just been to India and were all struck with the opportunities for Indian investment in Africa. You are going to see a lot more south-south investment. **D.P.**

Keywords

Rachel Kyte; IFC; global crisis; SMEs; microfinancing.



Young women studying dressmaking in Project Credit Femmes school, Dakar, Senegal. © Reporters/ Lehtikuvva Oy



Charles Goerens. © EP

Marie-Martine Buckens

“I believe we should have a G180”

There will be deadlock unless all countries, including the smallest and poorest, are involved in the decision-making process. This is essentially the view of Luxembourg MEP Charles Goerens, a member of the Environment Committee and Vice-Chairman of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, who has a strong interest in Africa and African agriculture. An interview.

You are critical of the G20. Why is that?

The G20 has pretensions of replacing the United Nations. As it includes just 10 per cent of the world's countries, it is hardly very representative. If you do not belong to the club of rich nations, you do not have the right to be heard. Is this good governance? The European Union could have made the difference. It should allow the other EU Member States, and not just the rich ones, to take part in the initial phase of the decision-making process, which is not the case at the moment. This is true for the African, Caribbean and Pacific nations. South Africa, the only ACP member of the G20, is not really representative of the ACP group.

What is the solution?

I believe we should have a G180, which would include all the nations that have been left out. I have just returned from a conference on security and development, a major issue in these times of crisis (and the subject of a report by Charles Goerens – *editor's note*), because development cannot be achieved without security, and vice-versa. Everything depends on a nation's governance and wealth.

Where this is lacking, the system does not function well enough to allow the state to govern properly. Poverty is therefore the underlying reason for all insecurity. This is where we need to start addressing the problem. It is an arduous, low-profile job, but it helps to keep



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the peace. I firmly believe this is the right approach. Having said that, I still believe that Africa has never been as well governed as at present with the exception of regions like Kivu and Darfur, where freedoms are flouted and access to wealth is limited. Africa can be seen as an enormous institutional building site. We are the only ones who cannot see this. They need our help. I support the need to open Africa up to the world, but in

a well-managed way. An Africa which is open without being sold off.

What can Europe do?

Europe's ability to listen and show prudence is its strength, but also its weakness. Europe missed an opportunity to position itself on the international stage between 4 November 2008 – the date of Barack Obama's election – and 20 January 2009, the date of his investiture as President of the USA. Europe also lacks clear vision when it comes to positioning itself in international organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Take the Chinese, for example, who inundate the informal African markets with manufactured goods, thanks to a chronically undervalued currency, while still adhering to the WTO's anti-dumping rules. Instead of suppressing the Africans, we should be helping them get themselves back on their feet. And Europe can play its part here by joining forces within the IMF to address the issue of currency parity.

Keywords

Charles Goerens; security; development; G20; G180.



Participants at the 2009 Tax & Development Conference, jointly organised by the EP Development Committee and EU Commission. © EP

Fiscal reforms in developing countries

Organised by Eva Joly, chair of the European Parliament Development Committee, and Karel De Gucht, former European Commissioner for Development, a conference on good fiscal governance was held on 9 December 2009. The many experts present included László Kovács, European Commissioner responsible for Taxation, Abou Bakar Traore, the Malian Minister for Mines, representatives of the Spanish government, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and international Non-Governmental Organisations.

Two inescapable realities provided the starting point for the debate. While taxation is the best means of achieving development by enabling countries of the South to be less dependent on international aid, in practice these countries have rarely succeeded in putting into place an efficient tax system. On the contra-

ry, tax evasion and the flight of capital to tax havens cause them to lose billions every year that could have been used to build schools, hospitals, roads and fund other development projects. The cause lies in corrupt practices among Africa's elite coupled with the financial dishonesty and banking secrecy found in the countries of the North.

“Victims of tax evasion, fraud when engaging in cross-border trade or the putting into place of tax incentives aimed at attracting investment capital, the developing countries are believed to be losing US\$385bn every year”, stressed Joly. “The black economy – which by definition avoids all tax – reduces the tax base. In Kenya, for example, 60 per



Eva Joly, chair of the European Parliament Committee on Development and Karel De Gucht, former European Commissioner for Development. © EP

cent of the country's tax revenue comes from just 0.2 per cent of the population, this being insufficient to collect sufficient resources to meet the country's vital needs."

Karel De Gucht believes tax evasion currently represents at least three times the amount of development aid.

In the face of such a situation, the priority is to correct the weakness of the tax systems of developing countries. This requires long-term investment – a tax administration cannot be reformed in a year – which is not only the responsibility of the governments concerned but also of donors. Currently just 0.2 per cent of public development aid goes towards improving tax systems.

However, recently there has been some progress. "We have made more progress over the past 10 months than in the past 10 years", explained Jeffrey Owens, Director of the OECD's Centre for Tax Policy and

Administration. Recalling the commitments made at the G20 in London in April 2009 to bring tax havens into line, he urged NGOs to keep up their pressure on politicians.

Another initiative, which is all the more important as it comes from the South, is that African countries have decided to take their destiny into their own hands by launching the African Forum on Tax Administration in November 2009. The launch of this network, with support from the OECD and European Union, should enable senior African tax officials to set out Africa's tax needs and priorities and to develop and share best practices to strengthen capacities in this sector.

"I hope that this conference will have served to generate genuine awareness of the situation and will force the European Commission to take more account of 'tax and development' in its proposals in the future", concluded Joly. This dynamic MEP

and former magistrate is also determined to fight to oblige multinational companies to provide details in their annual reports of the activities, revenue and taxes paid per country. **A.M.M.**

http://ec.europa.eu/development/services/events/tax_development/index.htm

Keywords

Fiscal governance; László Kovács; Abou Bakar Traore; taxation; Eva Joly; Jeffrey Owens; OECD; Anne-Marie Mouradian; Karel De Gucht.

“Trade talks must reflect a new global consensus on hunger”

At the end of 2009, the FAO announced that the number of malnourished people in the world had hit the billion mark. From Rome – where the last Food Summit was held in November – to the Copenhagen Climate Conference in December, the issue of food security was yet again on the table. To no great effect, despite warnings from UN experts, including Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on the right to food. We interview him here.

“In Rome”, explains Olivier De Schutter, “all the sensitive questions were brushed aside. Some difficult questions were hardly raised at all, often passed over in silence or put on hold while awaiting the results of further studies. These were: the problem of agro-fuels, land speculation in southern countries and international trade reforms although I should emphasise that questions of world trade bear a more complicated relationship to food than people usually acknowledge”.

How do you see the future?

Over the coming months we must look at these fundamental issues. But with whom and adopting what approach? These questions remain unanswered. On the other hand, what is new, and this should be emphasised, is that the Committee for World Food Security is now firmly in place. It has existed since 1996 but to date had been ineffective as it only included constituent states. It was a talking shop that lacked visibility and took no decisions. It has now been reformed to include the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), along with organisations representing civil society. It is a kind of mini-parliament which will provide for increased coordination through the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme).

Food security inevitably raises the question of international trade. How do you regard the



Courtesy of www.afronline.org and Damien Glez, www.glez.org.

still thorny negotiations on this point within the WTO?

I believe that, unfortunately, international trade will be held up as a panacea when in fact it risks fooling people. We are confronted with a declaration that both says we are going to help ‘small countries’ and which presents international trade as a catch-all solution, when in practice, countries that wish to increase their exports, and thus their ability to gain access to foreign markets, create food insecurity inside their own countries. The small countries are often the ones that lose out. If they increase their exports they have to increase their own investments and small producers end up being the losers. We are faced with competition for access to the best

land and water. The key issue here is protectionism. I suggest a solution that gives countries the right to protect their agriculture.

The problem is that we are seeing a fall in tariff protection due to bilateral agreements and to the demands of donors. Southern countries have not used all the WTO’s flexible mechanisms. This allows them to export bananas or cotton, but to what effect? It doesn’t make it possible for developing countries to pursue more sustainable agriculture. This is where the main cause of a lack in food security lies. **M.M.B.**

Keywords

Food security; Olivier De Schutter; FAO.

Overhaul of EU fisheries agreements in 2012?

2010 will see the European Union put pen to paper on the blueprint of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) which is expected to include a new approach towards fisheries agreements with non-EU countries from 2012. An in-depth evaluation of the existing agreements with West Africa, 'To draw the line – EU Fisheries Agreements in West Africa', by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), highlights some of the deficiencies in the current agreements.

A 2009 'green paper' of the European Commission's Directorate General for Fisheries and Maritime Resources involved a very public consultation on the way ahead, including scientists, civil society and many interested individuals. The European Commission is now drawing up an impact assessment on the CFP, based on the consultation, which includes the future nature of agreements with non-EU countries.

EU boats have a long tradition of fishing in West Africa to meet a dependency on imported fish which provide two-thirds of requirements. On joining the EU in 1986, the bi-lateral fisheries agreements of Spain and Portugal with African nations were brought under the EU umbrella. These agreements – essentially licences to fish for compensation – were given a facelift in 2002 and renamed 'Fisheries Partnership Agreements' which placed more of an accent on developing the artisanal fishing sector in African nations.

The SSNC study says that the agreements with other nations cost the EU more than €150M during 2009, or 16.8 per cent of the EU's total fisheries budget, involving some 718 vessels mainly from Spain, France and Portugal. It questions whether the agreements promote sustainable development based on an assessment of their impact on West African nations – Mauritania, Guinea, Senegal and Guinea Bissau.

"The concept of fisheries and fish as a pre-requisite for food security seems to be forgotten, dominated by the states with big commercial interests", finds the SSNC. Demersal species and other fish stocks have been over-fished and the SSNC also casts doubt over whether the EU money goes to developing the sector in West Africa.

➤ "Real partnerships"

The SSNC wants to see "real partnerships based on coherence between fisheries, development and trade policies", suggesting that agreements should better manage fish stocks and develop the sector. To make this happen, it wants the European Commission's

Directorate General for Development to take part in future negotiations, rather than leaving them to the DG for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs. And because of the nature of stocks which obviously cross boundaries, it recommends that future partnerships be drawn up on a regional basis.

The SSNC also wants all EU governments to be actively involved in negotiations – not just be left to nations with a vested interest in exploiting stocks – and it says there should be an end to subsidies for EU boats. Priority should be given to developing the West African sector and small-scale fisheries in particular with local community involvement to prevent further depletion of resources. Only when surplus stocks have been properly documented should commercial agreements be negotiated: "Should there be a shortage of fish, it is the West Africans who have the right of precedence to their own fish", says the SSNC study. **D.P.**

Keywords

Fisheries agreements; Swedish Society for Nature Conservation; Mauritania; Guinea; Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.



Fishing boats, Saint-Louis, Senegal. © Reporters/Photononstop



Children play with toys transporting wood, Ghana.
© Reporters/LAIF

'Green' Ghanaian timber for Europe

At the end of 2010, the first shipments of timber from Ghana – certified 'legal and sustainable' – will be arriving at European ports. This is a major first, the result of several years of negotiations with the European Union (EU) and an example that is likely to be followed by others. More Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) are soon to be signed, starting with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

It was on 20 November 2009 in Brussels that the VPA between Ghana and the EU was signed by Mrs Nana Bema Kumi, Ghana's Ambassador to the EU, European Environment Commissioner, Stavros Dimas and Swedish Agriculture Minister, Eskil Erlandsson, President of the EU Council at the time.

The agreement concerns the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan. Introduced by the EU and the Member States in 2003, this

aims to increase the capacity of developing countries to control illegal logging in their forests by improving national sovereignty as well as to reduce the recurrent problem of trade in illegal timber between these countries and the European Union.

FLEGT provides a legal framework for control and monitoring that makes it possible to guarantee that all the timber that arrives in the EU market is legally acquired and exported in accordance with the laws of Ghana. The agreement also creates a national legal assurance system for all timber and timber products commercialised in the EU as well as in Ghana or in non-EU countries. It also provides for independent third party audits of the entire verification system. These audits will be made public. The system is often compared to the Kimberly process that was introduced in 2003 and whose certification system aims to prevent trade in diamonds from conflict zones.

The European Commission has nevertheless warned that successful implementation of the agreement will require political commitment, investment in a number of areas and strengthened regulatory systems.

A programme financed by the European Commission, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the World Bank will supplement Ghana's own resources to assist the country in implementing the agreement.

Five other countries are currently at the negotiating stage – Cameroon, Liberia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia – and two others are engaged in preliminary discussions, namely Gabon and the Central African Republic. **M.M.B.**

The EU imports almost half of the forestry products exported by Ghana, a market estimated to be worth €350M a year. Timber is Ghana's fourth largest source of export revenue, after gold, tourism and cocoa.

Keywords

FLEGT; timber; Ghana; EU; DRC.



Overseas Countries and Territories receive the emancipation cure

Mamoudzou, Mayotte.
© Reporters/Image Source

It is in keeping with the spirit of the times. After having launched the major initiative of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, the European Union has decided to review the association that links it to the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). The new recommended partnership has three main objectives: increased competitiveness, reduced vulnerability and the opening up of the OCTs to other cooperation partners.

On 6 November 2009 the European Commission presented its communication on a new partnership between the EU and the OCTs (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.douri=COM:2009:0623:FIN:EN:PDF>). This new communication comes against the backdrop of the reflection initiated by the Commission in

June 2008 following publication of a 'Green Paper' on relations between the EU and the OCTs. It takes stock of these consultations and presents the components for a new partnership with a view to replacing the present Overseas Association Decision that expires in December 2013. The aim is to continue this reflection in 2010 and 2011, in partnership with the OCTs and the Member States to which they are linked (Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), so as to be able to draw up concrete legislative proposals to modify the present association by the end of 2013.

> Exceptions

In regard to this consultation, the Commission notes that: "A common opinion is that the current anti-poverty focus in relations between the EU and the OCTs no longer corresponds to the reality in the field and should be replaced by a new approach. The unique relationship between the OCTs and the EU should be the cornerstone of such a new logic. It should take due account of the OCTs' specificities, in particular their economic and social development, diversity and vulnerability, as well as their environmental importance. It should also aim

to strengthen their resilience and enhance their competitiveness".

There are exceptions, however. In the case of Anguilla, Mayotte, Montserrat, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and Wallis and Futuna, the Commission acknowledges that maintaining "an anti-poverty approach might be justified" insofar as they fulfil the conditions for development assistance.

Regarding trade and financial cooperation, the Commission proposes to maintain current anti-reciprocal tariff preferences granted to the ACPs, "without prejudice to any revision necessary". This would be the case, for example, if an OCT decided to join an EPA concluded between the EU and a regional ACP group. It thus notes that "the Cariforum-EU EPA already allows OCTs to be brought within the scope of the agreement. Should an OCT and its Member State so request, the Commission would agree to include that OCT within an EPA". **M.M.B.**

Keywords

OCTs; EPA; EU; new partnership; ACP.

EU funds for 13 ACPs to cushion the impact of the economic crisis

Children walk past a dilapidated colonial building, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau. © Reporters/AP

Eleven African and two Caribbean countries are the initial beneficiaries of €215M from the EU's Vulnerability-FLEX (V-FLEX) finance mechanism for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) nations, it was announced in December 2009. They are: Benin, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Malawi, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Sierra Leone and Zambia (see table).

V-FLEX', an initiative adopted by the EU in August 2009 to cushion the impact of the economic crisis on ACP countries, has an overall budget of €500M. "The Vulnerability-FLEX mechanism is the EU's swift response mechanism to help countries maintain priority spending, thereby assisting the worst-affected countries to reduce the social cost of the crisis", said Karel De Gucht, EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid. EU officials say the remaining budget will be allocated during 2010.

The funds will be injected directly into ACP governments' budgets so that they can keep up levels of public spending, particularly in social sectors, without jeopardising macroeconomic stability. For ACP states which requested V-FLEX funding, the EU based its calculations on forecasted fiscal losses and other vulnerability criteria. EU officials say the mechanism is aimed at countries with a high degree of economic, social and political vulnerability and with the right policies in place to deal with the crisis. For the same purposes, a handful of countries from the

same list of beneficiaries will also receive further smaller amounts from the European Development Fund (EDF) and from a

'FLEX' mechanism to support fluctuations in export earnings (see table below for countries and corresponding amounts). **D.P.**

Table: Financing of ACP countries in response to the crisis (EU sources)

(In Million Euros)	V-FLEX	FLEX	Other EDF financing	Total
Benin	25.00	1.40		26.40
Burundi	13.60			13.60
Central African Republic	7.60			7.60
Comoros	4.70	0.33	2.24	7.27
Ghana	35.00			35.00
Grenada	5.00	0.29		5.29
Guinea Bissau	8.00	3.18		11.18
Haiti	30.00			30.00
Malawi	25.00			25.00
Mauritius	10.90			10.90
Seychelles	9.00		7.50	16.50
Sierra Leone	12.00			12.00
Zambia	30.00			30.00
Total	215.80	5.93	9.74	230.74

V-FLEX = Vulnerability FLEX instrument
 FLEX = Support for fluctuations in export earnings
 EDF = European Development Fund

Tim Graewert*

Opinion

Newcomers to ACP-EU partnership draw on 30 years of ties



Andrei Gromyko (foreground right), then Foreign Minister of the former Soviet Union, meeting with Marcelino dos Santos, founding member of FRELIMO and then Mozambican minister for development and economic planning, Moscow, 1977. © Reporters/Novosti

Bulgaria is a newcomer to the EU-ACP partnership. As an economy in transition, it has itself been a recipient of foreign aid for the past 20 years. Nonetheless the Balkan state gained experience in development cooperation when the Communist regime was in power. From the early 1960s until the end of the 1980s, Bulgaria was a donor of development aid to over 40 countries including some in sub-Saharan African nations. Some other Eastern European newcomers have similar ties.

From 1946-1990, it was active in aiding the African independence movements in countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe (the former Rhodesia), Namibia, Angola and Mozambique. Although there were no diplomatic relations at government level, leaders of the Bulgarian Communist Party actively supported the liberation movements in these countries with the aim of encouraging them to incorporate socialist policies into their political programmes.

South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) established relations with Bulgarian government officials and NGOs in the early 1970s. Four years after his appointment as Secretary General of the ANC, Alfredo Nzo, who served as foreign minister under the government of Nelson Mandela, went on a state visit to Bulgaria in 1973. In subsequent years, ANC delegations were regularly invited to party congresses in Bulgaria's capital, Sofia. The Bulgarian government provided humanitarian and military aid to the ANC and on several occasions, publicly expressed its solidarity.

On the independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1975, Bulgaria concluded respective treaties of friendship and co-operation with both countries. Bulgaria provided scholarships to African students and in some countries set up joint enterprises (i.e. Bulgarian-Nigerian companies).

Most former socialist nations followed similar development policy goals. In the 1970s, Poland actively supported the concept of the 'New International Economic Order'. Despite being a socialist country, Poland successfully forged relations with African leaders who were opposed to Communism. Other Socialist bloc nations focused more on partnerships with Communist movements. The Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, for example, concluded inter-party co-operation agreements with Mozambique's Liberation Front (Frente de Libertação de Mocambique – FRELIMO) and Angola's Popular Liberation Movement (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola – MPLA).

But are there any connecting factors between the policies of Socialist governments

decades ago and the development policies of today's EU newcomer member states from eastern Europe? The personal career of the former Slovak foreign minister Eduard Kukan (in office 1998-2006) suggests that the answer to this question is yes. Kukan was a Czechoslovakian diplomat from 1964 until 1991 and dealt mainly with his country's relations with different African countries. As his country's foreign minister, he made use of his language skill in Swahili, which he learnt while studying at Moscow's State Institute of International Relations. Hence today's political leaders may rely on qualifications and personal contacts, acquired in the past, to revive the partnership of their states with certain ACP countries.

* Freelance journalist.

Keywords

Bulgaria; Poland; Slovakia; South Africa; FRELIMO; MPLA.

Andrea Marchesini Reggiani

Culture is a fundamental tool for the EU's external relations. This is one of the themes that has been emerging since 2007, when the Council approved an Agenda for Culture, based on three ambitious sets of objectives: cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; culture as a catalyst for creativity; and culture as a key component in external relations.*

The first *European Cultural Forum* planned within this Agenda was held in Brussels on 29 and 30 September 2009, and addressed, amongst others, the issue of the relationship between culture and development. This issue was discussed by Odile Quentin, Director General for Culture, and Stefano Manservigi, Director General for Development. Mr. Manservigi described the shift that has been taking place in this relationship. Culture used to be last on the list of importance in terms of development policy, but now constitutes a transversal approach, due to the recognition of its key role in creating the correct foundations for dialogue.

The workshops of the Forum involved cultural analysts from ACP countries, and interesting comparisons were made between the *Culture* programme (targeted at Europe) and the *ACPCultures* programme (targeted at ACP countries). The *ACPCultures* programme has not been operating for long, and therefore has less experience, with less funding available for a greater number of countries (€6M for the 79 ACP countries, compared to €400M for the 27 European countries). *ACPCultures* also has lower visibility among the target audience of citizens.

Francisco D'Almeida (of the Culture and Development Association) communicated the impatience of African field operators, and their desire to witness the concrete application of local and national policies which benefit their day-to-day cultural activities, and also to enjoy a better structuring of national and interregional markets. The topic of visas for non-European

Cultural policy: Operators engage in networking activities



© EC

operators was also discussed. The European cultural platforms, which are engaged in the political lobbying of their governments, were cited as an interesting model.

Indeed, networking is now a working practice which is applied to all cultural projects. At the *3rd World Culturelink Conference*, which was held in Zagreb from 13 to 15 November 2009, discussions were held on the status of cultural networks in relation to national and transnational policy-making. *Culturelink Network* is an institution which is funded by UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and its members highlighted the importance of the redefinition of cultural policies in the current period in which technology facilitates interaction and shapes cultural practices in a constantly changing landscape of digital communication.

Key issues concerning the value of cultural networks in sustainable development strategies were emphasized through examples from Latin America (The Latin American Network of Art for Social Transformation) and Africa (The ARTerial Network).

Therefore, the networking activities carried out between operators represent a priority for cultural policy, and are essential to address the urgent needs of cultural industries in the south of the world.

* Res. of the Council of 16th Nov. 2007, on a European Agenda for Culture, in *The Official Journal of the EU* C 287/1, 29.11.2007.

Keywords

European Cultural Forum; Culturelink Network.

Conference on Decentralised Cooperation

Securing a role for local authorities, the third party

Governments and experienced non-governmental organisations apart, local and regional authorities must also take part in resource management for cooperation for development, in order to make the process more effective. This was the idea behind the 'Conference on Decentralised Cooperation', which took place under the auspices of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels on 2 December 2009, in collaboration with the European Commission. Among the important decisions taken at this meeting was the establishment of a political dialogue on decentralised cooperation which should eventually lead to greater consideration of the wishes of both European local authorities and beneficiary nations when it comes to planning EU aid.



Khalifa Sall, Mayor of Dakar, Senegal, at the 'Conference on Decentralised Cooperation', Brussels.
© Committee of the Regions

Participants from all of the continents met in Brussels at the Committee of the Regions, a European Union institution, with a view to discussing projects, programmes and future perspectives for decentralised cooperation, but above all to define the role played in the whole process by local authorities. In the opinion of the Commissioner for Development of the European Commission, Karel De Gucht, "Local and regional authorities bring with them a valuable viewpoint and unique experience and abilities as far as action on questions of development is concerned". His view won the backing

of Luc Van den Brande, President of the Committee of the Regions, who stated that "NGOs are already highly active in this field. We should not aim to imitate them, but rather to focus our efforts on quality of management of development aid among our partners at a local and regional level".

On top of the general debate, four round tables formulated recommendations:

- **Effectiveness of aid.** A "good" project is one which is defined by people according to their specific needs. It is therefore necessary to take local authorities into account in the drafting of European development policy.
- **Local governance.** This implies the participation of all local and regional actors, governments, civil society and the general population. Local authorities must administer a portion of the aid, which should not, for example, allow for budgetary aid.
- **Energy.** Local action is particularly important as far as protection of the environment and climate change, is concerned. Examples of this can be found in the energy independence of the city of São Paulo, Brazil, which produces exactly 45 per cent of its own energy requirements, or the reforestation process in Paris, France.

- **Millennium Development Goals – Health.** Only very rarely do local authorities take part in the planning of health policy, and it is vital that this should change.

The immediate decisions announced at the close of the meeting were the following: the compilation of an 'atlas' listing cooperation programmes and projects involving European local authorities; the continuation of the process of dialogue following the initial meeting; and the setting up, among other initiatives, of an Internet forum on the subject of European funds for decentralised cooperation.

In a declaration made by the Director General for Development, Stefano Manservigi, the European Commission made a significant commitment to work towards a greater integration of the views of local and regional authorities in EU policy, within the framework of United Nations action on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in 2010. **H.G.**

Keywords

Committee of the Regions; European Commission; Conference on Decentralised Cooperation; WCO; Karel De Gucht; Stefano Manservigi; Hegel Goutier.

Philippe Lamotte*



Greenpeace activists at the 2007 EU-Africa Summit, Lisbon, Portugal. © Reporters/AP

Greenpeace sets up in Africa

Long established in Europe and the Americas, Greenpeace is now making its presence felt in Africa, tackling climate change, deforestation and overfishing. The rationale behind this move is that a better management of natural resources should be beneficial, in the long run, to food security and combating poverty.

Interview with Michelle Ndiaye Ntab, Greenpeace Africa Executive Director and expert in governance, health and development

News from *Greenpeace* in recent months has certainly shown a very African slant. The South African Kumi Naidoo, holder of a doctorate in political sciences from the University of Oxford, was appointed last autumn as the new Executive Director of *Greenpeace International*, while Michelle Ndiaye Ntab, from Senegal, recently took the helm of the 'rainbow' organisation's three first offices in Africa: Cape Town, Kinshasa and, opening soon, Dakar.

What is your image of Africa?

Michelle Ndiaye Ntab: After a long time as an Afro-pessimist, I now have a more balanced view. True, there is a stagnating Africa, an Africa of bad governance and corruption, one that is desperately short of visionary governments and whose civil society, without a sounding board, is not managing to make itself heard. But there is also an Africa that is largely neglected by the media, an Africa that is on the move. Take



Michelle Ndiaye Ntab. © Greenpeace

Burkina Faso, for example. Landlocked and over-dependent on cotton, in the space of a few years this country has managed to diversify its agriculture to a significant degree, exporting French beans and cherry tomatoes to the European Union. And then

there is the Africa group's common stance a few weeks before the Copenhagen climate change conference, which was a first, and the development decisions that have been implemented since 2000-2001 by NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development), in particular as regards motorways and fibre optics. Africa is changing!

Telephone services, of course. But promoting motorways in Africa? That will need some explanation for the Europeans in Greenpeace!

If we want to free regional markets, an infrastructure must be provided which enables people and products to move from one country to the next, especially when there is no access by sea. It is quite absurd that goods currently have to be transported via Belgium or France to go from one African country to another! If our markets open up to one another, they will then be able to freeze out certain products from developed countries that massively undercut our local prices. That said, environmental concerns

are also becoming more important within NEPAD.

It is sometimes said that Africa needs strong leaders and cannot afford the luxury of democracy.

If Africa is where it is today, it is because at one time it was believed that it was not important to have strong political institutions. The important thing was the need to attract investors and, with their money, to keep the economy running. The problem is that now Africa is being asked to do in fifty years what Europe did in three centuries. The West sometimes forgets that a nation is always built in stages. It is my fundamental belief that the coming of democracy goes hand in

hand with the emergence of a strong civil society, strong parties and strong leaders.

What are Greenpeace's priorities in Africa? Will you adopt the same methods as those practised by European and American supporters?

It all depends. In the DRC, for example, we are working a lot with grass-roots communities from regions that have, until now, been spared deforestation. In South Africa, we are dealing with a more educated and aware urban and semi-urban population, and so there we can lobby the government directly. We denounce certain political decisions or the scheming of polluting industries, but we also place a lot of emphasis on the alterna-

tives and their benefits. After just one year, *Greenpeace Africa* already has 3,800 members, all private individuals, each paying €5.50 per month. In the autumn of 2008 we carried out an extensive communication campaign via community TV and radio stations, and it was very exciting to see how quickly our profile rose across the continent. If we continue to be so successful, in two or three years we will be independent.

* Freelance journalist.

Keywords

Greenpeace; Africa; Michelle Ndiaye Ntab.

ACP civil society adopts networking approach

At its meeting on 10 and 11 December 2009 in Brussels, the ACP Civil Society Forum decided to set up a vast virtual network for dialogue between all civil organisations and their focal points in the 79 countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The aim is to exchange information on the major challenges facing the ACP at the halfway stage in their cooperation with the EU within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement.

At the opening of the meeting, Sir John Kaputin, Secretary General of the ACP group at the time, declared: "Your participation in the drawing up of regional and national indicative programmes is vital, as is your

opinion on the analysis being undertaken on the Cotonou Agreement at the halfway stage, not to mention the negotiations on the economic partnership agreements." Dominique Delicour, of the European Commission's EuropeAid cooperation office, invited the

participants to take part in the regional seminar, within the framework of structured dialogue, which the Commission will hold this year in Mali. She also invited forum representatives to read the report drawn up by the Commission's services on the participation of civil society (http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/civil-society/index_en.htm).

During the meeting – the third since the forum was established in 1997 – the civil society representatives complained about the Commission's "complex and bureaucratic" procedures. They also appealed to the Commission to involve experts from the ACP more in the programmes concerning them. "The Commission's practice of sending European experts does not produce exchange or knowledge transfer; on the contrary, the numerous reports drawn up are not used and are a waste of time and money", pointed out one representative.

M.M.B.



Medical stock from a basic Health Unit in Aftout, Mauritania. © EC/ Carolina Martin Tirand

Keywords

ACP Civil Society Forum; Sir John Kaputin; Dominique Delicour.

Diamond-dependent Botswana, a land-locked country with a population of just under two million, saw its economic sparkle fade in 2009. The precious gems have long been a mainstay of the economy, providing half of government revenue and 70 per cent of foreign exchange and contributing to the country's enviable social development which has almost become a model for the rest of Africa. Some diamond mines have been forced to close in the wake of the global economic downturn. Moving into 2010, there was a glimmer of recovery, but the jolt has now caused a change of course in government plans for the sector with a call for more private sector participation in the creation of a diamond centre of excellence where Botswana will cut, polish and craft its own diamonds, said Phandu Skelemani, Botswana's Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in a recent interview with The Courier in Brussels.



Debswana's headquarters, Gaborone. © D. Percival

Global crisis chips Africa's gem



A glimmer of recovery in 2010? © Debswana

“When Europe, America and Japan are not buying diamonds, it means we have no revenue. The result is that we have had to make big cuts in our budget. Firstly, the year-on-year budget: in the last one the development part was cut by 5 per cent and the recurrent by 7 per cent. We have had to forego some of the projects that we wanted to embark upon”, said the minister. What’s more, Botswana’s Middle Income Country status means that access to international donor funds has become more difficult over the past two years.

Diamond sales originally fell off in the run-up to the holiday period at the end of 2008. “We had two periods when not a single diamond was sold for two successive months: October 2008 and Christmas 2008. A number of mines closed and workers were laid off. It did not make much sense to keep on producing the diamonds when they are not being sold and stockpiled. The price

was affected and there were no buyers even at lower prices. Happily, we have started selling diamonds again but we have not yet caught up and are still at 2007 levels”, said the Minister.

Botswana’s tenth National Development Plan has been affected. This six-year development plan approved in August 2009 started late because of revenue uncertainties. “Even now, we do not think we are yet out of the woods. The result is that we had to draw down on our reserves. We are borrowing much more than we have done before”, Minister Skelemani told us. He added that borrowing was vital to keep on track some of projects such as the construction of three big dams in the southern part of the country which has no water or rivers. The Minister, however, said that spending cuts would not affect the flow of government funds to purchase of anti-retroviral drugs for the large number of Batswana infected with the HIV/AIDS virus.

A ROCKY 2010

The economic downturn has affected the diamond trade, a very capital intensive business, on a global scale, says Freddy J. Hanard, Chief Executive Officer of the World Diamond Centre (WDC) in an interview with *The Courier*. Headquartered in the Flemish town of Antwerp, Belgium, the WDC holds an 80 per cent global market share of the rough diamond trade and 50 per cent of the trade in polished diamonds. The first months of 2009 were particularly difficult with producers reducing production and cutting sales, says Hanard. He says that Antwerp has resisted well with just a 25 per cent cut in its trade in both rough and

polished diamonds from January-November 2009. His predictions for the global rough diamond trade in 2010? "While sales amounted to \$US13.4bn in 2008, they will probably drop to \$US7.5bn this year and rise to \$US12.5bn in 2010". He forecasts a slight rise of 0.4 per cent in the global trade of polished diamonds in 2010. "We will probably have to wait until 2011 for full recovery, on the condition that we are not hit by yet another financial crisis. Diamond sales will not be driven directly by ultimate consumer demand, but by availability of financing", says Hanard.



Diamond mine, Botswana. © Debswana

> Aggregation delayed

Since April 2009, the country has been able to sell its diamonds again but is now looking beyond government financing to develop its diamond or minerals 'hub' operated by the Diamond Trading Company of Botswana (DTCB). The government has its sights set on the private sector buying up to 49 per cent of shares in DTCB. "This is one area where the private sector should be quite happy to join in. We had thought this should basically be a government thing but obviously we can't go ahead this way anymore", said the Minister.

The aim is a state-of-the-art centre of excellence for polishing, cutting and crafting

diamond jewellery and where aggregation can also be carried out. Aggregation is the blending of rough like-for-like diamonds for sale with those from other parts of the world such as South Africa, Canada, Tanzania and Namibia with Botswana's. It was due to get underway in the country from 2009. "Aggregation has been moved back by one year precisely because of the instability, but it is definitely coming because we think we produce the best gems by value. We do not see why aggregation should be done in places that do not produce diamonds", the Minister told *The Courier*.

The December 2009 decision by UK-based *Firestone Diamonds* plc, which has mining operations in both South Africa and

Botswana, to start up commercial diamond kimberlite operations in the BK11 mine in northern Botswana is a sign of the sector picking up – although in this case, it is a foreign, rather than a domestic concern that is putting up new money for the mine's development. Operations are due to begin ahead of schedule in the first quarter of 2010 with full production capacity of 1.5M tonnes of diamonds to be in place in the third quarter of 2010. Philip Kenny, the company's Chief Executive Officer said in a press statement that the decision was taken due to the projected shortfall in rough diamond supply which is expected to drive diamond prices higher in the coming years.

Botswana's tourism, another big revenue earner, has so far held up, said Minister Skelemani. This is in part due to the fact that people tend to book holidays to Botswana in advance and do not change plans at the last minute, and also that the country has unparalleled landscapes; the Okavango Delta, the Chobe National Park and the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Botswana is also hoping to reap benefits from the 2010 FIFA World Cup in neighbouring South Africa, having recently extended the airport in its capital, Gaborone to take long-haul jets from March 2010. **D.P.**



Tourism has so far held up. © D. Percival

Keywords

Botswana; Phandu Skelemani; diamonds; DTCB; FIFA 2010.

Eastern Caribbean farmers slate “done deal”



Banana seller. © Reporters / AP

A tariff deal between Latin American countries and the European Union (EU) in December 2009 in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva hails the end of a 15-year banana trade dispute, one of the longest-ever global trade wars. Eastern Caribbean farmers hit out.

The core of the deal agreed by the EU and Latin American Ambassadors is a phased cut in the EU's banana import tariff from the current rate of €176/tonne to €114/tonne in 2017 at the earliest. It includes an initial reduction of €28/tonne to €148/per tonne on the signing of the deal by all parties, expected in early 2010.

Latin American countries have in return agreed to demand no further cuts in tariff when the WTO's Doha Round of global trade talks resumes. As part of the package, the United States has also agreed to drop all its banana cases against the EU in the WTO, some of which have been pending since 1993.

When *The Courier* went to press, the EU Council still had to approve the agreement ahead of the signing the deal with Latin American countries and the settlement agreement with the US. Under the recently-ratified Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament must also give its consent. “This is the best possible deal we could achieve. It reconciles all parties' legitimate interests. I know African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) producers will face challenges in adjust-

ing to the new situation, but the EU will do its best to help”, said EU Development Commissioner, Karel De Gucht.

> Compensation

The EU has pledged up to €200M to be disbursed between 2010 and 2013 to improve the competitiveness, economic diversification and mitigate the social consequences of adjustment in ACP banana growing states. The EU says what was agreed in Geneva both gives the ACP countries time to adapt and will mean more predictability in the banana market. Eastern Caribbean producers are not convinced.

“The countries in the ACP group which export bananas to Europe are far from happy with the ‘deal’”, says Secretary General of the Windward Islands Farmers Association (WINFA), Renwick Rose. He says that Latin American exporters, dominated by the US multinational trio of *Dole*, *Del Monte* and *Chiquita*, have more than 80 per cent of the European market for themselves. By contrast, the Windwards; St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia and Dominica) only have a one per cent share, posing no

threat to Latin American domination. He adds: “Lowering the tariffs means that they can market their bananas even more cheaply than us thereby forcing our producers out of business”.

Rose fears that the “grossly inadequate” compensation will take time to flow and raises questions about whether it will actually reach farmers. He says the pledged EU compensation pot has to be shared by all producers in the ACP group including Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Suriname and Belize.

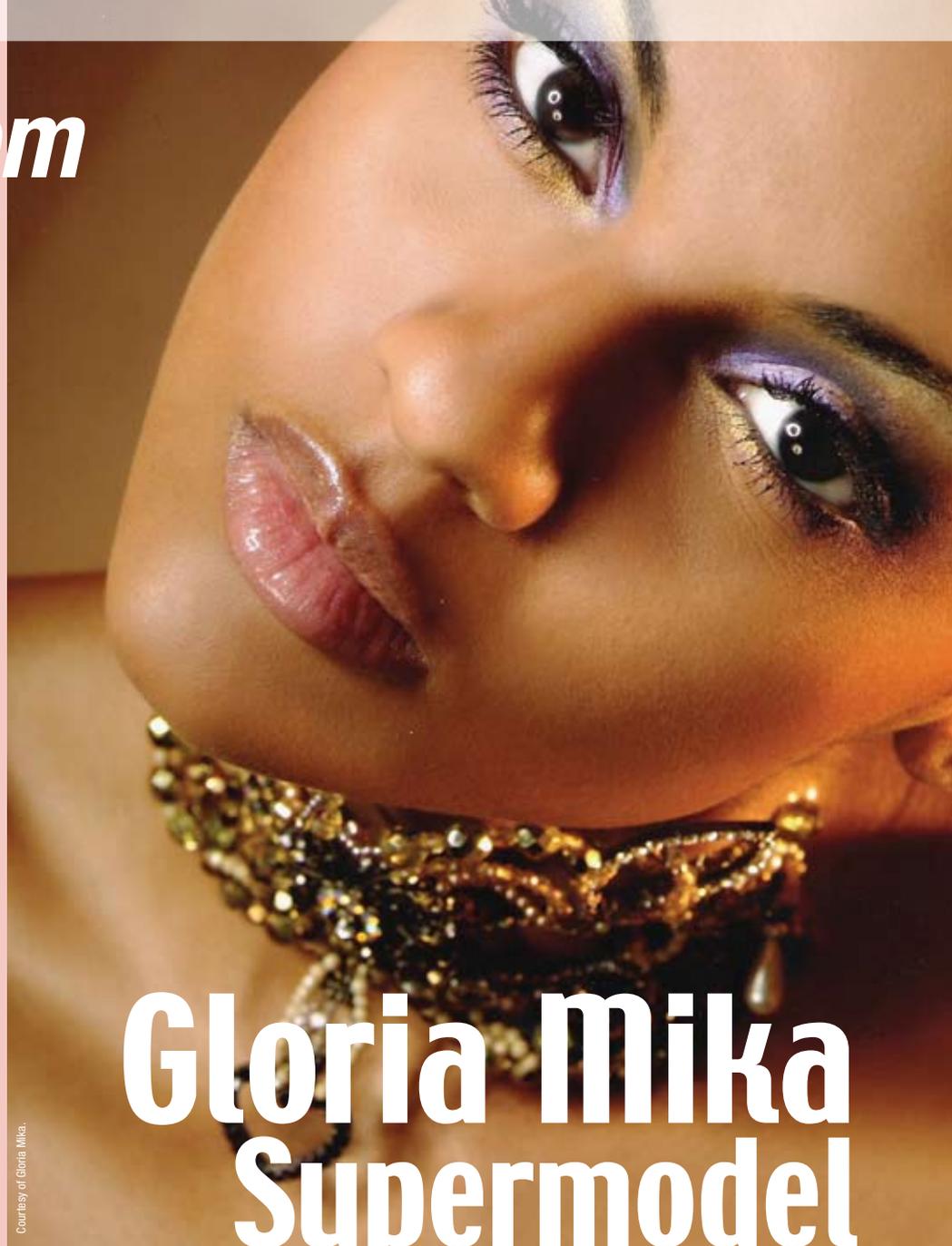
The EU, ACP and Latin American countries also agreed in December 2009 on a common approach on the so-called ‘tropical’ and ‘preference erosion’ products in the on-going Doha Round negotiations in the WTO where ‘tropical products’ will be subject to deeper tariff cuts, while tariff cuts for ‘preference erosion’ products of interest to ACP countries will be conducted over a relatively longer period. **D.P.**

Keywords

Bananas; Renwick Rose; WINFA; Karel De Gucht; WTO; Doha Round; Windwards.

With her slender 6ft 2in frame, beauty, elegance and intelligence, the Greco-Gabonese model Gloria Mika, icon of the couturiers and designers of luxury beauty products and muse of famous musicians, has just seen her fame take a quantum leap. Her appeal to the goodwill of her fellow models in setting up 'Guardian Angels for Transparency' to oversee the Gabonese elections last August, and in other countries where the people's choice was on the point of being denied, created quite a buzz on the internet. Since then Gloria Mika has been much in demand, and has taken a stand for a variety of causes, always with diplomacy, professionalism and courage, even if it means making enemies in the corridors of power.

Gloria Mika had been in Paris for a week, moving back and forth from Athens, where she also lives. It was clear that she hadn't had time for much sleep, and had had to hurry to make it to her rendezvous with *The Courier* at the Gare du Nord. We were soon to learn that she does a lot of her work at night. Her satin complexion, with an almost child-like freshness, and the slight pearliness of her lips betrayed only the faintest touch of make-up, and she was wearing casual clothes without ornamentation, presumably



Courtesy of Gloria Mika.

Gloria Mika Supermodel

Flight of the Guardian Angel of Democracy

to mark a difference between the angel of desire who casts a spell on the catwalk and the guardian angel of civic society. This was almost a day of relaxation for her: all she had to do was to buy a ticket for a short trip to Ghana leave her application for a visa at the embassy and in the afternoon meet up at the Bastille with a group of African intellectuals and activists, most of them from Guinea.

At 29 years of age, the supermodel has 10 years on the catwalk behind her, working with top agencies like *Elite*, top coutu-

riers *Ungaro*, *Diesel*, *Escada*, *Pierre Cardin*, *Alphadi*, *Paul Mitchell*, *Kathy Heyndels*, *Yianos Xenis* and *Misu Mitsu*, and jewellers such as *Chris Aire* de Los Angeles, through whom she met up with Céline Dion. She has been the face of *L'Oréal*, the prestigious beauty products company, and the muse of international stars like Wyclef Jean, founder of the Fugees, in his videoclip *Sweetest Girl*, alongside other major figures, Akon and Lil Wayne. She has been sought out for films and has even aroused the interest of one of the very top American film directors.

Gloria Mika was born in Libreville, Gabon, and her family moved to Senegal for three years when she was six, a period of her childhood which she remembers very vividly. At the age of 15, she went to the Rocheambeau French International High School in the U.S., Washington DC, and three years later went to live in Paris, where she attended the Sorbonne University, taking a BA in Communication and Public Relations. She went on to complete her studies at the American College in Athens, specialising in the management of non-profit-making organisations, and taking a course in political analysis too. She is intending to present her doctoral thesis on Gene Sharp, the theorist of the end of history, and his relationship with the advocates of non-violence, Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

At the tender age of 15, she had already participated in a fashion show as part of a cultural evening in Gabon. But it was when she took part, at the age of 17 and just for fun, in the *Miss Metropolitan* contest in Washington D.C., where she was chosen as runner-up, that she began to attract attention. Within a short space of time, she was invited to two relatively high-profile shows, at galas of the World Bank and then the U.N., where she met the Nigerian designer Alphadi, with whom she maintains a close relationship. When she came back to Paris, she met the

‘In July, I met up with the Tamils to give them my support, advocating the basic principles of my movement, that is, based on non-violence,’

Senegalese designer, Claire Kane, and then all of the other major figures in fashion followed.

> A different kind of icon

Gloria Mika has already been involved in a number of development projects in poor countries, like, for example, an educational project in a Haitian shanty town. It was her disappointment at the turn of events in the campaign for the elections of 30 August 2009 in Gabon which drove her to take the crucial decision to temporarily suspend her modelling work and to launch, on the 20 July, her appeal for the ‘Guardian Angels’, first on Facebook and then on her own specially-created website. Just a few hours later, the first registrations began to flow in, and within a few days figures were already in the hundreds. The time available was too short to have an significant effect on the transparency of the elections, but the frenzy of interest sparked off by the appeal of this iconic beauty led the worldwide media to reveal the irregularities of the elections and to publicise the instances of police brutality with which they were riddled.

Gloria’s new activities have well and truly taken off, and she is now a different kind of icon, who is listened to as well as admired. She is careful to establish safeguards to avoid the ‘Guardian Angels for Transparency’ being taken over by individuals with their own personal agenda or projects of a dubious nature. Members of the association must be pacifists and must not be affiliated to any political party. But now Gloria is in demand everywhere: organisations and personalities from Guinea, Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, intellectuals and activists, all appeal to her, asking her to take part in their different activities. She speaks at conferences and think tanks involving experts, researchers and politicians, and at events which even include Tamil activists. “In July, I met up with the Tamils to

give them my support, advocating the basic principles of my movement, that is, based on non-violence.” Elsewhere she continues to go all out to mobilise as many angels as possible. For a future campaign, ‘Breaking the Silence’, based on the three wise monkeys who will see, hear or speak no evil and relating this to the international community in the aftermath of the elections in Gabon, she enjoys the support of famous designers and of her model colleagues who also want to use beauty in the service of democracy.



Courtesy of Gloria Mika.

So many of the constant barrage of telephone calls she receives come from sources worried about her safety that in the end she asks if they have heard anything about a specific threat. “I’m not frightened because I don’t have any enemies. I just want to make my own little contribution as a citizen to help governments govern better. If anyone wants to kill me, let them get on with it. The only thing they’ll have left is my corpse and my disobedience.” **H.G.**

Keywords

Gloria Mika; Gabon; Guinea; Congo; elections; ‘Guardian Angels for Transparency’; Elite; Ungaro; Diesel; Escada; Pierre Cardin; Alphadi; Paul Mitchell; Kathy Heyndels; Yianos Xenis; Misu Mitsui; Chris Aire; Céline Dion; Wyclef Jean; Sweetest Girl; Akon; Wayne; Hegel Goutier.



Gloria Mika in front of La Bastille, Paris, symbol of the Declaration of Human Rights. © Hegel Goutier

Detlef Sonnenberg*

Climate change

Darkness before dawn



Installation at the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark. © Reporters/UPP

The poorest and most vulnerable developing countries came to Copenhagen knowing they had the least to offer and the most at stake. They came away with little.

“We fought for everything we came out with and as you can see we didn’t come out with much”, Dessima Williams, representing Grenada and the Alliance Of Small Island States (AOSIS), told 192 nations in the early hours of 19 December as the Copenhagen climate summit crumbled to a close. But, as did Ethiopia on behalf of the African Union (AU) and Lesotho on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), she urged those present to adopt the three-page ‘Copenhagen Accord’ announced 12 hours earlier by US president Barack Obama.

The same accord had subsequently been rejected by several developing nations including Sudan, whose charismatic leader Lumumba Di-Aping said it asked Africa “to sign a suicide pact”. Ultimately, the accord was “noted”, not adopted, by the

plenary and world governments agreed to continue the international climate talks, albeit with no deadline for their conclusion or agreement that they should result in a legally-binding treaty. “I will not hide my disappointment. Our level of ambition has not been met. There is no agreement on the need for a legally-binding agreement”, a tired and defeated-looking European Commission President José Manuel Barroso told journalists. The accord “will not solve the climate threat”, he said.

► Poorest nations take a stand

The Copenhagen Accord and decisions to continue talks under both the Kyoto protocol and broader UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) were the main results of the conference. The accord is weak however, and vague on specifics. It details no emission cuts, nor what share of long-term

financing will come from the public versus the private sector. Fast-track funding pledges currently amount to \$25bn, not \$30bn.

Explicit references to bunker fuels, a levy on which could meet up to a quarter of long-term financing needs according to green transport group T&E, were scrapped. Malawi had led LDCs in a push for reference to such a levy.

Some have suggested the chaotic experience of the Danish summit could shift the international climate talks to a new forum, such as the US-led Major Economies Forum (MEF) or the G20. This would leave the poorest without a voice just as that voice is gaining volume.

Ethiopian prime minister Meles Zenawi, who led Africa’s first-ever joint negotiating team in Copenhagen, said Africans were

THE COPENHAGEN ACCORD

- **SCIENCE:** the accord recognises that global temperature rise should be limited to 2°C. A review in 2015 will consider whether the goal should be strengthened to 1.5°C.
- **MITIGATION:** developed countries will file 2020 emission reduction pledges to the UNFCCC by the end of January 2010. How much and how defined is up to them. Developing countries will notify mitigation actions, to be domestically monitored with “provisions for international consultations”. Actions aided by developed nations will be internationally monitored.
- **ADAPTATION:** developed countries agree to provide “adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources, technology and capacity-building” to help developing countries adapt.
- **DEFORESTATION:** a short paragraph says Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) is “crucial” and “positive incentives” – a “REDD+ mechanism” – are needed to mobilise financial resources from developed countries.
- **MARKETS:** the accord supports markets, keeping the door open to cap-and-trade schemes and taxes, also for international aviation and shipping.
- **FINANCING:** developed countries will provide new additional fast-track funding “approaching” US\$30bn for the period 2010-12, with the poorest, most vulnerable countries getting priority. Developed countries also “commit to a goal of mobilising jointly US\$100bn a year by 2020” for developing countries.
- **GOVERNANCE:** A UNFCCC “Copenhagen Green Climate Fund” will manage mitigation-related climate finance flows to developing countries. New multilateral funding for adaptation will be subject to a governance structure where developed and developing countries are equally represented.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** A “technology mechanism” will be set up to accelerate technology development and transfer to developing nations.

FORESTS AND CARBON MARKETS LEFT HANGING

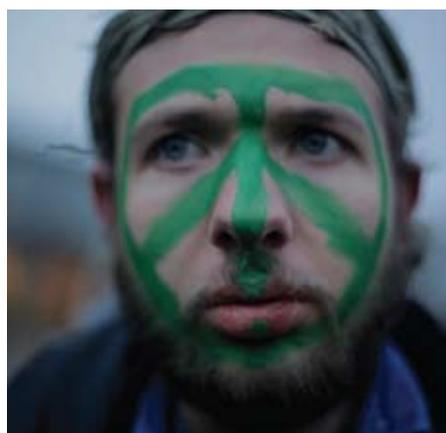
There was some progress on draft technical texts in Copenhagen covering issues from reform of the carbon market to REDD. But without agreement on a new legally-binding treaty these texts are works in progress. Countries did agree on some improvements to the Kyoto protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which lets rich countries cut emissions in poor countries instead of at home. Africa currently accounts for less than two per cent of CDM projects. To change this, countries that lack projects will in future benefit from deferred project registration fees and loans. The CDM executive board will also develop top-down methodologies and simplify additional requirements for the smallest projects.

there to negotiate, not stand by as victims. Ethiopia and France presented a financing plan calling for a global tax on financial transactions – the Tobin tax – and taxes on aviation and shipping. African civil society was present as never before, with Oxfam campaigner, Tim Gore, saying the climate talks increasingly resembled the international trade talks.

The chaotic experience of the Danish summit could shift the international climate talks to a new forum, such as the US-led Major Economies Forum (MEF) or the G20. This would leave the poorest without a voice just as that voice is gaining volume.

➤ EU climate strategy fails dramatically

The EU and Africa were aligned on many issues, from pushing for deep emission cuts



Protester at the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark. © Reporters/AP

to recognising the need for substantial long-term finance. But the EU, like Africa, failed to see its ambitions materialise. Ultimately, Europe was relegated to spectator status as the US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa did the deal. A frustrated Barroso said no one had shown interest in the EU's offer to increase its 2020 emission reduction

target to 30 per cent, suggesting its strategy for securing a meaningful deal had failed dramatically.

UN climate chief Yvo de Boer insisted the Copenhagen Accord was “politically incredibly significant” because it had involved dozens of world leaders in the climate change talks for the first time. It is this understanding, that Copenhagen is the beginning of a beginning rather than an end, which prompted leaders from AOSIS, the AU and LDCs to back an accord some were ready to throw in the bin.

* Freelance journalist.

Keywords

Climate change; Copenhagen; Africa Unione (UA); Least Developed Countries (LDCs); Kyoto protocol; UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); José Manuel Barroso; Meles Zenawi; Yvo de Boer.

R*eport*

A report by Marie-Martine Buckens

Cape Verde



A hub connecting three worlds

Barely twice the size of Luxembourg, scattered across ten islands, in a remote corner of the mid-Atlantic and for the most part consisting of arid landscape (owing to practically non-existent natural resources) and a local population often forced to emigrate, Cape Verde has achieved the great milestone of going from one of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to a Middle Income Country (MIC). A poisoned chalice, no doubt, for a country which has invested the enormous foreign aid it receives (predominantly from the EU) in its internal development. This alone, however, is quite an achievement. The secret of its success? Putting strong governance and human rights at the heart of government policy, to the extent that the 2009 Mo Ibrahim index cites Cape Verde as a beacon of economic success and sound governance. The real reason, however, or so you will be told by those in power in the country, is to be found in its only real resource: human capital – whether living on the islands or away from home. The locals (around 450,000) and those who have left (numbering around 700,000) have constructed

a network, through which the Diaspora is a major actor in the Cape Verdean economy.

But the country still faces a number of challenges: all-too-palpable poverty, high rates of unemployment, almost total dependence in terms of food and energy and a debt made all the more difficult to manage by the fact that the country will not benefit much longer from the advantages which came with its former LDC status. The answer? Give fresh impetus to its role as a transit agent, which it has played since its inception. A road to the Americas, in particular South America, a subcontinent with which the country has maintained strong ties since the time of Amílcar Cabral, and less than 3,000 km of cabling away. A stone's throw from continental Africa. Finally, strengthened cooperation with Europe, thanks to its belonging to the islands of Macaronesia, including the Spanish Canaries (as well as the Portuguese Azores and Madeira archipelago) at a mere 1,500km away. This is demonstrated by the two-year-old Special Partnership between Cape Verde and the EU, the only one of its kind among the ACP group.



Cidade Velha: in the São Francisco convent (restored with the aid of Spanish cooperation). © Marie-Martine Buckens

Unique and proud

A nation born of the first globalisation

Left alone to face the elements for more than 14 centuries, except for occasional landings by the Senegalese or even, it is said, the Chinese, the Cape Verde archipelago was not settled permanently until 1460. It was then that the navigator Diego Gomes took possession of the archipelago. It became the property of the Portuguese Crown in 1494. A land of seafarers recruited for whale fishing and a port of call for Portuguese vessels bound for Brazil, from the beginning of the 16th century Cape Verde also became a hub of the slave trade between West Africa and the New World. It is true that this chain of islands – ten in all, nine of which are now inhabited – enjoys an “ideal” location: 600 km from Africa’s most western point (“Cap-Vert” in Senegal) and less than 2,600 km from Brazil. It was from Ribeira Grande

on the island of Santiago, where the slave traders had to stop to pay duty and baptise the slaves, that they then set off for the Americas. The Cape Verdean settlers also had slaves brought from the African continent to work on their plantations. This was the beginning of a long and unique process of the mixing or ‘metissage’ of the two populations (European and African) transplanted to these virgin volcanic islands.

➤ Treaty and pirates

In 1533, Ribeira Grande became an autonomous diocese covering the whole of former Guinea. The slave trade enabled the cotton loincloth industry to develop on Santiago and neighbouring Fogo, the only inhabited islands at the time. It was not until the 17th century that people started to settle on the



Cidade Velha : the ‘pilhourino’ where the recalcitrant slaves were whipped. © Marie-Martine Buckens



In Porto Novo (Santo Antão island). © Marie-Martine Buckens

islands of São Vicente and Sal. The French, Dutch and English traders, who were competing for the monopoly on the African coast granted by the Portuguese Crown, used the loincloths as currency for procuring slaves on the continent. In the middle of the 17th century, Cape Verde's status as a slave centre declined as the traffic moved to the Guinean port of Cacheu. Thus deprived of its principal source of revenue, Ribeira Grande suffered its final blow in 1712 when Jacques Cassard, the French pirate, sacked the town. The capital was moved to Praia, 15 km from Ribeira Grande, now known as Cidade Velha ('old town').

The 1866 Abolition of Slavery Treaty and the separation of Guinea-Bissau from Cape Verde was the death knell for the islands' economy and sparked mass voluntary emigration to the United States and – under constraint of the Portuguese – to plantations in their colonies of Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe. The departure of the Portuguese colonialists enabled the Creoles and the Blacks to accede to senior posts in both religious and secular institutions.

Following the serious droughts of the early 20th century the archipelago entered one of the darkest periods in its history, with the Estado Novo ('New State') of the Portuguese dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970 and who ruled from 1933 to 1968). It was under his regime that the 'greenshirts' of his political police repressed any voices raised in opposition, whether in Portugal or in the colonies. Torture and deportations to the 'death camp' of Tarrafal, on the island of Santiago, became common. Despite the ban on emigration, thousands of Cape Verdeans managed to flee during the 1950s and 1960s, mainly to France, the Netherlands and Belgium. It was in these countries that

most of the leaders of the Cape Verdean independence movement were educated.

➤ Amilcar Cabral's dream

In 1956 in Bissau, along with four Cape Verdean and Guinean patriots, the agricultural engineer Amilcar Cabral, a native of Santiago, founded the PAIGC, the African Party for Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde. Four years later, disregarding UN General Assembly resolutions, Salazar refused any dialogue on independence for Cape Verde and Guinea. February 1963



The artistic village of Porto Madeira (Santiago island) founded by the Cape Verdean artist Misa.
© Marie-Martine Buckens

saw the start of the armed struggle for national liberation in Guinea-Bissau. The Cape Verdeans and Guineans joined forces in the resistance movement. Tarrafal prison was soon full of African nationalists from Cape Verde, Guinea and Angola.

On 20 January 1973, Amilcar Cabral was assassinated in Conakry by traitors from within the PAIGC. The perpetrators were probably in the pay of the PIDE, the political police of the fascist regime, although this was never confirmed. In 1973 Guinea-Bissau proclaimed its independence, followed two years later, after the 'carnation revolution' in Lisbon and the end of the colonial war, by Cape Verde.

The adoption of the First Constitution, which confirmed the PAIGC as the single party, came in 1980. The coup d'état in Bissau in November saw the end of the plans for a union of Guinea and Cape Verde. A year later the PAIGV became the PAICV (African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde), with Marxist allegiances. In February 1990, the PAICV announced that it would be opening up to democracy. A year later, the Movement for Democracy (MpD), a party of more liberal persuasion, demanded free elections that it went on to win, appointing António Mascarenhas as president and Carlos Veiga as prime minister (currently leader of the opposition).

The PAICV was returned to power in 2001 with Pedro Pires as president and José Maria Neves as prime minister. Mr. Pedro Pires was re-elected in February 2006, beating former Prime Minister Carlos Veiga, the PAICV retaining a majority in the National Assembly. In his inaugural speech, Mr. Neves restated his government's priorities: to encourage the growth and competitiveness of the economy, to modernise the state through civil service reform, to provide training and jobs, to improve the health system and, finally, to recognise the family as "the cornerstone of society". To facilitate its vital relations with international financial institutions, in 2006 Praia launched an austerity programme and, moreover, appointed Cristina Duarte, previously president of Citibank in Angola, finance minister, and José Brito, a former oil engineer, economy minister and then foreign minister in 2009.

M.M.B.

Keywords

Diego Gomes; Cidade Velha; Amilcar Cabral; Tarrafal; Salazar; Carlos Veiga; PAICV; Pedro Pires; José Maria Neves.

Setting the standard for development



São Vicente Island seen from Santo Antão. © Marie-Martine Buckens

The special partnership – dating from November 2007 – with Cape Verde sets the standard for the way forward for every signatory of the Cotonou Agreement keen to strengthen its cooperation with the European Union, states Josep Coll i Carbo, head of the European Union Delegation in Praia.

“**T**he partnership”, Coll i Carbo explained, “was set up at the request of Cape Verde in the belief that the Cotonou Agreement could be further developed. Cape Verde sought to link up with the closest, most prosperous and most culturally familiar area of stability, the European Union. The EU was not the only organism to respond positively to this initiative, and member states have also shown commitment to the initiative, although for historical reasons Portugal, Spain, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Austria have shown the greatest involvement” (primarily due to the large numbers of Cape Verdeans living in these nations, *Editor’s note*).

What is the added value of such a partnership in addition to the Cotonou Agreement, which brings together ACP countries and the European Union?

Let us make it clear that the partnership was based on the Cotonou Agreement, which makes it possible to set up new initiatives for cooperation which had not previously been envisaged. We work together as equals, putting our common interests on the table. The European Union clearly has strategic interests, both economic and commercial, to defend, but in Europe there is a tendency towards a certain conceptual distortion of our relations with Africa. The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) that we are in the process of negotiating with the ACP group form part of this initiative, and involve bringing these economies up to date and making it possible, through win-win agreements, to go beyond the donor relationship. Cape Verde is a true bridgehead for continental Africa and benefits from a strategic presence in the middle of the Atlantic, helping create a zone of stability between the three continents. This stability,

CONFORMITY WITH EUROPEAN STANDARDS

The end of 2007 marked Cape Verde’s arrival on the international stage, and its promotion from the group of Least Developed Countries to the status of a middle-income nation, according to World Bank criteria. The country also became the 153rd member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and, more importantly, signed a special partnership with the European Union, which should eventually enable Cape Verde to deal with Euro-

pean operators on an equal footing. "Instead of piecemeal actions, this partnership makes it possible to better organise our technical and normative convergence with EU legislation on the basis of six pillars," explains José Luis Monteiro, Deputy National Authorising Officer for the European Development Fund (EDF) in the Cape Verde government. Although normative convergence is one of these six pillars, Praia prefers to view it as forming part of the other five pillars, namely good governance, security cooperation, regional integration, the information and knowledge society and the combating of poverty. "This strategy is fundamentally political in nature, and, in addition to enhancing political, cultural and social cooperation, aims to achieve greater economic integration with the outermost Atlantic regions of the European Union in particular."

One disappointment, according to Monteiro, is that "we were expecting additional funds for this partnership", but the only resource earmarked for this is the EDF, which has not been increased. Despite that, we will manage." Cape Verde is also watching with great interest the EU-Morocco Association Agreement, the last meeting of which resulted in a true qualitative leap that Monteiro believes should eventually give Morocco a form of semi-membership of the European Union.

* The provisional programme of European Community aid to Cape Verde provides €11.5 million for the special partnership, out of a total of €51 million for the period 2008-2013 (corresponding with the 10th EDF). For details of the 10th EDF, see the following article.

however, is currently seriously endangered by illicit trafficking, in the form of illegal emigration, arms or drug smuggling and money laundering. Major players have set their sights on this region to enable them to get closer to the West, but fortunately Cape Verde has reacted to this danger with foresight, and the government has, with the help of our funding, set in motion a thorough awareness-raising campaign and overhauled its security systems.

This partnership is also – and I would like to stress this point – an excellent exercise in improving coordination between member states and the European Union, imbuing the action of each with greater coherence. As such, a framework has been created which benefits all parties, and the EU Delegation in Praia, with its newly-acquired status of a Delegation in its own right, is now also able to play a full part in this process.

You've talked about relations between the European Union and Cape Verde, but what about relations between the latter and the rest of Africa?

Cape Verde can bring to West Africa and ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States) an Atlantic dimension which compensates in part for the difficulties posed by being part of a continent, and adds a new dimension to the notion of territoriality. In terms of the EPA negotiations, Cape Verde has concentrated on the services sector, while other members of ECOWAS are more raw materials-focused, which may in the long run enable a variable-geometry agreement. Let us not forget that

Cape Verde also enjoys a strong relationship with the Outermost regions (OR) of Macaronesia, in particular the Canaries, with which the archipelago shares important synergies. The Frontex mechanism has made it possible to significantly reduce the illegal flow of emigrants via the Canaries.

What are Cape Verde's weak points?

Access to water and sanitation, on the one hand, and on the other energy. These are two areas in which the European Union is providing support. Improvements in economic performance have also resulted in a greater divide between rich and poor, and the Cape Verdean government is very much aware of this.

And its strengths?

The ability of the Cape Verdean people to function effectively anywhere, at home and abroad. On a political level, I would highlight the insight with which the government has managed to 'de-ideologise' its foreign policy. The political class is equally at ease with representatives from the United States and from China, to mention just two major countries, and the fact that US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and the Deputy Leader of the Chinese Communist Party have recently visited Praia is proof of the importance that these countries, in particular, attach to Cape Verde.

M.M.B.

Keywords

José Coll i Carbo; Cotonou Agreement; EPAs; ECOWAS.



Left to right: Stefano Manservigi, European Commission Director General for Development, José Brito, Cape Verde's Foreign Affairs Minister and Josep Coll i Carbo, Ambassador and Head of the EU Delegation to Cape Verde, during a reception organised in Praia for Europe Day, May 2009. © EC

“We want to become a bridgehead for continental Africa”



© Marie-Martine Buckens

Interview with José Brito, Cape Verde's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities

Cape Verde has decided to deploy substantial funds to attract investment. But where, exactly? Primarily in infrastructure – ports, airports, high-speed communications – to transform the country into a bridgehead for investors attracted by the nearby continent of Africa, which has a predominantly young population and is under-equipped. Such investors will come from the Americas, with Brazil leading the way, as well as from Europe and Asia.

It comes as no surprise to hear, by way of introduction, José Brito explain that against this background foreign policy “represents a key instrument not just in terms of development, but also with regard to implementation of the strategy to transform the country”. Outlining his approach, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said: “Our nation has a stable political system underpinned by a judicial system, which is consistent and perfectible, and a public administration which, due to the absence of corruption, is an asset rather than an obstacle to investment.” The government is focussing on its good management qualities, widely recognised by the international community, to win over future partners. This is because, in other respects, the country hardly has an abundance of riches. “Human resources are our only natural resource”, conceded José Brito.

Are you aiming to turn Cape Verde into an international service centre?

What is Cape Verde? An archipelago with a surface area of 4,000 km² and a maritime

area of 550,000 km² located at the crossroads between various continents. We want to take advantage of our geostrategic location. Cape Verde was one of the first nations to embrace “globalisation” in the days of the slave trade. The level of technology at the time forced ships – and later aircraft – to make a stop in Cape Verde. We would now like to revive this historical situation in a modern context. Look at maritime transport, for example. Ports, in particular those on the African continent, face increasing difficulties receiving large containers. Our country could act as a transshipment hub. We also plan to make increasing security levels a priority. This will serve us well, particularly in trading with the US, which demands that goods pass through secure ports.

This strategy also covers the fishing sector. I would like to turn the country into a regional base for fishing services. We don't have a continental platform and the species of fish are essentially migratory. Pre-catch is therefore not a profitable activity. Instead, we aim to focus on upstream activities like freezing and marketing. Essentially doing

what Iceland has done – buying, packaging and re-selling fish products. The Chinese, in particular, have a strong presence in this sector. If we were able to sell our services to their fleets and they were able to make my strategy profitable, then why not?

New information and communications technology (ICT) is another key element of the strategy. There is already extensive fibre optic coverage between the islands, and new cables to South Africa, Europe and America will be laid by the end of 2010, providing us with access to a wide range of databases. I have just returned from a trip to India, where I put forward a strategic partnership in ICT. There was interest in this. In this context, our human resources – our only natural resource – are vital in providing added value for Cape Verde products. It is essential that we strengthen our capacities in this area to achieve our aim.

Is that to become a bridgehead for the sub-region?

Cape Verde only has a population of half a million. That is not going to attract much interest. The continent of Africa is therefore of great importance to us strategically. We are close to the West African market, which has enormous potential for future growth. Our integration into the sub-region is based on this vision, which is actually nothing new. It is something that Amílcar Cabral under-

stood. Achieving victory in Guinea Bissau automatically meant independence for Cape Verde. In this sense, the stability of the sub-region is of fundamental importance. Investors are not interested in regions where there is unrest. This is where Cape Verde's diplomacy plays a major role. Don't forget that most of the agreements concerning southern Africa – such as those on Angola and Namibia for example – were negotiated here. At the time of Apartheid, Cape Verde allowed the aircraft of *South African Airlines* to land in spite of the embargo. The same for the Cubans en route to Angola. Lots of issues have been resolved amicably in the hotels of Praia, where everyone would meet.

We are now applying this experience to combating drug trafficking. Cape Verde was the first African nation to successfully tackle mafia networks. We have made this experience available to other western African countries. This has produced an action programme, which has become a 'bible' in the fight against drugs. African countries are more aware of the dangers of drug trafficking. While they are transit countries today, they risk becoming consumers in view of their young populations. It is this way of being 'useful' – also with regard to the issue of people trafficking – which is of interest to the European Union in the context of our special partnership.

However, this opening up to the continent is only possible now that Brazil has adopted a genuine African policy, which will allow it to diversify its exports.

Cape Verde does not have any natural resources, but it could obtain some. You started your career as an oil engineer, what is your view of opportunities in that sector? Has prospecting already started along your coasts?

As far as that is concerned, I prefer to adopt a prudent approach and tell myself that "our human resources are our oil and these are what should be refined." In view of environmental issues in the developed world, there will also be increasingly less demand for polluting activities.

Finally, what about your relations with China?

As elsewhere in Africa, China has a presence here. Whatever one might say, China offers Africans an alternative option. The days when only French or UK companies operated here have gone. Today, options are beginning to open up for Africa and it must protect its interests. **M.M.B.**

Keywords

José Brito; Cape Verde.



Mindelo harbour (São Vicente island). © Marie-Martine Buckens

“It was our sound management that got us through the crisis”

Meeting with the Finance Minister of Cape Verde, Cristina Duarte

Located in a remote area of the Atlantic Ocean, with very little fresh water, Cape Verde is heavily dependent on the outside world, both financially (direct foreign investment accounts for 14 per cent of GDP, money sent home by emigrants 12 per cent and development aid 10 per cent), as well as for its supplies. With limited fishing and agriculture resources, this country made up of a group of islands is forced to import food to cover more than two-thirds of its needs. The service sector – 72 per cent of its economy – relies heavily on tourism, while infrastructure depends on public concessionaries, who themselves rely on external aid, while it is hoped that recently announced privatisations will have a positive impact. In spite of all these handicaps, and thanks to sound management of its finances, the country has been able to retain the confidence of major donors, who are crucial to its immediate survival.

How has Cape Verde been affected by the financial crisis?

Cape Verde is a small country with an open economy. As such, it was bound to suffer from the effects of the crisis, namely through lower revenue in the key sectors of direct foreign investment, tourism and exports. Still, we have managed to weather the storm by maintaining our strategy, adopted in 2001, of rigorous management of public funds. Before then, our finances were in a dire state. In 2001, we put in place conditions that favour growth, allowing us to achieve sustained economic growth over the past three years.



© Marie-Martine Buckens

What did you do?

We took action on several fronts. We safeguarded the budget, in particular by aligning internal prices – namely fuel and food – with international ones. We also protected vulnerable populations by doubling social pensions, salaries and reducing the tax burden on families. In addition, we implemented a very ambitious public investment programme, doubling it in three years. In 2009, we significantly reduced business taxes. We took several steps to offset this

loss in tax revenue, notably by harnessing additional resources by launching an appeal to our partners in the international community, in particular the European Union, who responded by providing budgetary aid. All these measures are bolstered by comprehensive management of public finances and a stable monetary policy, allowing money to be sent home to families by those who have left the country, which is vital for our economy.

How do you see the short term future?

Our policy has certainly borne fruit. In 2009, all disbursements were achieved. As far as 2010 is concerned, we have a budget which is both prudent and ambitious. Prudent, as we foresee an increase in current expenditure (+3.2 per cent) within manageable limits. And ambitious, as our public investment should increase by 26.4 per cent compared to 2009. Public debt should hover around 12 per cent. This is high, agreed, but sustainable, as it arises from investment programmes and not from operating budgets. As far as funding goes, we aim to profit from ‘concessionary’ borrowing conditions, from which we will continue to benefit for another few years (even though the country has gone from being an officially poor country to a ‘middle income country’ [MIC] - Ed.).

M.M.B.

Keywords

Cristina Duarte; Cape Verde; finances; crisis.

AN AGENCY FOR PROMOTING INVESTMENTS

To optimise its strategy, the government has set up an agency, *Cabo Verde Investimentos*, headed by the Cape Verdean Ministry of Economic Affairs. Its mission is to attract potential investors by extolling the archipelago as a safe destination. "Our assets", explains Carlos Rocha, head of the agency, "are good macro-economic data and a currency, the escudo, that is pegged to the euro". The objective, he continues, is to "develop a major industrial centre, the key parts of

which are in the process of being put in place: a major transfer port on the island of São Vicente along with a new international airport to supplement those on the islands of Boa Vista and Sal". The latter are primarily destinations tourist, another sector the government is building on. "In this particularly thriving sector, the bulk of investments are European." Europeans are also appearing in another expanding sector, ICTs.



On the Praça 12 de Setembro, Praia.
© Marie-Martine Buckens

PREDOMINANTLY BUDGETARY AID



New road on Santo Antão (funded by the EU). © Marie-Martine Buckens

Nearly 90 per cent of the development aid allocated to Cape Verde by the European Union (through the European Development Fund; EDF) is budgetary support. This record rate is proof of the confidence Europe places in the economic and budgetary management of the Cape Verdean authorities, and deservedly so. "It is above all thanks to the European Union, and also the Netherlands, that the government has been able to improve its system of governance and its budget", explains José Luis Monteiro. "This was a fundamental action. If Cape Verde is better managed, it is thanks to this fully computerised, transparent system that is also directly linked to the Court of Auditors. Even the United States would like to have it!"

The bulk of this budgetary aid is to support Cape Verde's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) and its good governance programme. The key objective of the GPRS is to ensure access to basic social services such as health care, education, water and sanitation for the very poor, to reinforce vocational training and to develop a social welfare strategy. At least €32.6M were set aside for the GPRS and the governance programme under the 10th EDF for 2008-2013 (the total of which amounts to €51M).

The €11.5M allocated to the special partnership should enable Cape Verde to improve its security system in order to deal with the new rise in illegal trafficking (drugs, people, money laundering, etc.)

and to identify cooperation projects with the other Macaronesian islands (Madeira, the Azores and the Canaries).

A total of €1.1M must go toward funding good governance initiatives in the five Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) and Timor Leste.

Two million euros will help support the non-state sector and €1.8M should help fund research and technical assistance not included in the projects, not to mention the €2M in reserve.

ORGANISED MOBILITY

In June 2008, the European Union and Cape Verde signed a mobility partnership, the first of two agreements (the second one being Moldova) to be signed by the European Union with a third country. The aim of the partnership was to strengthen legal migration and better manage illegal emigration from Africa to Europe, notably via *Frontex*, the agency for the management of the European Union's external borders. In parallel, a Schengen visa centre should open in Praia in February. Managed by Portugal, it should initially represent countries such as Belgium, Slovenia, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (as France and Spain have signed bilateral agreements). The visa facilitation centre should make it possible for those, Cape Verdeans primarily, such as sports people and artists, to travel easily to Europe on short trips.

“The government is a long way from achieving its objectives”

Meeting with Carlos Veiga, leader of the Movement for Democracy (MpD), the principal opposition party.

“The government has set itself clear objectives for the fight against unemployment and poverty as well as for growth. But it is a long way from having achieved them.” The reasons, according to the leader of Cape Verde’s main opposition party, essentially lie in distrust of the private sector on the part of the governing party, the PAICV.

When it comes to the objectives, Carlo Veiga has no complaints. He advocated them himself when he was prime minister, between April 1991 and July 2000. It is how to achieve them that is

the problem. And the man who narrowly lost the 2001 and 2006 presidential elections is determined to apply his methods if the people give him their backing in 2011, as he believes they are ready to do. Carlos Veiga sees proof of this in his party’s victory in the 2008 municipal elections, in which his MpD also won control of the capital Praia. But the man who gracefully accepted defeat at the hands of the PAICV in 2001 – “political peace” is a reality in Cape Verde – acknowledges that positive results have been achieved “since the country’s independence”. “That is clear”, he says, “but we want to go further”. For example? “A fair allocation of funds between central and local government. At present 90 per cent is controlled by the former and 10 per cent by the latter, when it is to the local council that most people go with their problems. We want to reverse present government policy that focuses on consumption, public aid or indebtedness and imports, and concentrate on production, investment and exports.



© Marie-Martine Buckens

Even though much has been done to guarantee basic education, we must also promote high quality education and create an environment conducive to private investment.” One particularly urgent issue is to ensure the viability of *Electra*, the public water and electricity company, by setting up a public-private partnership. **M.M.B.**

SOLAR CELLS FOR WATER TOWERS

Most of the water consumed by the Cape Verdeans comes from desalinated seawater. This is a major burden on the *Electra* budget that is 100 per cent dependent on crude imports to produce its electricity. Yet the archipelago does have water reserves, even if the groundwater is confined to small and heterogeneous deposits trapped within a complex network originating in former lava flows. Over the past year Cape Verde has started using energy produced by solar panels to pump the water from these underground deposits, storing it in water towers prior to distribution to the villages. A number of such projects have been carried out, thanks to EU support, in the interior of the island of

Santiago and on Sao Nicolao. Another promising option is the building of dams to retain runoff. A dam has been built on Santiago with the help of the Chinese, and others are planned with the assistance of Portugal.

The ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy has just set up its headquarters in Cape Verde, at a time when this energy is slowly starting to make its appearance in the archipelago. Four wind parks have been built or scheduled (Santiago, Sao Vicente, Sal, Boa Vista) for the production of around 28 megawatts, equal to 18 per cent of the archipelago’s total energy production.



Dam, Santiago island. © Marie-Martine Buckens



Water tank, Santiago island. © Marie-Martine Buckens



Informal settlements, Praia. © Marie-Martine Buckens

“Djunta-Mô!” *‘Working together’. In less than 20 years, Praia has seen its population more than double, and is today home to almost 140,000 people, a quarter of the archipelago’s population. The constant arrival of people from the countryside, leaving behind what is essentially a form of subsistence farming, presents certain problems. The main social challenges, which the Cape Verde government is attempting to overcome with the support of the EU, are concentrated in the ‘unofficial’ districts springing up along the dried up river beds.*

In February 2007, the local authority launched a pilot project in the unofficial districts of Praia with the help of the Italian NGO, Africa’70, supported by the European Development Fund (EDF). The unemployment rate here is high, illegal buildings do not have sewage systems, and access to water and other services is at best arbitrary. The project is based on three approaches: social integration – with the support of the highly active district associations – support for urban management, and infrastructure – Africa’70’s field of activity.

Gian Paolo Lucchi of Africa’70 said: “After carrying out a diagnosis of the social and technical requirements, we concentrated our efforts on construction of retaining walls, which enables all kinds of other infrastructure work, such as construction of access roads and routing of water. They also help hold back flood waters in the rainy season”.

Africa’70 is a member of Cape Verde’s NGO platform. With 220 members, this platform also receives EDF support. Mário

Moniz, the platform’s executive secretary, said: “With a presence on all the islands, the NGOs work with the 700 highly active community associations. Working together – ‘djunta mô’ – is a deeply embedded tradition in Cape Verde”. What is the platform’s role? Mário Moniz said: “To provide the NGOs with the tools to identify and set up projects. We have just approved the 2010-2015 agenda, and have adopted a code of ethics for the first time”. What are its priorities? Mr. Moniz explained: “Healthcare and education, with the emphasis on professional training”. In the field of healthcare, the platform is the main recipient, together with the Ministry of Health, of a US\$12M project from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS. This scourge has so far spared the archipelago, which has an HIV rate estimated at 0.8 per cent in 2005. **M.M.B.**

THE EMERGENCE OF DENGUE FEVER

Dengue fever hit Cape Verde for the first time in November 2009, infecting 12,000 people, six of whom died from this mosquito-transmitted virus, which thrived after a particularly heavy rainy season. The measures taken by the healthcare authorities held the epidemic in check. The opening of five healthcare centres in the capital a year ago – funded by the EU, for which healthcare is a priority in its cooperation with the country – provided relief for overrun hospitals. Margarita Cardoso, Director General at the Ministry of Health, explained: “Apart from the epidemic, these centres enhance primary healthcare in particular, which

is extremely important for rural immigrants confronted with urban life. This enables us to tackle the problems of the least advantaged directly. Around 3,000 people visit these centres each month”. Similar centres are planned for other islands, a measure, which together with the improvement of the education system, aims to settle the population on the islands. What are the main challenges to be overcome? She said: “The renewed outbreak of transmissible diseases at a time when we are starting to curb non-transmissible diseases. A lack of human resources, in particular specialists”.



Margarita Cardoso (second from the left) with the team of a health centre in Praia. © Marie-Martine Buckens

Keywords

Praia; least advantaged districts; Africa’70; NGO platform; healthcare centres.



Santo Antão. © Marie-Martine Buckens



On Mindelo beach. © Marie-Martine Buckens

“Saudade” and natural beauty

Culture is everything, Manuel Veiga, Minister of Culture, tells us. We have no other natural resources. An interview.

What do you understand by ‘culture’?

Culture is essential, not just as art, but as a way of life, a way of seeing things, and a means of making contact, which is vital in our part of the world. It’s extremely important because we have emerged from great cultural dialogue. The fact that Cidade Velha was recently given world heritage status by Unesco says a great deal. A new anthropology has been born out of the ongoing exchange between Africans, initially as slaves, and Europeans. We stay true to our Creole culture, but remain open-minded. We never show contempt for other people, provided they conform to certain values, because we are, in one way, ‘other people’ too. Conversely, foreigners love us because they find a thread here that leads them back to their own culture.

Would the music be the thread?

Yes, it may well be, even though music came after our language. Cape Verde Creole developed from Portuguese, and what I would call an underlying structure of African languages, as the black slaves were ethnically dispersed across the Portuguese colonies to prevent them from communicating. But all human beings possess an internal strength, when faced with constraints, which enables them to display creativity, with the need to communicate being the strongest. The Creole language is the fundamental characteristic of our identity. Having said that, we are renowned for our music and Cesaria Evora is our ambassador. **M.M.B.**

Keywords

Culture; Manuel Veiga; morna; batuque; coladeira; funana; Santo Antao; Mindelo.

FROM MORNA TO BATUQUE

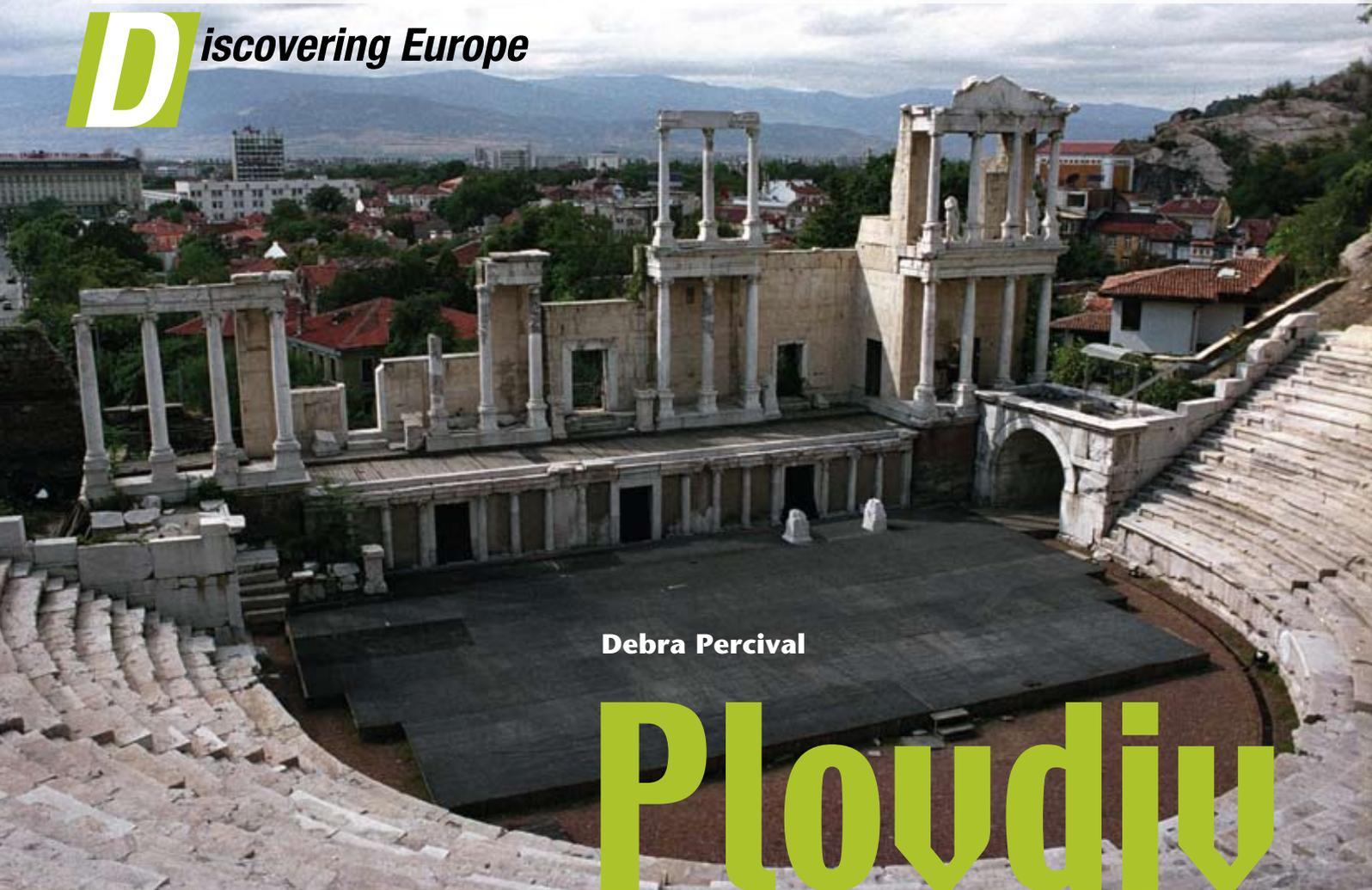
‘The bare-footed singer’ had to take Lisbon, and then Paris, by storm in order for the West to discover ‘morna’, the music inspired by the Portuguese fados. But Cesaria Evora is not the only performer to sing it. All Cape Verde islanders talk with great feeling about Ildo Lobo, who died in 2004 at the age of 51. He was regarded as the islands’ greatest singer. ‘Coladeira’ emerged in Mindelo, Cape Verde’s ‘capital’ of song in the 1930s. An upbeat version of ‘morna’ mixed

with polka, it is often played at carnival time. ‘Funana’ comes from the island of Santiago, and has a much more African sound. It was the music of the slaves, and of rebellion. Probably the archipelago’s oldest musical genre, ‘batuque’ comes from African music and dance rituals, and is mainly performed by women. Lots of young singers have been captivated by its charm, including Mayra Andrade, Lura and Tchaké.

SANTO ANTÃO – THE MAGICAL ISLAND

The volcanic island of Santo Antão rises majestically opposite Mindelo, the capital of Sao Vicente. Arriving by boat in Porto Novo, the island seems to be nothing but steep and arid ridges. From the port, you take the new road (photo page 48), which was opened with great ceremony on 9 May 2009 in front of a crowd which even included members of Cape Verde’s diaspora who had returned for the occasion. Funded by the European Union, and with the support of Luxembourg, Italy and the Cape Verde government, the road runs along the coast, which is wild and magnificent, connecting the north and south of the island. The

long-term benefits it offers are twofold. Firstly, it enables farmers because once you leave the coast, there is a fertile hinterland where sugar cane, bananas and lots of other products are grown to export their products to the other islands. Secondly, it will attract tourists interested in natural surroundings. Some are already here, travelling the roads that criss-cross the hinterland, alongside the old dormant craters at the island’s centre. Manuel Veiga explained: “People do not just come here for the sunshine. Through culture and meeting the people, we can strike the right balance and turn tourism into a development tool.”



Debra Percival

Plovdiv

Roman amphitheatre, Old Town, Plovdiv. © Reporters

New ventures for Europe's oldest inhabited city

Bulgaria joined the EU in January 2007 but five of its six planning regions* hover in the bottom ten of the EU's regions ranked by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. Following a change in Bulgaria's government in July 2009, now led by Prime Minister Boyko Borisov of the Citizens of European Development Party, it is anticipating that much-needed pledged EU funds, in particular for infrastructure, will flow to the country more readily after various EU funding, including some during the pre-accession (PHARE) process, was halted due to a number of difficulties ranging from the procedural to administrative mismanagement in Bulgaria.

According to the President of Sofia's independently-run Chamber of Commerce**, Georgi Chernov, the country has been less

affected by the financial crisis than some other EU countries, largely because Bulgaria has a lot of foreign banks. He predicts, however, that his country's Gross National Income (GNI) will fall by another two percentage points this year on top of the 6 per cent drop in 2009. The financial crisis has pushed up interest rates and diminished the availability of credit in Bulgaria which could lead to unemployment rising this year, says Chernov. "But in spite of everything, the situation is not too bad compared to that in some other eastern European countries. Bulgaria does not have big debts and we still have more than €8bn of reserves", says Chernov, which he puts down to 5-6 per cent growth rates in previous years as a result of Bulgaria's construction boom.

Our various interviewees for this report are now expecting EU funds. During a visit

to Bulgaria in mid-November 2009, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Pawel Samecki, announced that the country would receive €9.5bn (2007-2013) under the EU's cohesion policy which aids EU regions with a per capita GDP below 90 per cent of the EU average, in particular for building infrastructure. Commissioner Samecki pinpointed Bulgaria's cities as "engines of growth". We put the spotlight on one of these, Plovdiv, to the south east of Sofia and Bulgaria's the second largest city. With the accolade of being Europe's oldest inhabited city, over its 6,000-8,000 year history, Plovdiv has constantly adapted to change and is now taking on both the challenges and opportunities of EU membership.

*www.ec.europa.eu

**www.scci.bg

Waiting to be discovered



Mural, Plovdiv, depicting Ottoman presence. © D. Percival

Name Europe's oldest inhabited city. Athens, Thebes (Greece), Cadiz (Spain) or Larnaca (Cyprus)? Few would pick Bulgaria's second city, Plovdiv, which lies 150 km south east of capital Sofia, also listed as the sixth oldest inhabited city in the world in the Time Out Guide*, The World's Greatest Cities. All its fascinating layers of history which date back between 6,000-8,000 years await your discovery.

From Thracian times to the Bulgarian revival of the 19th Century, Plovdiv, which lies astride the banks of the river Maritza, has changed its name more times than it has hills. It was originally known as 'City of the Seven Hills' although one has since subsided.

Archaeologists have discovered fine pottery and other everyday objects dating back to the Neolithic age and it was already an established settlement in the 7th Millennium BC. The Thracians called the city *Eumolpias*; it was known for its production of wine and honey and jewellery crafting. In 342-341 BC, the town was conquered by Philip II of



Remains of Roman Stadium, Plovdiv. © D. Percival

Macedonia and given the name *Philippopolis* and subsequently *Pulpudeva*. The Romans conquered the city in the first century AD and renamed it *Thrimonzium* (referring to the fact that it then lay on three hills). The excavated Roman amphitheatre now incongruously overlooks a busy highway. In the hot summer months (winters can be biting cold), it stages open-air concerts, opera and

classical drama. A Roman stadium is also partially visible in the city centre.

The Huns ruled the town in the 447 AD and in the 6th Century the Slavs settled in the Balkan peninsular and gave the city the names *Pulden* and *Plundiv*. In 815 AD, Khan Krum of Bulgaria seized the city's fortress and it was fully incorporated into the Bulgarian Empire in 834 AD, only to be reconquered by the Byzantine Empire. The five centuries that followed saw it change hands between Bulgaria and Byzantium. Plovdiv was also on the path of the crusades, the city demolished and plundered by crusaders on their way to Mecca. In 1385, the town fell to the Ottoman Empire and the city was known as *Phillibe*. It was to remain part of the Empire for the next 500 years. At that time, the city had over 55 mosques. The Dzhumaya Mosque which still stands in the centre is one of the oldest Ottoman buildings in the Balkans.

➤ Bulgarian Renaissance

In the 19th century, Plovdiv was at the heart of the Bulgarian renaissance from the Ottoman's cultural oppression, including the opening of the first Bulgarian publishing house in 1855 from which printed books, newspapers and magazines were circulated

around Bulgarian lands. The Bulgarian revolutionist, Vassil Levski, organised a revolutionary committee in Plovdiv. During this period, wealthy merchants built houses in a Bulgarian Renaissance style with unique ceilings carved in wood which have been exquisitely restored, and are breathing life into Plovdiv's Old Town. The ethnographic museum, in the house of *A. Koyumdjioglou*, gives an insight into the city's riches at this time.

The city was liberated from the Ottomans by the Russians in the battle of Plovdiv, 1878. The Treaty of San Stefano of the same year founded the Principality of Bulgaria, gathering all lands with a predominantly Bulgarian population. Plovdiv was declared the capital of the new state and the centre of the new Russian temporary government. However, the Treaty was subsequently modified in Berlin and the newly liberated country was divided into Bulgaria with Sofia as its capital and Eastern Rumelia Province with Plovdiv as capital – under the military and political control of the Turkish sultan while Macedonia was returned to Turkey. This carve-up was short-lived. The Unification of Bulgaria was proclaimed on 6 September 1885. In 1892, the first international fair - Bulgarian exhibition - was held in Plovdiv with international participants. This tradition has kept on and Plovdiv International Fair now has a permanent building in the city and each year hosts many exhibitions attracting international participants.



Houses of wealthy merchants, Plovdiv. © D. Percival



Detail on 19th century merchant's house, Plovdiv Old Town. © D. Percival

During the Second World War (1939-1945), the pro-Nazi Bulgarian government announced in 1943 the deportation of all Bulgaria's 50,000 Jews. Thanks to the courage of a number of individuals including Archbishop Krill of the Orthodox Church, the government finally backed down. The bulk of the country's Jews chose to emigrate to Israel following the war.**

When the Nazis left Bulgaria in 1944, the country came under Communist power and formed a very close relationship with the former Soviet Union. A monument of a Russian soldier still starkly sits on one of the city's peaks. Another layer of Plovdiv's history was laid when it staged a major anti-Communist demonstration, one of the events which led to the toppling of the Communist regime in November 1989. This is why city is sometimes referred to as the 'blue' (democratic) capital of Bulgaria.

Another layer of the country's history is now being laid post-Communism and since Bulgaria's membership of the EU in 2007**.

D.P.

* Time Out Guide, The World's Greatest Cities. September 2009, 350 pages, Edition 1.

** 'Beyond Hitler's Grasp: The Heroic Rescue of Bulgarian Jews' by Michael Bar-Zohar, 1998.

Keywords

Plovdiv; Bulgaria; Thracians; Ottomans.

SHARING EU MEMBERSHIP EXPERIENCE

The Sofia-based European Institute was set up in 1999 with the financial support of the founder of the Open Society Institute, George Soros. It was one of the first non-governmental bodies campaigning for Bulgaria's European integration. Now financially independent, it is working on a number of projects to pass on its experience of the process of accession to the EU – good and bad – to its Balkan neighbours, explains its Director, Lubov Panayotova, who is a former deputy finance minister in her country.

Its website www.Europe.bg is one of the most consulted in Bulgaria on European matters. "At the beginning, the idea was to collect all sorts of information about the

negotiation process", says Lubov Panayotova. With the European Parliament's (EP) financial support, the Institute has also set up an interactive website linking up Bulgarian and other members of the EP in contact with the public: www.europarlament.europe.bg

It is also providing technical support to Bulgaria's Ministry of Regional Cooperation under a cross-border cooperation project with Macedonia* which is giving assistance and training to its neighbour on how to generate projects ideas and apply for grants. New projects in the pipeline include "job maps", explains Borislav Mavrov, the Institute's Director of International Programmes and Projects, to make

it easier for Romanians and Bulgarians to find jobs in the market of its neighbour through the help of a website.

The Institute has a long experience in anti-discrimination issues and is currently working on a project to counter growing violence in schools. Lubov Panayotova says that violence is especially incited through message sent by mobile phones. She partly puts this down to recent transformations in Bulgarian society: "Everything is changing but not only for the good", she says.

For more see: www.europeaninstitute.bg

*Macedonia is known in the EU as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, following a protest from Greece.

From Dionysus to the damask rose – Plovdiv's riches

Valley of the roses near Plovdiv. © Reporters

The province of Plovdiv is historically a vibrant commercial centre and at a trading crossroads between the European Union and to the east, Turkey and the Middle East. It has gained a reputation for the manufacture of non-ferrous metals, fertilisers, pharmaceuticals, food and wine and rose oil. Over the past 20 years, like the rest of Bulgaria, the region has adapted from a state-run economy and since 2007, to the more exacting production and import standards as a result of EU membership, says Angel Hronev, Head of the Information Centre of Plovdiv's privately-run Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in an interview with The Courier.



Angel Hronev, Head of the Information Centre, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Plovdiv. © D. Percival

Traditional industries such as food, wine and tobacco are all adapting to the EU market. Due to a huge amount of cheap diesel from the former Soviet Union, in the late 1980s, Bulgaria was the number one in Europe for the production of greenhouse vegetables. “We had a very good state-run cooperative system prior to 1989 especially concerning the planting of vegetables and grain”, explains Angel Hronev. Pre-accession to the EU, Bulgaria received funding from the EU from SAPARD (Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) which has helped the country adapt its agriculture to new EU rules and regulations, to enhance efficiency and competitiveness and boost employment in the sector. “Although there were a few shortcomings with the programme, it brought new cultivation and introduced new technologies, especially in irrigation”, says Hronev. Even so, there has been a rural exodus and 1.5M of Bulgaria’s 7.5M population now live in the capital,

Sofia. A phenomenon of EU membership is that young people do not stay and farm in Bulgaria but now go to other parts of the EU, where wages are higher, to work as seasonal farm labourers.

► Valley of the Roses

‘The Valley of the Roses’, north of Plovdiv, is planted with rose bushes which produce the *rosa damascana* (damask rose), traditionally picked in June. As many as 3,000-5,000 kg of flowers (more than a million flowers) are needed to produce just 1 kg of rose oil. “Because of very specific conditions, the quality of rose oil can be found nowhere else in the world”, says Hronev. A variety of local rose products include shampoos and rose jam!

Also rapidly gaining an international reputation are wines of the Thrace valley in Plovdiv province. During the era of the state-run economy, one or two state-run companies had a monopoly and produced cheap wines,



Tobacco growing. © Reporters

especially for the market of the former Soviet Union, explains Hronev. In the late 1980s, Bulgaria was the second largest exporter of wines. The country now faces strong competition from Chile, Argentina and South Africa which are even found on supermarket shelves in Bulgaria – particularly ‘whites’ since Bulgarians still prefer domestically-produced ‘reds’. “The issue is to improve quality”, explains Hronev. Recent years have seen a glut in Bulgaria’s wine production since making your own wine has been in vogue and is almost second nature to Bulgarians. “Wines were produced for which there was no market”, says Hronev. To improve the quality of wines for the EU and other markets, experts were sought and now some very good local wines are produced in Plovdiv province in the €6-8 bracket. They include the *Castra Rubra* winery’s *Via Diagonalis*, developed with the help of French wine consultant, Michel Rolland. The *Bessa Valley* winery, just 40 kilometres from Plovdiv, has developed the *Enira* label with German investment and technical expertise. With the added *cachet* that Dionysus, God of wine, was from the Thrace valley, Hronev also sees the provinces huge potential for wine tourism.

The profile of the typical investor in Plovdiv has changed since Bulgaria’s became part of the EU in 2007. Whereas in the 1990s, investor money largely came from neighbouring Greece and Turkey, Hronev notes more interest from EU member states further to the west, largely because overheads and labour still remain cheaper in Bulgaria. “Italy is one of the few countries that have a special nationally-funded programme to transfer business from one region of the EU to another”, says Hronev. “Italians feel comfortable here and invest in cosmetics and perfumery, food, coffee, ice cream and machinery”, he adds. Under a similar German government programme, one businessperson is producing machine building parts for German industry.

With its huge historical interest (see article on history), Plovdiv’s tourism potential remains relatively untapped but its expansion will depend on improved infrastructure such as better road connections inside Bulgaria and with the rest of the EU, and improved frequency of low-cost flights into Plovdiv if it intends to grab the EU short vacation destination market. A new road crossing with Greece has just opened up which puts the

Greek coastline within two to three hours reach of Plovdiv but there is still no fast highway between Plovdiv and Bulgaria’s coastline to the east, popular with holidaymakers from other parts of the EU. The Rhodope Mountains in the south of the province have both ski and spa resorts.

Despite the financial crisis having affected Bulgaria’s construction industry which was booming two to three years ago and resulted in unemployment below zero per cent, at just 6.76 per cent, the city nevertheless still has one of the lowest rates of unemployment in Bulgaria. “Plovdiv is going to develop. If we manage to take advantage of all the opportunities we have, it will do very well”, says Hronev. **D.P.**

www.pcci.bg

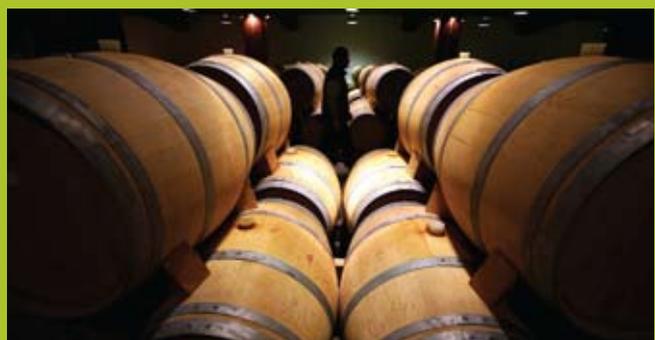
Keywords

Plovdiv; Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Plovdiv; Angel Hronev; Plovdiv International Fair; VINARIA; Michel Rolland; FIFA World Cup.

VINARIA – CELEBRATING SOUTH AFRICAN WINE

South Africa is to participate as an organising partner country in Plovdiv’s annual International Exhibition of Vine-Growing and Wine Production (VINARIA), 14-17 March 2010, to be held in premises of Plovdiv’s international fair. South African wines are increasingly popular in the Bulgarian market. Wine is currently third in the list of South Africa’s global exports and ranks ninth in the list of top wine producing countries in the world with an annual production of 10M hectolitres. VINARIA is expected to boost relations between Bulgaria and South Africa. The organisers say that VINARIA-goers will be able to taste the wine chosen by South Africa for the FIFA World Cup.

www.fair.bg/en/events/vinaria, www.bessavalley.com



Wine industry is adapting to conquer new markets. © Reporters

How to integrate and end discrimination of the Roma?

The Roma in Bulgaria make up the country's second largest minority or 4.7 per cent of the population. According to official figures, the Stolipinovo area of Plovdiv has one of the largest concentrations of Roma. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) claim discrimination against the Roma, whereas other commentators say that feeling of antagonism between Roma and the Bulgarian majority population derives more from a Romani reluctance to integrate into modern society.



Roma children, Bulgaria. Attitudes to Romas must change, say NGOs. © Reporters

The most common Roma group in Bulgaria is the Local Roma or *yerlii* divided into Bulgarian gypsies (*Daskane Roma*) and Turkish gypsies (*Korhane Roma*), although there are other groups as well. Roma were thought to have arrived in Bulgaria as early as the 13th century and particularly in the 14th and 15th centuries with the Ottoman conquest.

Bulgaria is one of 12 European Governments with Roma minorities participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) www.romadecade.org* which aims to improve the social economic situation and social inclusion of Roma into societies, and receives both European and international funding. But NGOs working with Roma say more action is required.

Angel Gestov is a consultant for the NGO *Roma Together* (www.romatogether.com). Although working with grassroots communities in villages in the central-north part of Bulgaria (around Polski Trambesh), he says Roma face the same discrimination issues in all parts of Bulgaria. "In the past two years Romas who have sought to take advantage of the economic boom – especially in construction are now without jobs due to the economic crisis", he told *The Courier*.

> Unemployment

A lack of employment opportunities, he says, means that Roma are "disproportionately dependent on the social care system to maintain their minimum living standard but their access to social services is restricted by both a discriminatory attitude and prejudices among government officials and legislative requirements which constitute barriers to access to social services".

"State policy towards the Roma minority in Bulgaria should consider using incentives to encourage public and private actors to change their attitudes and behaviour in relation to Roma, or penalise them in case of non-compliance", he adds. He says that inter-governmental declarations on Romas are not implemented in practice because of a lack of political representation.

Lubov Panayotova, Director of Sofia's *European Institute*, a non-governmental think-tank on European policy which works on a range of non-discrimination issues, says there are at least 16 Roma 'clans' in Bulgaria, each with its own strong hierarchy which is sometimes opposed to more integration into Bulgarian society. She says that changes will come through educating Roma children to find jobs and stresses the need for "best practices" to manage diversity. **D.P.**

EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) aims to combat Romani racism and human rights abuse of Roma at an international legislative level. A recent ruling of Strasbourg's Court of Human Rights found in favour of a case brought by the ERRC on behalf of the Romani Baht Foundation and Bulgarian attorney, Alexander Kashurnov, over the inhumane and degrading treatment of three Bulgarian nationals of Roma origin who had been detained in police custody in Bulgaria. ERRC was also recently awarded an NGO prize, the *SOLIDAR* Silver Rose award for "increasing public attention, condemning abuse and developing EU policy documents and influencing human rights aspects" in favour of the Roma.

www.errc.org
www.solidar.org

* Countries taking part all with Roma minorities are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain.



Bulgarian Parliament, Sofia. © D. Percival

Bulgaria's government was poised to give the go-ahead to its first-ever bi-lateral development strategy when we visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sofia mid-January 2010. Going to press, an "ordinance paper" was awaiting the approval of Bulgaria's Council of Ministers at the start of 2010. This is expected to lead to approval of funds by the country's Ministry of Finance for pilot development projects in six countries bordering Bulgaria, earmarked to be the initial beneficiaries of the country's new policy.

Bulgaria's development programme on the launch pad

Along with all EU newcomer states, on joining the EU in 2007, Bulgaria took the commitment to strive to achieve the Monterrey development goals and the amount of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) allocated to the goals to reach 0.17 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2010 and 0.33 per cent of GNI in 2015. (*Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions, 10255/05, Brussels, 18 June 2005, p. 8, para. 27*)

Boyan Belev heads the Department for Development Policy in the Directorate of the United Nations and Global Affairs in Bulgaria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs which has drafted the new policy. He explains that the "ordinance paper" is to be adopted in tandem with the setting up of a fully-fledged development unit in the Ministry of between 8-10 persons. The six countries picked out to receive the initial assistance, all of which are Bulgaria's close neighbours are, to the west,

Macedonia*, Kosovo and Serbia; and to the east, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia. Boyan Belev told us that thought had been given to including a sub-Saharan African country on the list – Angola, with which Bulgaria has former ties – but this plan has been dropped for the moment, partly because Angola is seen to be an “aid darling”, and partly because at this kick-off stage, Bulgaria does not want to spread its funds too thinly, believing that it can be more useful in countries which whom it has special cultural affinity and experience such as the transformation of state-run economies.

> Specialised Unit

With a limited number of personnel, the country’s Development Department currently has its work cut out. Since becoming an EU member, it has to prepare and participate in the EU’s Ministerial meetings with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP), in EU Development Ministers’ meetings and those of General Affairs as well as related working parties, meetings on the EU’s neighbourhood policy** and on the stability instrument***.

Presently Bulgaria commits just 0.06 per cent of its GNI (figure for 2008) to development aid. Boyan Belev indicated that the country would be unable to meet the target

of 0.17 per cent of GNI by 2010, although the GNI level is expected to rise this year since the country will be a first-time contributor to the €22.682bn 10th European Development Fund (2008-2013) for ACP states. The total estimated contribution of Bulgaria to the 10th EDF is €31,754,800, to be staggered over the next three years.

The country’s bi-lateral policy may still be awaiting lift-off, but it does provide some funding currently to the EU’s general development activities through the amount paid into the EU’s overall budget. Bulgaria provides 4.5 per cent of the EU kitty.

Boyan Belev says that venturing into the bi-lateral development field is a “learning exercise” for his country. The “ordinance paper” on the table of Bulgarian Ministers follows a draft strategy paper on development policy, published in the same year that the country joined the EU. The draft highlights that the country’s development policy should be based on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in poorer countries and that Bulgarian international development cooperation be consistent with political commitments made in the framework of both the UN and the EU. It states Bulgaria’s support for poverty eradication and sustainable development and the strengthening of developing countries’ economies.

Boyan Belev says that his country does not lack experience in development policy. In the mid-1980s, it was an important donor to over 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the country’s state-owned companies were present in all three continents.

Sub-Saharan Africa and other countries may eventually join an expanded list of recipients, particularly given the EU’s commitment to steer 50 per cent of the increased development aid to the continent, indicated Boyan Belev. **D.P.**

* On the concerns of Greece, the European Union recognises the Republic of Macedonia as the “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

** The neighbourhood policy covers co-operation with: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine. Find out more: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm

*** The EU’s instrument for stability was adopted in 2007 and provides support for conflict prevention, crisis management and peace building. Find out more: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/index_en.htm

To find out more about BPID: www.bpid.org

Keywords

Boyan Belev; Bulgaria; TRIALOG; CONCORD; Presidency Fund.

AN EXPANDING NGO PLATFORM



Dimitar Sotirov, head of the Bulgarian Platform for International Development. © D. Percival

Dimitar Sotirov is the very committed part-time head of the Bulgarian Platform for International Development (BPID) set up at the beginning 2009 for Non Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs). The BPID was originally funded by the EU’s former Presidency Fund and TRIALOG, the umbrella NGO platform for EU newcomer states. Its current financial support, until April 2010, comes from the European Non Governmental Organisation Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD), of which Bulgaria is seeking membership. Dimitar Sotirov fully supports the aim of Bulgaria’s development policy in not “aiming too big” at the start, but adds that a strategy in place and a specialised development policy with more personnel to direct it, are both vital.

The burgeoning BPID currently numbers 20 members. They include; CARE Bulgaria, Caritas Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Red Cross, and the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation. Dimitar Sotirov says that the Bulgaria can impart a lot of knowledge to its developing nations such as the processes involved in merging with EU economies. The platform works on such issues as development education, health, gender issues, environment and sustainability. In October 2009, the BPID organised a round table on the ‘Participation of Bulgarian Civil Society in EU Development Cooperation’ where other countries such as Japan and the UK were invited to share with Bulgarian participants details of how they organise bi-lateral development policy.

See more: www.bpid.org

Sandra Federici

A Meeting Place for African Culture

Creative Africa Network (CAN) provides a virtual platform which connects creative operators both within Africa and throughout the world, giving visibility to talented people in the fields of architecture, dance, design, fashion, film, fine art, literature, music, new media, performing arts and photography.

CAN* is a *puma.creative* initiative, and is sustained by this famous sport-lifestyle factory. It is based on 2.0 technology and is one of the most lively, up-to-date and frequented of all of the virtual platforms on African culture. The project aims to connect the African creative world to an interdisciplinary network, which extends throughout Africa and beyond. Through the principles and technologies of today's information society, it also aims to provide shared and free self-produced content and information. This social networking website has an intelligent and intuitive structure which allows users to create their own profiles, with text, photos and links. In this way the website is producing itself and is growing every day. It is interesting to see who is there, who is not there, and who is a fan of whom. When consulting the profile pages of projects, institutions, individuals or exhibitions, the viewer can "become a fan". The "calendar"

section is one of the most useful, featuring news of events, art and film festivals, awards, reviews, calls for artists and other opportunities, as well as providing professional information and updates on cultural liaisons, which are valuable to both established and emerging artists.

The 'library' section contains information on 300 important books and brochures, as well as the profiles of around 200 'librarians'. They add their names to the page dedicated to the books they own. The website aims to create a true "shared, non-centralised library", through the "lending and borrowing (of books) by members". It is not clear, however, how well this works.

Christine Eyene (former Publishing Director of the French journal *Africultures*) is the editor of CAN. She updates the site with information on the main cultural events and, along with Mark Coetzee, Chief Curator

of *puma.creative*, promotes collateral initiatives. One important project promoted through Creative Africa Network is "The *puma.creative* Mobility Awards", which aims to facilitate the participation of both emerging and established artists, art professionals and arts organisations in major national and international art events.

Amongst the numerous winners of the 2008 and 2009 Mobility Award are important artists such as Barthelemy Toguo and Goddy Leye from Cameroon, the Nigerian curator Bisi Silva and the two most important Afro-American artists: Kara Walker and David Hammons.

* CAN is a partner of the Creative Caribbean Network. <http://www.creativeafricanetwork.com/>

Keywords

African Culture; virtual platforms; contemporary art; Christine Eyene; Mark Coetzee.



Right: Christine Eyene (2nd left), giving a Creative Africa Network workshop with Malian art students at the *Conservatoire des Arts et Metiers Multimedia* during the 8th Bamako Encounters – African Photography Biennial, November 2009.
Middle: Guests at the PUMA.Creative / Creative Africa Network Dinner Party. Photo by Christine Eyene.
Left: Musicians performing and journalists documenting the PUMA.Creative/Creative Africa Network dinner party hosted at the National Museum of Mali during the 8th Bamako Encounters, Nov. 2009. Photo by Christine Eyene.

Elisabetta Degli Esposti Merli

A Window on Contemporary Photography



B. Mouanda (Congo Brazzaville), 'S.A.P.E' series, Congo Brazzaville, 2008. © Baudouin Mouanda

The 8th Bamako Encounters

The 8th Bamako Encounters – the Biennial Exhibition of African Photography, which took place from 7 November to 7 December 2009 in Bamako, were organised by the Ministry of Culture in Mali, in collaboration with Culturesfrance (Paris), with financial, technical and media support from many local and international corporate bodies.

This year, the theme of the Biennial of African Photography was “borders”. In this edition the co-curators invited artists to explore the issue of borders, looking at how borders affect peoples, identities, religions, territories, economic resources, socio-political contexts, movements and migrations. In Africa, more than anywhere else, borders represent complex issues, whether they are natural barriers or artificial lines drawn by man. But borders also arouse ethical concerns in Western countries. Almost every day the news is full of reports on the problems faced by young people seeking better living conditions in Europe.

As Victor Hugo notes: “The border is the first slavery. Remove the border (...) Peace will follow”. The Biennial’s new leadership team, made up of

the artistic directors Michket Krifa and Laura Serani, has prioritised the removal of boundaries between the event and the general public, ensuring that the public is more involved.

Borders can also represent places for encounter and exchange. For this reason, in addition to the awareness-raising work carried out in schools and universities, around ten exhibits will be displayed in working-class neighbourhoods as well as in important places in Bamako. These include the National Museum, the Palace of Culture, the District Museum, and the National Institute of Arts (INA).

But while the attention of the major players in the art world is fixed on the Bamako Encounters, the local public does not appear to be particularly

involved, showing little interest in the various activities going on in the city. Mr. Samuel Sidibé, Managing Director of the Biennial, declared that mobilising the interest of the local public has been a big challenge.

But these difficulties haven't stopped the "Encounters" from emerging as one of the most important stops on the global biennial circuit for exploring contemporary photography.

The programme contains a number of different sections: the Pan-African exhibition (including 40 selected photographers and 13 video artists), a section on monographs (including work by Angèle Etoundi Essamba, Hassan Hajjaj, Patrizia Guerresi Maïmouna, Baudouin Mouanda, and Fazal Sheikh), thematic exhibitions (including The Maghreb Connection, Living Under One Roof, Albinos, Goudron-Tanger/Le Cap, and Nord Kivu), "Focus on Mali" (an exhibition presenting a selection of con-

temporary Malian photographers), a guest gallery (featuring Michael Stevenson, The Arles Encounters in Bamako), and a section on photo memoirs.

The jury was made up of Malick Sidibé (the Chairman), Els Barents (Director of the Huis Marseille Museum for Photography, Amsterdam), Annie Boulat (Director of the Cosmos Agency, Paris), Manthia Diawara (Writer and Director, New York University, New York), and John Fleetwood (Director of the Market Photo Workshop, Johannesburg). This jury assigned the Awards as follows:

- **The Seydou Keita Prize** (the *grand prix* of the Encounters of Bamako, awarded by the Malian Ministry of Culture): **Uche Okpa Iroha / Nigeria;**
- **The European Union Prize** (Best Work of Press Photography or Reportage by a Photographer from an ACP Country): **Jodie Bieber / South Africa;**
- **The Jeune Talent Prize** (offered by

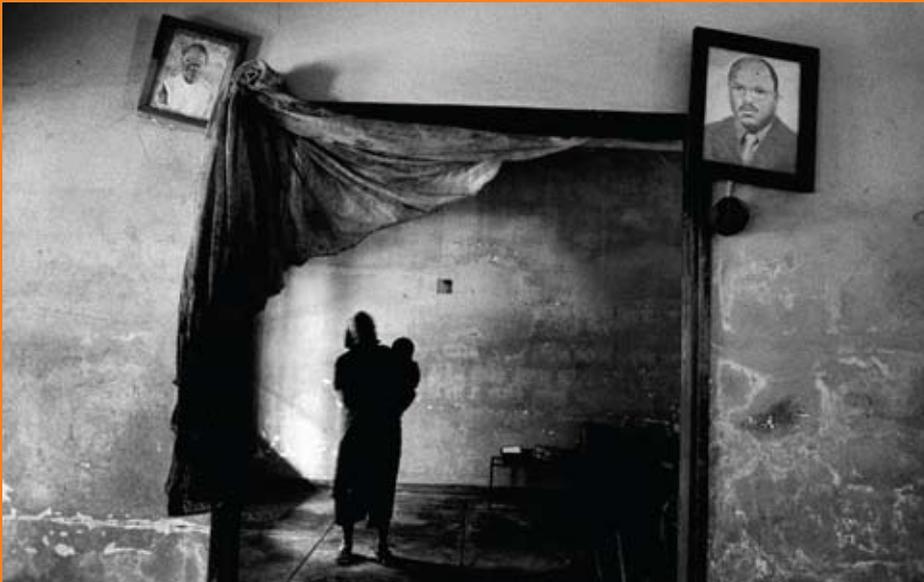
Bolloré Africa Logistics, rewarding the creative work of a young photographer): **Baudouin Mouanda / Congo-Brazzaville;**

- **The Jury Prize** ("Special Favourite" by Culturesfrance): **Berry Bickle / Zimbabwe and Abdoulaye Barry / Chad;**
- **The Prize of the International Organisation of la Francophonie** (Best Francophone Photographer): **Guy Wouete / Cameroon;**
- **The Elan Prize** (awarded by the French Development Agency): **Salif Traoré / Mali.**

For more information on the artists and their work, and to view the events programme and press release, please visit the following website: www.rencontres-bamako.com.

Keywords

African photography; borders; art; culture; exhibition; award.



J. Bieber (South Africa), 'Going Home' series, 2001, Pan-African exhibition. © Jodi Bieber



S. Traore (Mali), 'Rêve non réalisé' series, 2008, Pan-African exhibition. © Salif Traoré



Z. Muholi (South Africa), 'Miss Divine 2008' series, Pan-African exhibition. © Zanele Muholi



G. Wouete (Cameroon), 'Volcano', 2008, Pan-African exhibition. © Guy Wouete



U. Okpa-Iroha (Nigeria), 'Underbridge Life' series, 2009, Pan-African exhibition. © Uche Okpa-Iroha

Haiti in black and white and colour

Haiti is a small Caribbean country struck on 12 April by an earthquake that killed over 200,000 people. In the previous two years, it was hit by four hurricanes. The events happened at the very moment that its population was beginning to see an improvement in their country's general situation. It is this same hope, perhaps, that has enabled Haitians to lift their heads and immediately get down to reconstructing their country. **H.G.**



Words from Readers

Science can have a place in the economic development of ACP countries.

It is not possible to continue saying that science is out of reach of developing countries. Investments, funding and science are the rights of ACP countries.

Juan Antonio Falcón Blasco

Dear Sirs,

You wrote "It [the Ishango rod] would become the darling of archaeologists". The opposite is true: the rod was kept on the 19th floor of the archaeology museum for about 50 years, and nobody paid attention to it. Until mathematicians revealed it and it was finally put in exposition.

Furthermore, on his death bed in 1998, the discoverer revealed he held another Ishango rod. It was only in 2007 this second Ishango rod was made public. And still few people know about it. It certainly is not a "darling".

Dirk Huylebrouck

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to comment on Eritrea, my country of origin. I also have UK citizenship and I live and work in London. I strongly oppose any interference on the internal matters of my country by any outsider for any reason as the ambassador of Eritrea to the EU countries rightly said that Eritrea is the most stable and peaceful country in the whole of Africa.

Now, what are the problems with religion, race and human rights in Eritrea? None. Human rights are abused widely by the superpowers such as USA and the UK in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other places ... Please do not try to blame Eritrea for anything as the country is trying to build its life back from ruin to recovery as priority.

Thank you,

Kelati Measho (Eritrea)

We are interested in your point of view and your reactions to the articles. So do tell us what you think.

Address: The Courier - 45, Rue de Trèves 1040 Brussels (Belgium)
email: info@acp-eucourier.info - website: www.acp-eucourier.info

Agenda

MARCH-MAY 2010

March 2010

- 26-28/3 **5th Meeting of Spanish and African Women World for a Better World**
Socio-cultural event to be held in Valencia, Spain.
www.eu2010.es/en
- 27/3-1/4 **18th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly**
Magma Conference Centre, Costa Adeje, Tenerife, Spain
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/>

April 2010

- 23/4- June **Edition II 'Africa lives'**
Festival celebrating the 50th

anniversary of the independence of African countries. Opening ceremony in Barcelona, Spain.
www.eu2010.es/en

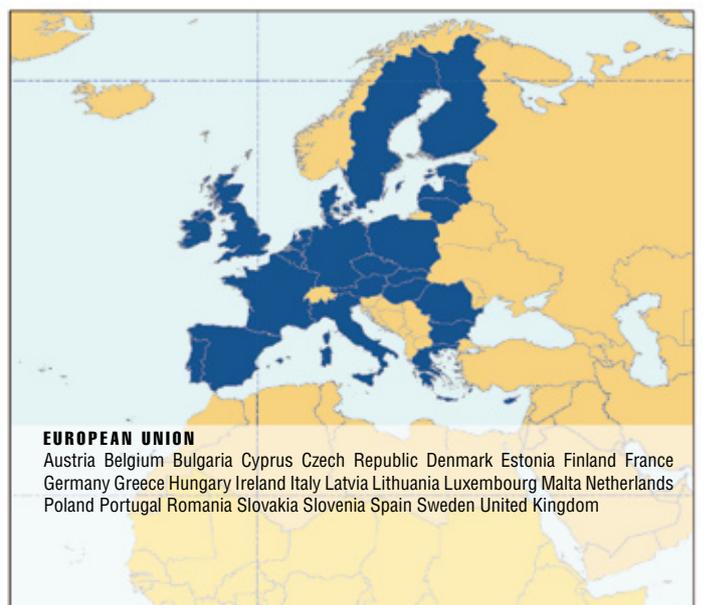
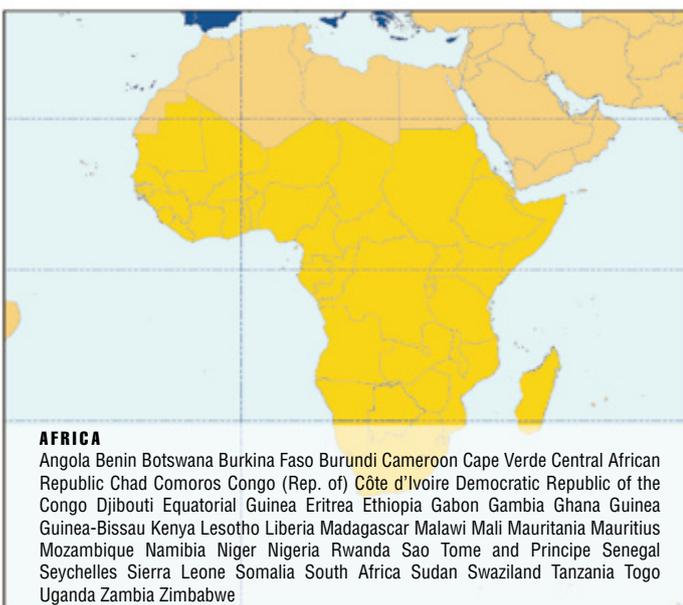
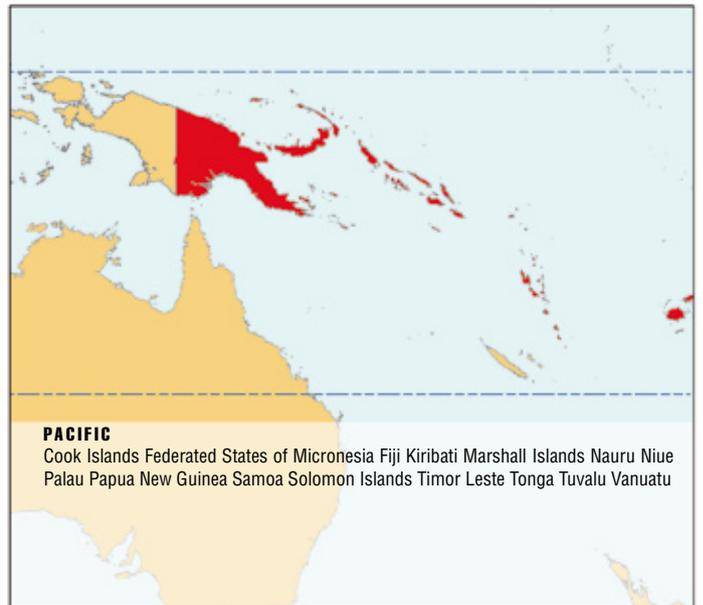
- 21-23/4 **Africa-EU Energy Partnership: Ministerial High Level Meeting**
Vienna, Austria
- 27/4 **14th Africa-EU Ministerial Troika**
Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- 28/4 **Workshop on employment, social protection and decent work in Africa**
Organised jointly by the European Commission and the African Union Commission, in cooperation with interested EU and AU member states, Nairobi, Kenya.

- 19-23/4 **Better Training for Food Safety regional workshop**
Kampala, Uganda

May 2010

- 19-21/5 **IST-Africa 2010 Conference & Exhibition**
Fifth in an annual ICT conference series bringing together senior representatives from leading commercial, government & research organisations across Africa and from Europe, Durban, South Africa.
<http://www.ist-africa.org/Conference2010/default.asp>

Africa – Caribbean – Pacific and European Union countries



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