



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Remarks by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
after his meeting with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia
Hailemariam Desalegn**

This morning Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and I had a very good discussion on a number of issues important to both Ethiopia and the European Union.

The continued significant and broad based economic growth in Ethiopia is very encouraging, it is well above the Sub-Saharan Africa average. Equally remarkable is the country's progress in poverty reduction and Millennium Development Goals achievements, as well as the country's recent successful efforts in reducing inflation.

Ethiopia and the EU have substantial and diversified economic and trade relations. The EU is by far the most important trade partner for Ethiopia with over 40% of Ethiopia's exports going to Europe. The EU is an important investor with 300 European companies active in Ethiopia and the EU stands ready to support the Government in its long-term vision leading to growth and increased investment. The EU fully supports Ethiopia's efforts to join the WTO. Development cooperation is also progressing well. The EU (European Commission and Member States) is the biggest donor with commitments totalling around 1 billion euro yearly.

At the same time, the EU attaches great importance to human rights. Success of socio-economic developments depends on the participation of a strong and open society and on the respect of fundamental freedoms.

P R E S S

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We also touched upon a number of regional issues related to the situation in the Horn of Africa region and beyond, including the situation in Somalia in light of the dramatic developments of the last weekend. We agreed that we must all work towards a new future in regional relations, building a new atmosphere of economic integration and security cooperation. Both the EU and Ethiopia have a common interest in stability and economic development of the Horn of Africa. That is why the EU has engaged comprehensively in the Horn of Africa - through development aid as much as through its missions and operations and through political support. The EU attaches great importance to its relations with Ethiopia, and to the role Ethiopia plays to ensure peace and security in the Horn of Africa region.

In addition, since Ethiopia holds the 2013 chairmanship of the African Union, the meeting also covered EU-African Union relations and, in particular, the preparation of the next EU-AU Summit in 2014.

Let me conclude by repeating that both the European Union and Ethiopia see the value of further deepening our political and trade relations in terms of promoting mutual economic and social development as well as tackling wider regional security challenges.

Thank you very much for your first visit outside Africa as Prime Minister, first visit to Brussels.
