

EUROPE DAY SPEECH
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Greetings

Lumelang Bo 'Me le Bo Ntate

Welcome to my fourth Europe day in our garden on this day 58 years ago when Robert Schumann made his speech which led to the start of this wonderful experiment which is today the EU

Long before that the British philosopher Edmund Burke stated in 1770: "All that it requires for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing"! Yes, Evil takes many forms both internationally, domestic and in our day-to-day life. What comes to mind is: Rwanda 1994, Darfur and Zimbabwe lately where we all could have done something to prevent the sliding down to chaos, to death and destruction. But also as examples, when human rights abuses are committed and non-punished; or when there is a lack of willingness to dialogue with political opponents also is to let evil prevail, just as is not to interfere in child-abuse and wife-beating.

The paradigm of doing nothing, of not preventing "evil", by closing my door to my neighbours crying for help is something we should all fight against. Kannete, we should all think on this and we should etsa kapele in doing so!!

I read recently that "political leaders in many African countries are uncomfortable with change and that they do not adhere to the democratic principles but in stead pay lip-service and then destruct through self-preserving legislation, or by influencing the justice system or even worse by using police and army; in short that still there is big gap in understanding democracy quoting national interests and sovereignty"

What about us in EU. Are we better? Yes and no!! A friend of ours emailed us (she is of Iranian origin) and wrote: "You don't know how happy you should be having been born in Scandinavia". I will enlarge this to EU in its entirety. I do sincerely believe that we have learned from our horrible mistakes and of 1000 years of fighting each other. The EU Member States' have gone beyond own narrow national interests and have introduced equality for all citizens and for private companies in the law. The individual citizen or the private entity is in the centre of everything – not the nation or the executive. This individual sovereignty is guaranteed by the rule of law both nationally but also on the EU level through strong EU institutions like the European Commission and the European Court of Justice, Court of Auditors and the Parliament. But what are probably more important is that the essential values are perpetrated and understood by most EU citizens today: whether democracy, rule of law, a liberal but controlled market economy and of

course the international recognised human rights principles. But this is in constant flux. Like bi-cycling you can never stop pedalling, you can never stop the building of democracy or defending human rights. What comes to mind today are issues like personal interference due to the need to fight terrorism or due to new intrusive IT mechanisms just to mention a few which have and will continue to influence us and to which we will have to adapt our systems.

Besides this positive aspect, then of course we do have persons, politicians who are trying to corrupt justice or even human rights. But the difference is maybe that there is a public understanding among population and politicians of what is right and wrong.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen

Yes it has been a tough year with highs and lows for us in Europe, in Africa and of course closer to home in Lesotho – and I don't talk about the mostly horrible weather patterns we are experiencing. I will focus on a few of these highs/lows.

First of all EU's relationship with Africa has seen a change to the better.

Our cooperation with the AU has been strengthened in the past year by opening reciprocal embassies in Brussels and Addis and by having joint meetings between the two Commissions. Furthermore the issue of Zimbabwe was not allowed to derail the second EU-African summit in Lisbon in December which launched the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and where intense discussions on peace and security, governance and human rights, trade and development, migration and climate change took place. This meeting launched the action plan of "Toward a Strategic Partnership" where last month a meeting for Eastern and Southern Africa took place here in Maseru in order to operationalise this document. To make it a result-oriented partnership – and not only a fine declaration – is the long term aim. I hope and trust that Lesotho will do what it can to substantiate this partnership.

Our engagement is maybe most clearly illustrated by the provision of police and military training and assistance in DRC as well as the ongoing establishment of a European military force in Chad and CAR to protect the civilians for the effect of the Darfur crisis.

In the framework of the Lisbon summit the 10th EDF for Lesotho was signed by the Hon MFA and my Commissioner Michel providing EUR 136 m new money for Lesotho for the coming years – an event we celebrated last month when launching the programme in Maseru Sun. Incidentally our combined EC portfolio is now more than EUR 260 million and if we add the portfolio of the 3 Member States present we provide together more than USD 500 m in ongoing and upcoming financing.

At the launching I insisted that all these monies come to nothing if Lesotho itself does not prepare the groundwork necessary, whether legislation or sufficient and qualified staffing. We are working – with highs and lows – with the GoL and other parties involved to make it a success.

In one area Lesotho did prepare the ground for a hopeful new and better future was through an improved regional trading relationship by the signing of an Interim Economic Partnership Agreement between EU, Lesotho and other SA countries by the end of the 2007. This will be further negotiated to reach a full EPA by end 2008. In fact today here in Maseru is SADC ministerial meeting to discuss the next steps.

Much has been said about these agreements – mainly wrong or un-informed statements – but trade issues are complicated and even more so with strong economic interest trying to steer them. However, I repeat what I have said before and which have been confirmed several times, that not only GoL but also the private sector in Lesotho wants more liberal regional trading arrangements in particular change of RoOs, lowering costs for services – in particular for the foreign dominated telecommunication, banking and tourism sector. We have only the interest of seeing the region as a whole develop not only Lesotho – our interests can only start being met once the Region reaches a much higher level of development – that is also why the agreement is asymmetric and foresee 15 years transition – is that predatory behaviour??

My good friend the RSA HC alluded to some of these problems in his Freedom Day speech a few weeks back when he deviated from his written text, which stated that (RSA and Lesotho) "should sit down and find a way of resolving the problem in a mutually agreeable way. One issue that comes to mind is the issue of "European" Partnership Agreements (Freudian slip – economic)" or EPAs as they are known. I am convinced that when the dust settles we would all have agreed on a way forward for our mutual benefit" Besides his "slip" that is the spirit and that is what we all aim for in the coming months. To find mutually agreeable solutions

It has been a tradition to hide shortcomings in own policy making by giving the "big bad EU" motives which simply do not exist. Lesotho has clearly not done so but identified its problems much closer to home, Yes there may be a fiscal impact but the provision of "duty free- quota free" access and easier rules of origin in particular AGOA like rules for textile products should compensate for this. This should easily compensate this in particular as the EPA is very asymmetric, as I said above. Sensitive sectors are protected, Lesotho loses nothing – on the contrary on a liberalisation of the services sector she will gain.

Aid and Trade are the twin pillars of EU development policy, with trade acting as a catalyst for economic growth in developing countries. The Doha round under WTO is another example of this supported by the EU. The successful integration of developing countries into world trade requires more than open access to export markets and strengthened international trade rules. They must also remove supply side constraints and address their own structural weaknesses. This includes domestic reforms to facilitate trade, including better customs co-operation? A need for better infrastructure, expanding of productive capacities and the development of domestic and regional markets need to be included. Complementary efforts are required in areas such as macroeconomic stability, fiscal reform, investment, improved labour policy, capital and product market

regulations and human capital development. We are involved in helping Lesotho in these efforts. In fact these principles, accompanied by substantial aid for trade, are the foundation for the EPAs.

For forty years there has been no move in Africa toward more integration toward more regional trade and subsequent poverty eradication. EPA has put the "cat among the pigeons" and finally there is a movement and those who wish to protect their own interest – personal or national – have been exposed. The visit in February by Peter Mandelson our Trade Commissioner did a lot to clarify many issues in his contacts with GoL. He also managed to find time to hand over a check of EUR 500 000 to ALAFA to fight HIV/Aids in the textile sector.

In short I believe this is an area where good people together will prevent evil.

Hon Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please remember my opening statement on "evil and non-action". This is of course very relevant when it comes to Zimbabwe. I welcome the MFA statement at the above referred Africa Freedom Day celebration, where he stated "We call upon all parties in the electoral process in Zimbabwe to accept election results once they are announced as the people of the country has spoken. The unprecedented delay must be cut short so that legitimacy returns to Zimbabwe". I hope that Lesotho will continue to provide assistance through its entire means to find a solution for the suffering population.

I was in Zimbabwe when the Matabeles were butchered by the 5th Brigade in the mid-eighties. And we did nothing – not even stopping our assistance (except the transfer of commercial farming land to small holders due to the pervasive corruption already then). So evil prevailed. Today we are still the biggest contributor to enable the Zimbabwe's population to survive under testing circumstances to say it mildly.

The effect the Zimbabwe crisis have had, still has and will have for a long time on neighbouring countries and on SADC's future is of major concern to us all. Not only the EU - I am personally concerned about SADC's future – also because I was present when establishing SADCC in 1980/81 and while in Zimbabwe 1984-88 I was heavily involved in assisting countries fighting apartheid through SADCC. I have always wished to see SADC countries emulate EU where small countries have the same rights as big countries and see it succeed.

At the SADC HoS meeting in Mauritius end April my Commissioner made a very powerful almost emotional appeal to the SADC HoS to take on their regional responsibilities in Zimbabwe both ethical and practical. (And implicit not letting evil prevail).

Last week the EU Council of Foreign Ministers discussed Zimbabwe and issued the following statement: *The Council closely follows the situation in Zimbabwe after the elections on 29 March and expresses its deep concern over the delay in announcing the*

result of the presidential elections as well as over acts of intimidation, human rights abuses, and violence. The countries in the region, Southern African Development Community and the African Union have a crucial role and a responsibility to continue their engagement to resolve the current crisis in Zimbabwe. The EU recalls that it does not supply or sell arms, related materials or equipment which could be used for internal repression in Zimbabwe. It encourages others to exercise similar restraint at this time by introducing a de facto moratorium on all such sales and welcomes actions which have already been taken in this respect. The EU will continue to closely monitor the situation and to explore further options for increasing pressure on those who direct and engage in state-sponsored violence and intimidation in the post-election period. The EU also wishes to confirm its willingness to continue to make use of any opportunity provided to engage in the dialogue with a democratically elected Government of Zimbabwe.

Hon Minister, ladies and gentlemen - let me finish on a lighter note.

This year has been momentous for Europe. Today is the first Europe Day when peoples of countries once divided by the “iron curtain” can travel freely across Europe since the Schengen free travel area was expanded to the east. This year we are also celebrating the tenth anniversary of the European Monetary Union, one of the EU's strongest symbols. The Euro area is set to expand to countries which, less than twenty years ago, were still guided by a totalitarian state-directed economy. Thus by fighting evil you can get change. But you need good men to act.

It is by pooling our resources and building ever closer ties within Europe that we have unified our continent in peace; bringing freedom, security and prosperity to our citizens. I hope and trust and pray that the Southern Africa will go the same way. The SA whose liberation I have been involved in for more than 35 years - first the fight against colonialism and apartheid and now against poverty, intolerance and for the individual rights vis-a-vis the state. Every generation, every country, every region has its fights to fight to ensure good prevail against evil.

Thank you to the Government for an excellent co-operation in the past year. Thanks in particular to the office of the NAO.

A thank you to the three EU Member States present in Lesotho and to other cooperating partners, UN family, RSA and China in particular.

Finally an extra big and warm thank to all my staff – expatriate or local - in the Delegation and in the residence for having suffered and persevered another year not only with the workload but also with me. These thanks go even more to my wife without whom I would certainly have given up long time ago.

Matla ke kopano–

United we stand - divided we fall

With these words I would like to propose a toast for HM the King and his family whereafter we will listen to the Lesotho national anthem.

Rea leboha