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UNIDO Brussels Office

Newsletter



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The Brussels Office is responsible for enhancing UNIDO's policy dialogue and cooperation with the **European Union Institutions (European Parliament, European Commission, European Council)** and other actors, including the **European Investment Bank**, the **ACP Group of States**, as well as with other development partners represented in Brussels, including Permanent Representations of Member States, international organizations, civil society (think tank, universities) and the private sector, plus the International Organization of Francophonie (OIF).

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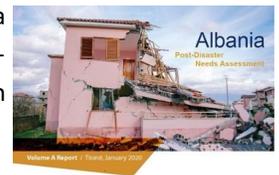
Visit of the UNIDO Deputy to Director General Mr. Hiroshi KUNIYOSHI at the UNIDO Brussels Office

For the International Donors' Conference for Albania, UNIDO Brussels had the pleasure to receive UNIDO Deputy to Director General Mr. Hiroshi Kuniyoshi and Regional Division—Europe and Central Asia Mrs. Solomiya Omelyan on the 17th February 2020 in its Offices in Brussels.

A delegation from the UNIDO took part in the international donor's conference "**Together for Albania**". This event, organized by the European Commission, was convened to **support reconstruction efforts in Albania** after an earthquake struck the country on 26 November 2019. A **post-Disaster Needs Assessment**, concluded that the total recovery needs of the country exceeded **€1 billion**, a financial challenge that cannot be addressed by the country single-handedly. Apart from the **human tragedy** (51 casualties), a total of **714 businesses suffered damage**, with the result that 428 employees from 56 manufacturing businesses and 79 employees from trading companies **lost their jobs**.

Therefore, UNIDO offered to contribute with its **technical expertise** to support the rehabilitation of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) which are key to socio-economic recovery and sustainable progress. Plus, UNIDO ensured to stand ready to **initiate concrete technical cooperation** projects under its five-year **Country program** with the Government of Albania.

UNIDO Deputy to Director General presence to the International Donor's Conference for Albania is a **strong signal** sent to its partners : UNIDO stands ready to work with donors and the Government of Albania and by the same token, UNIDO highlights its readiness to **enhance** and strengthen its partnership with the European Commission and the others European Union Institutions.





Brexit deal approved by the European Parliament

The Withdrawal Agreement was approved by the European Parliament on the 29th of January 2020 by 621 votes in favour, 49 against and 13 abstentions. Then, the Withdrawal Agreement was put to a final vote by qualified majority in the Council.

Redistribution of seats in the European Parliament

Of the UK's 73 seats, 27 have been redistributed to other countries, while the remaining 46 will be kept in reserve for potential future enlargements. The new distribution took into account the size of the population of member states as well as the need for a minimum level of representation for European citizens in the smaller ones.

EU-UK Future relations

On the 12th of February, the European Parliament adopted a resolution providing MEP's initial input to the upcoming negotiations with the British government on a new EU-UK partnership. The European Parliament wants the association agreement with the UK to be based on three main pillars : an economic partnership, a foreign affairs partnership and specific sectorial issues (citizens' rights and mobility of persons, data protection, ...). In that sense, The European Commission has transmitted, last 18th of March, to the UK a draft agreement on a new partnership with the EU that is closely aligned with European Parliament's recommendations .

Photo : ©EU 2020-EP

Parliament mobilized to fight COVID-19 outbreak

"Not since the end of the Second World War have we faced such a dramatic crisis" stated European Parliament David Sassoli during his 13th of March' statement on measures to address COVID-19. MEP's call for solidarity among EU member states.

REGI Committee triggers the urgent procedure to adopt the Corona Response Investment Initiative measures

On 10 March, the European Commission announced it would bring out a "Corona Response Investment Initiative" directed at health care systems, SMEs, labor markets and other vulnerable parts of the EU member states' economies. The Regional Development Committee requested that the European Parliament use the "urgent procedure" (defined under Rule 163), to allow the proposed measures made by the Commission to be efficiently adopted. On that point, the Committee agreed to speed up the legislative process by referring the proposal without amendments to be adopted directly by plenary, **in order to channel EU funds as soon as possible** to countries hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parliament and Member States working together to ensure the continuous supply of medical equipment

Parliament works with member states to swiftly approve 40 out of 50 million EUR for intensive care medical equipment needed to combat COVID-19 effects. Green lanes, for medical and protective equipment will be ensured within the Single Market. The aim of this measure is to protect health and keep goods and essential services available within the EU's internal market. In that sense, Transport Committee Chair Mrs. Karima Delli said that "smooth border crossing" and coordination between member states will be essential to overcome this crisis.

The European Parliament will hold an extraordinary plenary on 16 and 17 April

The European Parliament President and political group leaders (Conference of Presidents) decided to hold an extraordinary plenary to continue with parliamentary work on the special measures to fight the pandemic. On the agenda will be a debate with Council and Commission and a vote on a resolution on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. The European Parliament also asserted its readiness to vote on any legislative or budgetary proposals prepared in time by the European Commission to further address the current situation.



Photo : ©InkheartX/Adobe Stock

A new Industrial Strategy for the European Union

On the 19th of March, the Commission unveiled its new Industrial Strategy for a globally competitive, green and digital Europe. This new Strategy aims to help Europe's industry lead the twin transitions towards climate neutrality and digital leadership. It was conceived to help deliver on three key priorities : **maintaining European industry's global competitiveness** and a level playing field, **making Europe climate-neutral by 2050** and **shaping Europe's digital future**.

"Europe's industry is the motor of growth and prosperity in Europe. This is more important than ever as Europe embarks on its ambitious green and digital transitions in a more unsettled and unpredictable world" stated President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen.

Photo : [@eucommission](#)



Shaping a new partnership with Africa

The Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy proposed on 9th of March 2020 the basis for a **new strategy with Africa**. The communication sets out proposals to intensify cooperation through partnerships in **five** key areas : green transition, digital transformation, sustainable growth, peace and governance and migration. On 27 February 2020, the European Commission and African Union Commission met for the 10th 'Commission to Commission' meeting in Addis Ababa. This meeting marked a record participation on the EU side, a testament of the priority relations which Africa represents for the New European Commission and its aspiration to take them to a new level.

"Today's strategy with Africa is the roadmap to move forward and bring our partnership to the next level. Africa is the EU's natural partner and neighbour. Together we can build a more prosperous, more peaceful and ore sustainable future for all." stated the President of the European Commission last 9th of March.

Commission response to COVID-19

Adoption of a Temporary Framework to enable Member States to further support the economy

This Temporary Framework is meant to enable Member States to ensure that sufficient liquidity remains available to businesses and to preserve the continuity of economic activity. So that Member States can implement the measures needed to contain the coronavirus outbreak and mitigate its negative socio-economic effects, the Commission proposed a general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). It includes using the full **flexibility** of fiscal and state-aid frameworks, mobilising the EU budget to allow the EIB Group to provide short-term liquidity to SMEs and directing €37 billion to the fight against COVID-19 under the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative.

Commission steps up research funding for projects in vaccine development, treatment and diagnostics

On 30 January 2020, the Commission launched a special call for expressions of interest to **support research on COVID-19** with an initial budget of €10 million. Furthermore, up to €45 million in Horizon 2020 funding will support additional research through the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI), a public-private partnership between the Commission and the pharmaceutical industry. In addition to that, the Commission added a €37.5 million budget for research on COVID-19, which allowed to involve **136 research teams** from across the EU and beyond dedicated to the work on developing vaccines, new treatments and new diagnostic tests.

A practical guidance to ensure the free movement of critical workers

The 30th of March, the Commission issued a new practical Guidance to ensure that mobile workers within the EU, in particular those in critical occupations to fight the COVID-19 pandemic (those working in the health care and food sectors), can reach their workplace.

Photo : © Copyright European Commission 2020



Council of the EU and the situation at the EU's external borders

The EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs met the 6th of March 2020 for an extraordinary Council meeting (photo 1) to discuss the crisis in **Idlib** and the situation at the **EU external borders with Turkey**. In its statement, the Foreign Affairs Council acknowledged the increased migratory burden and risks Turkey is facing on its territory and the substantial efforts it has made in hosting **3.7 million migrants and refugees**. The Council also strongly rejected Turkey's use of migratory pressure for political purposes and restated that the EU and its member states remain determined to **protect EU's external borders**, in accordance with EU and international law. By the same token, the Council recalled that it expects Turkey to implement fully the provisions of the **2016 Joint Statement** with regard to all member states. The Council welcomed the European Commission's additional support to Greece, notably its commitment to make immediately available EUR 350 million, and the proposal for an **additional EUR 350 million** to support migration and integrated border management. The Council also welcomed the Commission's efforts to coordinate the rapid delivery of assistance via the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. The 6th March' extraordinary Council also echoes the President of the European Council Charles Michel and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan meeting on 4th March 2020 in Ankara, and the four presidents of EU institutions visit to the Greek Turkish border on the 3th of march 2020 (photo 2).



Photos : [European Union](#)



The Council set out its priorities for the 2021 EU budget

The EU's annual budget lays down all of the European Union' **expenditure and revenue for one year**. It ensures the **funding of EU policies and programs** in line with the EU's political priorities and legal obligations. The annual budget is agreed by the Council and the European Parliament on an **equal footing** and the draft budget is proposed by the Commission.

In its guidelines for the 2021 EU budget, the Council considered that this budget should ensure prudent budgeting and leave sufficient margins under the ceilings to deal with unforeseen circumstances. Sufficient resources should be allocated to the implementation of the Union's programs and actions that contribute most towards achieving Union policies. In addition, the Council recommended that the budget should allow commitments already made under the current multiannual financial framework (MFF) to be paid in due time, in order to avoid any unpaid claims.

Photo : *President Charles Michel meets MFF contact group of the EU Parliament* copyright : [European Union](#)

The Council adopts measures for immediate release of funds to fight COVID-19 pandemic

The 30th of March 2020, the Council adopted two legislative acts to quickly release funding from the EU budget for tackling the COVID-19 crisis. The first act amends the rules of the structural and investment funds and the second act extends the scope of the EU Solidarity Fund. The **Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative** will give member states access to €37 billion of cohesion money to **strengthen healthcare systems**, as well as **support SMEs enterprises, short-term working schemes and community-based services**. Member states will also have greater flexibility to make transfers between cohesion policy programmes in order to redirect resources to where they are most needed. The Council also amended the scope of the **EU Solidarity Fund** to include public health emergencies in addition to natural disasters.

New Secretary General of the ACP Group of States, H.E. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, assumption of duty



Photo : <http://www.acp.int/>

New Secretary-General (SG) H.E. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti took up office on the 2th of March 2020 at the start of his five-year tenure which will extend until 2025.

In his **inaugural address** to the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Committee of Ambassadors (CoA), the new **Secretary General (SG) of the ACP Group of States, H.E. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti**, laid out his vision for the **next five years**.

Presenting the different challenges the ACP Group will have to face and setting out the global context against which he takes the helm of the ACP Group, the new Secretary General insisted on his readiness and desire to *“implementing change in order to carry out the processes of **reinvention, realignment, and repositioning of the ACP Group**”*. He then asserted a strong willingness to *“build a solid foundation that will allow the Group to effectively utilise its numerical strength and **become one of the most important and influential players on the international stage over the next five years**”*. SG Chikoti eventually concluded on the necessity to *“reform”* and to *“innovate”* the ACP Group’ *“approaches and methods”* in order to implement a new *“**strategic change leadership**”* (extracts from Secretary General of the ACP Group H.E. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti inaugural address on 2th November 2020).

⇒ One of the most urgent processes ACP Group has to deal with is the **modernization** and **extension** of the **Cotonou Partnership Agreement** with the European Union. This agreement is the **legal framework** governing the relations between the EU and 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The Cotonou agreement needs to be **modernised** in so far as it was adopted two decades ago (**2000**). Global and regional contexts have evolved and so have the common global challenges and opportunities to be grasped. Both the ACP and the EU are seeking a comprehensive political agreement, setting a modern agenda framed by the internationally agreed sustainable development roadmaps : the UN 2030 Agenda, the SDGs Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as well as the Paris Agreement or the New EU Consensus on Development.

⇒ ACP SG Georges Chikoti was invited to a welcome meeting by the **United Nations Office in Brussels** on 26 February 2020. It was the occasion for **UNIDO Brussels Office** to ensure its **support** to ACP countries for **inclusive and sustainable industrial development**.



Photo : SG Secretary General of ACP Group Georges Chikoti with UNIDO Representative to EU Patrick J. Gilabert



Beyond good intentions : The new EU-Africa partnership

The EU and Africa are each trying to find their place in an unstable world. This paper argues that the needs and expectations on both sides call for a new and more interest-driven partnership between the EU and Africa, one that does not brush over contention, but recognises diverging views and priorities, negotiates concrete solutions that work for both sides, and lays the foundations of a real political alliance in global affairs. The EU recognises that it needs Africa more than ever, as an ally in multilateral affairs, as a growing market for European investments and trade, as the testing ground for its 'geopolitical' ambitions, and to ensure that Africa's growing population can meet its aspirations at home. Africa in turn is diversifying its foreign partnerships, but the EU and its member states are still its main trade and investment partner, the main supporter of its continental peace and security agenda, and can be an important partner in support of Africa's economic integration agenda. The paper looks at six thematic priorities of the partnership and examines common and diverging interests, the status of cooperation and the potential way forward across these different areas.

Read the paper [here](#) (March 2020)



Adapting to change : Time for climate resilience and a new adaptation strategy

Climate mitigation alone will not be enough to stop the dramatic effects of climate change and will have to go hand in hand with adaptation efforts. The EU and its member states need to start thinking seriously about how our societies will adapt to this new reality. If the von der Leyen Commission succeeds in setting up a plan for action, inciting member states to collaborate and mobilize resources towards the building of a climate-resilient Europe, we can expect multiple benefits. The message is clear: adaptation is not an option, but a social, environmental and economical must. This paper, therefore, calls on the EU to mainstream adaptation and shift its focus from reacting to disasters to a more proactive approach that prioritizes prevention, risk reduction and resilience building.

Read the paper [here](#) (March 2020)

An effective economic response to the Coronavirus in Europe



The COVID-19 pandemic represents a major shock to the global and European economy. Most European countries need to take bold quarantine and lock-down measures, as has been done in Italy, to prevent an explosion of the epidemic which would lead to many deaths and the collapse of healthcare systems. The economic consequences of such measures are major, and are felt through both supply and demand-side channels. This policy paper lays out the coordinated and bold response European authorities should implement.

Read the policy paper [here](#) (March 2020)



- **Participation to the organization of the “Journée de l’entrepreneuriat” (Entrepreneurship Day) at the Brussels’ Cité des Métiers**

20th January 2020 : ONUDI Brussels was associated to the Cité des Métiers - Beroepenpunt and to PAD Business Network Foundation for the organization of the Entrepreneurship Day (“Journée de l’entrepreneuriat—Dag van het ondernemerschap”).



- **Farewell to UNIDO Brussels’ Office Interns Flora and Natasha**

31th January 2020 : UNIDO Brussels Office wants to thank and congratulate interns Flora and Natasha for their great jobs and their participation to the advancing work of UNIDO Brussels Office with its institutional partners.



- **Meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General Mrs. Bience Gawanas, Special Advisor on Africa to the UNSG**

4th February 2020: UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Advisor on Africa to the UNSG, Bience Gawanas was welcomed in the UN Brussels Office to discuss United Nations partnerships with the European Institutions and the ACP Secretariat regarding Africa and more specifically regarding Africa’s plans of action to achieve SDG goals.



- **UNIDO Deputy to Director General Mr. Hiroshi Kuniyoshi and Managing Director of EEAS Mrs. Lotte Knudsen meeting at UNIDO Brussels Office**

17th February 2020 : UNIDO DDG Mr. Hiroshi Kuniyoshi and Managing Director of EEAS Lotte Knudsen discussed potential future joint initiatives on the sidelines of the International Donors Conference for Albania in Brussels (*Together for Albania*).



- **UNIDO DDG Mr. Hiroshi Kuniyoshi and President Economic Council of Albania Parliament Mrs. Mila Ekonomi meeting**

17th February 2020 : UNIDO DDG Mr. Hiroshi Kuniyoshi and President of the Economic Council of Albania Parliament Mrs. Mila Ekonomi discussed areas of cooperation between UNIDO and Albania which included UNIDO Country Program, on the side-lines of the International Donor’s Conference for Albania in Brussels.





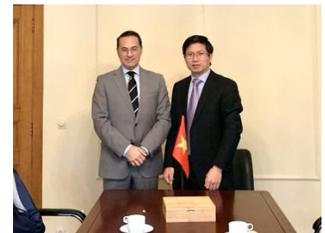
- **Meeting with the Ambassador of Papua New Guinea in Belgium, Mr. Joshua R. Kalinoe**

18th February 2020 : Head of UNIDO Brussels Office Mr. Patrick J. Gilabert met Mr. Joshua Kalinoe Ambassador of Papua New Guinea in Belgium in order to maintain and ensure its full support to Papua New Guinea economic development in the specific areas of investment, trade and energy in partnership with ACP Secretariat, the Pacific Community and the European Union.



- **Meeting with the Counsellor Mission of Vietnam to EU, Mr. Tran Van Cong**

24 February 2020 : UNIDO Representative to EU and Head of UNIDO Brussels Office Mr. Patrick J. Gilabert met Mr. Tran Van Cong, Counsellor Mission of Vietnam to EU in order to ensure UNIDO' support to Vietnam in the sustainable development and strengthening of its industry's quality so that Vietnam could rip the benefit of the future EU-Vietnam.



- **A new partnership with PAD Business Network Foundation**

3th March 2020 : UNIDO Brussels Office looks forward to clinch a new partnership with the PAD Business Network Foundation, a foundation created in 2019 that works in favour of economic development in Africa and more specifically that fosters projects from the Afro-Descendants persons (PAD).



Thanks for reading!



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