

Letter from the EU

Written by Administrator
Saturday, 19 April 2014 19:32 -

9th April 2014

Thank you for your letter of 26 February 2014 to the High Representative in which you refer to the elections of July 2013 and question the recent progress that can be observed in Zimbabwe. The letter has been given to me to respond. The EU's goal is, and has always been, to support the Zimbabwean people in achieving a more prosperous and democratic Zimbabwe. Normalising the relationship with the government will enable the EU to play a stronger role in supporting the return to economic stability, improving the democratic environment, rule of law, respect for human rights, and the living conditions for ordinary Zimbabweans. However, continued progress towards normalisation, as in other countries, will depend on the government of Zimbabwe's commitment to political and economic reforms.

The High Representative Catherine Ashton, in her declaration of 19 February 2014 on behalf of the EU following the review of EU-Zimbabwe relations, has welcomed the generally peaceful manner in which the 2013 elections were conducted. This represents a significant improvement in the conduct of previous elections in Zimbabwe and has contributed to the EU's decisions to suspend all remaining restrictive measures with the exception of the arms embargo and those targeting two individuals – the Head of State and his spouse and one entity – Zimbabwe Defence Industries.

However, there are many improvements that are still needed and the EU remains seriously concerned about significant weaknesses in the electoral process and the lack of transparency identified by SADC, AU and domestic observations missions, which calls into doubt the credibility of the elections. Through the 11th European Development Fund, once conditions permit, we aim to support the implementation of the recommendations expressed by the SADC and AU observer missions to improve the electoral framework. More broadly, the EU also intends to support further implementation of constitutional reforms.

The human rights situation is an issue of much importance for the EU and one which is kept under close review. The EU has issued numerous statements in the past highlighting the seriousness that we attach to human rights in Zimbabwe.

The EU will continue to monitor closely the performance of the government against its own commitments, of which progress on the implementation of the Constitution will be particularly important.

One may of course have different and critical views on the pace of reform. Through engaging in a dialogue with the Zimbabwean government and authorities, including on future development co-operation, we are seeking to promote further positive progress.

Angel Carro Castrillo

Chef de Division

Departement Afrique

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