

EUROPE DAY 2021

Stronger together

By Nona Deprez

Today is a special day for the European Union. It is our 71st birthday. Every year on 9 May we celebrate what started as a peace project in 1950 and is now an alliance for our joint future. The 27 Member States and their 450 million citizens build our Union every day with their actions and their commitment, making it stronger through challenging times such as the

COVID -19 pandemic. From day one, Europe has always been guided by the principles of community, solidarity and cooperation. Today, these principles remain as relevant as ever.

Europe promotes a sustainable and balanced growth: at home and in our partner countries. The European Union is the largest donor of development



Interaction with children at Temporary Learning Centre (TLC) in Gorkha in 2016. The EU supported to establish many TLCs in partnership with UNICEF in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake that hit Nepal.

/Photo : Mim Hamal/EU Delegation to Nepal



Women with their babies displaying their 'Nanglo with nutritious diet'. Ever since the first (2013-2017) phase of the Multisector Nutrition Plan (MSNP) gathered steam with support from the EU and UNICEF implemented by Nepal Government in 30 priority districts, there has been visible progress in the health of both mothers and their infants

/Photo : Eloisa Fernandez Astudillo, EU Delegation to Nepal

and humanitarian aid in the world and one of its major economic blocks, building the future based on agreed rules. The European Union has expanded its presence in 140 nations across the world to build for all children, wherever they are, whoever they are, a shared world of peace, democracy, prosperity and security.

The European Union advocates and promotes a multilateral rules-based world order. It believes that there are global solutions to global problems. And to solve today's global problems, the EU is pushing for universal access to COVID-19 vaccines, to strengthen the global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,

tackle inequalities, modernise global institutions, establish global rules for the new digital technologies, win the race against climate change and restore our relationship with nature.

Let's focus on climate change. The EU is dedicated to tackle this challenge, in Europe and in Nepal, because there are no partial solution to climate change. 40% of the world's public climate finance comes from the European Union, and climate change is at the heart in our external action and financing. We want to take this opportunity to invite the Government and the people of Nepal to engage in a conversation

on how we can work together and make a green alliance with Nepal.

The European Union has seized the challenge of climate change in the context of COVID recovery and has adopted the ambitious European Green Deal, which is the Union's internal growth strategy aiming towards a carbon neutral Europe by 2050. As in Europe, the fight against climate change in Nepal is an opportunity to support, alongside with other international partners, Nepal's evolution towards a modern, sustainable, resource efficient and competitive economy. A green recovery is not only about climate change. The pandemic has reminded us of the links between environmental degradation and the impacts on human health. Air needs to stay cleaner, and biodiversity loss needs to be reversed. We have to build back better, for the health and wellbeing of our people. The COVID-19 crisis has proven gender-biased, looking at its impact on women-owned businesses, on the burden women are facing during the crisis, on their role as essential workers, the increased household load and the increase of gender-based violence. It is more relevant than ever in this context, to shape the coming socio-economic recovery with women at its centre, so that it is so-

cially just, resilient and inclusive for all and support the progress on Nepal's global commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement.

The EU is showing leadership, responsibility and solidarity with those affected by the pandemic. Since the very start of this pandemic, the EU has chosen multilateralism and cooperation over nationalism and competition. We have formed Team Europe, which consists of the EU, its member states and their diplomatic networks, and financial institutions such as the national development banks, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Together, Team Europe has contributed €2.47 billion to the COVAX initiative, which delivered already 40.5 million doses of vaccine to more than 100 countries worldwide, including Nepal – truly embodying our European principles of community, solidarity and cooperation.

348,000 doses of COVID vaccines reached Nepal in March under this COVAX facility and Team Europe will do its part so that 20 percent of Nepal's population is vaccinated for free.

The EU in its over 45 years of partnership



Responsible mountaineering can be a means to empower women and to design locally owned paths towards a green and sustainable development. The EU stands with Himalayan communities and indigenous people to address climate change, governance, education, gender and environmental issues and to build together local success stories.

/Photo : Dakipa Sherpa



The goal of EU's international partnerships is to build a more sustainable and inclusive world.

with Nepal has contributed to the development, reform and democratization process of the country, as a reliable companion in the implementation of Nepal's reform strategies. European citizens have given 600 million Euros to Nepal in the last 15 years, and they intend to continue. We were here during the hard times, as when the earthquake hit, and we will continue being here in the next decade.

The EU as a political partner will make Nepal's voice stronger in the global and international dialogue and partnerships. Let's celebrate Europe Day and may the friendship between Nepal and the European Union and our people grow deeper and stronger. Let's

live the principles of community, solidarity and cooperation because we are stronger together.

This year's celebrations, just as last year's, come amidst the COVID pandemic. In keeping with the social distancing measures, online events will replace traditional Europe Day celebrations (see details on our website (https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/nepal_en), Facebook and Twitter accounts (@EUin-Nepal). We may not be able to share physical spaces, but we can still be together virtually, safely from our homes. Stay safe.

(Mrs. Deprez is Ambassador & Head of EU Delegation to Nepal)