



President Luca Jahier visits Ethiopia to bring EESC's support to local civil society and discuss EU's strategy in Africa

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A delegation of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), composed of President Luca Jahier, Jaroslaw Mulewicz (Chair of EESC ACP-EU Follow-up Committee) and Carlos Trindade (Chair of EESC Permanent Group on Migration) is visiting Ethiopia this week (27-31 May) to bring EESC support to local civil society and to discuss the EU strategy in Africa.

With the European Union giving increasing importance to its relations with Africa as a strategic partner, Luca Jahier decided to lead a first presidential mission to Ethiopia, a country with a crucial role in the Horn of Africa and with the potential to become a true "African lion". The new government under the lead of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has introduced important economic and social reforms and signed a peace agreement with Eritrea, thus contributing to the political and economic stability of the region.

During the visit the delegation met with several **government Ministers** (Ms Ergogie Tesfaye, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs; Ms Yalem Tsegay, Minister of Women, Children and Youth; Ms Misgana Araga, State Minister of Trade and Industry; Ms Muferiat Kamil, Minister of Peace). The discussions focused on Ethiopian reforms, including new labour laws, the new Refugee Proclamation, combatting gender based violence, woman entrepreneurship and political participation and industrial development.

During the meeting with **Ms El Fadil, African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs**, a commitment was made to strengthen cooperation between EESC and AU ECOSOC. **Ms Birtukan Mideksa, Chairwoman of the National Election Board** presented her ambitious plans for credible and peaceful election organisation.

The delegation also met with the **regional offices of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the European Investment Bank (EIB), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)** and important Ethiopian and international civil society stakeholders and members of the business community to discuss labour, gender and socio-economic issues.

During a meeting with **ARRA** (Administration for Refugee & Returnee Affairs) and visits to the **Nguenyiel refugee camp** in Gambella and the International Organisation for Migration (**IOM**) **Transit Centre** in Addis Abeba, the delegation learnt first-hand about the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons and host communities in Ethiopia.

"At a personal level, I am particularly pleased that the Prime Minister has chosen the term of **Ethiopian political Renaissance** for his reforms and that the African Union is also using the motto of **African Renaissance** in the context of its 2063 agenda!", **Luca Jahier** said, making reference to his presidency programme for a European Renaissance to give a new impetus to the EU project, which he called **rEUnaissance**.