



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - WEB RELEASE

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The European Union will provide up to EUR 60 million in grants to Laos in 2014-2015

The European Union (EU) has announced it has allocated up to EUR 60 million (KIP 60 billion, USD 75 million) to Laos under its bilateral cooperation programme over the period 2014-2015 to improve basic education and food and nutrition security and strengthen good governance as well as the rule of law and human rights.

Laos has set itself the target to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2020. The EU's new bilateral cooperation programme reaffirms its strong commitment to help Laos reach this goal and contribute to further poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth. Better education and lower levels of under-nutrition are key factors to achieve this which is why we focus our support especially in these two areas.

Mr. Michel Goffin, the EU Charge d'Affaires to Laos said that: "In the area of good governance and the rule of law we will work with the National Assembly and with civil society to broaden public participation and enhance the respect for human rights and the rule of law.

In addition to the bilateral cooperation, Laos will continue receiving support under other EU thematic and regional instruments and programmes. These cover a wide range of issues, including civil society, environment including forestry and climate change as well as trade".

Sustainable rural development is essential to help eradicate poverty in rural areas of Laos and to improve food and nutrition security. Therefore, the EU plans to finance substantial actions in the area of 'Sustainable Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security'. We will provide support to address the high levels of under-nutrition by supporting vulnerable communities giving them access to a variety of quality foods throughout the year. Smallholder's will also be supported. The EU will also continue to assist Laos with the clearance of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO).

The 'Education' sector in Laos will also be a focal sector for our cooperation. The EU will provide support for increased and equitable access to basic education to reduce repetition and dropout rates. Emphasis will also be given to improve the quality and relevance of education by increased availability of teaching and learning materials and better teacher education.

In the area of good governance, rule of law and human rights we will focus our efforts in increasing and broadening peoples' participation; help create an environment that enables civil society engagement and work to enhance the respect for human rights and the rule of law.

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