



MEMORANDUM N° 28/2011

03/03/2011

SUMMARY:

- ONE) – **EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK READY TO DOUBLE LOANS TO SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN** – Page 2
- TWO) – **EGYPT SEEKING EU DEBT RELIEF** – Page 2
- THREE) – **EGYPTIAN ISLAMISTS TO LAUNCH 'REEDOM AND JUSTICE PARTY'** – Page 2
- FOUR) - **ALGERIA TO LIFT STATE OF EMERGENCY** – Page 3
- FIVE) - **NEW STRATEGIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME** - Page 3
- SIX) – **EU'S BARNIER PROPOSES NORTH AFRICA COMMON MARKET** - Page 5
- SEVEN) – **INTEGRATING ISLAMIC VALUES INTO FINANCE** - Page 5
- EIGHT) – **UGANDA: BETTER COFFEE BRINGS BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS** – Page 6
- NINE) – **SOUTHERN COUNTRIES CALL FOR EU BURDEN SHARING ON REFUGEES** - Page 8
- TEN) – **BURDEN SHARING MUST BE VOLUNTARY, SAYE EU COMMISSION** - Page 8
- ELEVEN) – **FRENCH INTERIOR MINISTER SENDS STERN WARNING TO WOULD BE MIGRANTS** – Page 9
- TWELVE) – **ARMED SOUTH SUDAN POLICE RAID SOUTH NEWSPAPER** - Page 9
- THIRTEEN) - **SOUTH AFRICA LOSING INTEREST IN SADC CUSTOMS UNION** - Page 9
- FOURTEEN) – **MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT VERY WORRIED** - Page 11
- FIFTEEN) - **MOROCCAN YOUTH, NGOs CALL FOR CONTINUED MOBILIZATION** - Page 11
- SIXTEEN) - **KEY MOROCCO PARTY WANTS REFORMS AGENDA** - Page 11
- SEVENTEEN) - **SENEGAL SEVERS TIES WITH IRAN OVER REBEL WEAPONS** - Page 12
- EIGHTEEN) - **49 SOMALIAN IMMIGRANTS DIE IN GULF OF ADEN** – Page 12
- NINETEEN) - **TUNISIA WILL NEED LOTS OLF FOREIGN AID, SAYS CENTRAL BANK** - Page 12
- TWENTY) - **GUN SHOTS IN ABIDJAN** – Page 12

ONE) – EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK READY TO DOUBLE LOANS TO SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN

La [Banque européenne d'investissement](#) (BEI), bras financier de l'UE, s'est dite prête mardi à doubler ses prêts aux pays du sud de la Méditerranée à environ 6 milliards d'euros, afin d'aider leur « transition » vers la démocratie et éviter une « conflagration » sociale. « Nous sommes prêts à faire plus si nécessaire pour aider ces pays dans leur transition vers la démocratie », a déclaré son président, Philippe Maystadt, lors d'une conférence de presse à Bruxelles. « Nous pourrions faire quelque chose de significatif dans les trois prochaines années », a-t-il ajouté. Sous certaines conditions, il est possible « d'arriver près d'un niveau de 6 milliards d'euros pour la période 2011-2013 ». L'objectif de la BEI est de « montrer que l'Europe est capable de réagir très vite » aux bouleversements en cours dans cette région, a ajouté le vice-président de la BEI, Philippe de Fontaine Vive. « Nous voulons être présents tout de suite pour financer maintenant les besoins économiques pour que la désespérance qu'il y a dans la région ne cède pas le pas à une conflagration aussi économique et sociale », a-t-il expliqué. « A l'heure actuelle, dans un pays comme la Tunisie, une liberté retrouvée peut permettre d'avoir un taux de croissance accru de 1 ou 2% de point de PIB par an », a-t-il souligné. La Tunisie pourrait bénéficier de près d'un milliard d'euros de prêts de la BEI dès cette année. Outre la Tunisie, la région Méditerranée recouvre dans le budget de la BEI l'Algérie, l'Égypte, le Maroc, la Jordanie, le Liban, la Syrie, les territoires palestiniens et Israël. La Banque n'a en revanche « jamais été autorisée à agir en Libye », selon son président. **EU PARLIAMENT ASKS FOR € 1 BILLION MORE** Maystadt a rappelé que le mandat donné à la BEI par l'UE prévoyait initialement pour cette région, pour la période 2007-2013, un total de 8,7 milliards d'euros. Sur ce montant, « il ne reste plus que 2,8 milliards pour couvrir la fin de la période, jusque 2013 », a-t-il précisé. Mais des possibilités existent pour augmenter l'enveloppe régionale, a-t-il expliqué. Le Parlement européen a notamment demandé la semaine dernière de relever d'un milliard d'euros le plafond des prêts que la BEI peut consentir dans cette région d'ici à 2013, a-t-il rappelé. Les gouvernements de l'UE doivent encore donner leur feu vert. Le Parlement et les gouvernements se sont en revanche déjà mis d'accord pour permettre à la BEI de financer pour 2 milliards supplémentaires de projets destinés à lutter au changement climatique, a ajouté M. Maystadt, estimant que « la part de la Méditerranée serait de l'ordre de 700 millions d'euros ». La Banque a aussi 1,2 milliard d'euros disponibles sur ses moyens propres, et elle envisage enfin de réutiliser les gains réalisés grâce aux investissements faits par la Banque dans le passé, ce qui pourrait dégager encore 200 à 300 millions d'euros supplémentaires. En additionnant tout cela, ce sont « quelque 6 milliards de financement que nous pourrions apporter à la Méditerranée, et spécialement pour les pays en transition vers la démocratie », avec pour priorité « des investissements qui créent des emplois », a résumé M. Maystadt. La BEI fonctionne comme un bras financier de l'UE : elle emprunte sur les marchés avec la garantie de l'UE, ce qui lui permet de bénéficier de conditions favorables, et de prêter à son tour les fonds collectés à des taux moins élevés que le marché, dans le cadre de financement de projets spécifiques.

TWO) – EGYPT SEEKING EU DEBT RELIEF

Egypt's finance minister says he would like Britain's support in seeking debt forgiveness from the European Union. A statement released by the Finance Ministry on Tuesday said Samir Radwan discussed the issue with British Trade and Investment Minister Lord Stephen Green a day earlier. Radwan said Egypt was at least hoping for forgiveness of the interest payments, if not its entire debt to Europe. The call comes as Egypt is trying to mitigate the fallout from the 18 days of protests that led to Hosni Mubarak's ouster. The demonstrations and related violence unnerved foreign investors and tourists, hitting hard at two of the country's main sources of foreign revenue.

THREE) – EGYPTIAN ISLAMISTS TO LAUNCH 'FREEDOM AND JUSTICE PARTY'

The Muslim Brotherhood sees foreign investment in Egypt flourishing once the economy is free of the corruption that weakened it in President Hosni Mubarak's era, and says its political agenda will have broad appeal. A leading member of the Islamist group, Egypt's biggest political force, said the party it plans to establish would be based on Islamic laws but acceptable to a wide section of society. "The final version (of the programme) will be broadly acceptable to everyone because the atmosphere has changed, circumstances have changed and the Brotherhood themselves have changed," Essam al-Erian told Reuters in an interview.

“The revolution changed everyone,” he said, explaining how the group’s interaction with other sections of society during the uprising that toppled Mubarak had affected its thinking. Though the Brotherhood did not play a role organising the protests at their outset, it has been one of the main winners from Mubarak’s removal. Officially banned under Mubarak, the group has moved ever more to the heart of Egyptian public life since he was toppled on Feb. 11. The Brotherhood announced on Monday it would launch “The Freedom and Justice Party” to contest parliamentary elections which the military rulers running the country say they will hold within six months. **NOT SEEKING MAJORITY** Seeking to reassure Egyptians about its political strength, the Brotherhood has said it will not seek a parliamentary majority in those elections or contest a presidential election. “When we talk about the slogans of the revolution –freedom, social justice, equality- all of these are in the sharia (Islamic law),” Erian said. “This revolution called for what the Islamic sharia calls for,” he added. Erian, one of the group’s official spokesmen, said the management of Egypt’s economy needed to be reviewed. The country could do without the corruption of the Mubarak era, he said. “But Egypt cannot do without foreign and Arab investment. This will increase and increase because, when the country stabilises into a democracy, there will not be this corruption and this will encourage investors,” he said. The Brotherhood supported free markets, he added, but without “fraud, without monopoly and with real competition”. The United States has expressed concerns about “extremist elements” in the Brotherhood, a group founded in 1928 by an Egyptian teacher, Hassan al-Banna. Washington is keeping close watch to see what kind of clout it might wield. The Brotherhood forecasts it could win up to 30 percent of a free and fair vote. **“BRITISH ARROGANCE”** The Brotherhood was the only real political force to survive Mubarak’s three decades of autocratic rule. It has appeared more assertive since he was toppled. Since then, Erian said the Brotherhood had received requests for meetings from representatives of the governments of Norway, Germany, Sweden, Australia and Switzerland. “We postponed those meetings and said our concern is continuing the revolution and realising the demands of the people,” Erian said. He also slammed what he described as “British arrogance”, saying Prime Minister David Cameron had interfered in the country’s politics during a visit to Cairo this week. Cameron did not meet with the Brotherhood during his trip, and British officials said this was to highlight the fact that Islamists were not the only alternative to Mubarak. “Egypt finished with the British occupation 65 years ago,” Erian said.

FOUR) ALGERIA TO LIFT STATE OF EMERGENCY

Le président algérien Abdelaziz Bouteflika a décidé mardi de lever dans un délai « imminent » l’état d’urgence, dix-neuf ans après son instauration pour enrayer la guérilla islamiste, mais l’armée va continuer de conduire la lutte anti-terroriste. Cette décision était réclamée par l’opposition, notamment la Coordination nationale pour le Démocratie et le changement (CNCD) qui vient d’organiser deux manifestations pour obtenir un « changement du système » politique incarné par M. Bouteflika. Le département d’Etat américain a salué mardi la décision annoncée par les autorités algériennes tout en affirmant qu’elle devait être suivie d’une libéralisation politique plus importante. « La décision (...) est positive mais doit se traduire par une extension des libertés et un véritable changement », a écrit le porte-parole Philip Crowley sur son micro-blog Twitter. La levée de l’état d’urgence, promise par le chef de l’Etat depuis trois semaines, a été annoncée après une réunion du Conseil des ministres qui a aussi pris des mesures en faveur de l’emploi et du logement alors que le pays a connu au début de l’année des émeutes contre la vie chère avec un bilan de cinq morts et plus de 800 blessés. « Un projet d’ordonnance abrogeant le décret législatif du 6 février 1993 portant prorogation de l’état d’urgence, institué par décret présidentiel du 9 février 1992, a été adopté mardi par le Conseil des ministres », selon un communiqué officiel. « Ce projet d’ordonnance entrera en vigueur dès sa publication imminente au Journal officiel », indique le communiqué du Conseil des ministres sans plus de précision. L’état d’urgence a donné à l’armée des pouvoirs de police et s’est traduit par une restriction des libertés politiques qui a empêché les partis de se déployer deux ans après la reconnaissance du pluralisme politique en 1989.

FIVE) – NEW STRATEGIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

The new agreement builds on an existing partnership which, over the past three years, has provided UNEP and the Multilateral Environmental Agreements with over 50 million Euros for implementing close to 60 projects ranging from chemicals to biodiversity world-wide.

The agreement outlines a strategic partnership covering funding from the Commission to UNEP up to 2013.

It identifies key areas of joint activities, including under the European Union's "Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy".

It also reflects the EU 2020 strategy on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth that dovetails with UNEP's work on the Green Economy, the International Panel on Sustainable Resource Management and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), for which the Commission is a long standing supporter.

The precise funding arrangements and potential projects to be started under the new strategic cooperative partnership will be discussed over the coming months.

Multi-million dollar project for the Mau forest in Kenya

The European Commission and the UN Environment programme (UNEP) have also announced a multi-million dollar project to assist the restoration of the north western part of the Mau forest in Kenya.

The project, supporting the strategy of the Government of Kenya to rehabilitate one of sub-Saharan Africa's largest closed canopy forests, will help maintain nature-based assets worth an estimated \$1.5 billion a year to the Kenyan economy.

The details were unveiled during the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The project will secure services generated by the flows of the Yala and Nyando rivers. These rivers, which feed Lake Victoria and are important for drinking water, also support 5,000 hectares of rice production important for local food security and the Kenyan economy.

The new, more than €2 million project for Mau, is being funded out of the existing agreement. It will cover the Nandi part of the forest where significant degradation of the indigenous forest and conversion into grassland has occurred, due in part to unsustainable patterns of settlement.

Industrial forest plantations in the area are also currently poorly managed, and part of the project will tackle this issue, including the establishment of wood lots for local peoples' cooking needs.

The forest blocks targeted under the project for restoration are Northern Tinderet, Tinderet, Naboki, Timboroa and Londiani.

The loss and degradation of forest in this part of the Mau forest is endangering a range of businesses, development initiatives and biologically important sites.

The area is the upper catchment of the Yala and Nyando rivers that both flow into Lake Victoria and provide water for rice production with a market price in excess of one billion Kenyan shillings.

The area also supports river flows that are central to the success of a UNEP-Global Environment Facility funded project to reduce the electricity costs; power supply availability and greenhouse gas emissions linked with the tea industry.

The Yala and Nyando rivers also support key conservation areas, including ones designated Important Bird Areas. Bird watching is a key part of the Kenyan tourism industry.

What working together can achieve: ACP MEAS

Other collaborations already underway between the EU and UNEP demonstrate what can be done when these institutions work together. EU-funded Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries project are a case in point.

This four-year project, launched in 2009, aims at capacity building for the implementation of MEAs, and has already established three regional hubs that are implementing capacity building activities to enhance country capacity to negotiate and implement MEAs to promote environmental sustainability. The hubs are in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

Operating out of each region, the hubs' work has enhanced national and regional capacity to participate in international environmental negotiations, e.g. through negotiation training.

The project also strengthens the capacity of target ACP countries to foster increased level of carbon financing through the Clean Development Mechanism, and is improving chemical management through additional funding to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Quick Start Programme.

The project also builds capacity for combating desertification and the management of obsolete pesticides

through separate agreement with the UNCCD-GM and FAO, respectively.

KNOSSOS

Another joint example of collaboration of between the Commission and UNEP is the Knowledge from Science to Societies (KNOSSOS) project.

The project – funded by FP7, the Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development – aims to bridge the gap between available scientific evidence and policy making in the environment field, on the grounds that a sound knowledge base will lead to more effective environment policies. KNOSSOS takes stock of EU environmental scientific research activities and makes pertinent information easily available to those at decision and policy-making levels.

The project is run in partnership with the ‘GLOBE EU’ and ‘GLOBE Europe’ networks of parliamentarians. KNOSSOS is about to launch an online platform that will facilitate access to information for policymakers. The platform will also be a tool for improved exchange and uptake of EU-research results related to the environment.

The project will also appoint Environmental Science Ambassadors who will raise public awareness about emerging environmental issues.

Parliamentarians will also benefit from the improved information flow. Steen Gade, Member of the Danish Parliament Environment Committee and GLOBE Europe President, notes “science and research should always be the very basis of our environment policy, and what a project like KNOSSOS delivers will ease our daily work by making available the latest reliable scientific data and bridging the gap between science and policy.”

SIX) – EU’S BARNIER PROPOSES NORTH AFRICA COMMON MARKET

The European Union wants to help North African states form a common agricultural market to fight wild swings in food prices after unrest in the region dies down, the bloc’s Internal Markets Commissioner said on Tuesday. Michel Barnier, in Paris touring France’s annual farming fair, said such price swings were at the heart of the region’s social problems and had cropped up as a result of misguided economic policies favouring free trade over local production. “There are many regions that should have a common agricultural policy, but the first place we need to encourage that to happen is on the other side of the Mediterranean,” Barnier told reporters at a news conference. Public fury over food prices was a key factor in protests that brought down the leaders of Tunisia and Egypt after decades of autocratic rule. Barnier said the region should harness that momentum to improve its economic fate starting with agriculture. “The winds of freedom are blowing there and my opinion is that there should be a common market in that region once the situation settles ... We in the European Union, without telling anyone what to do, should lend our expertise in this respect and ultimately work together,” he said.

SEVEN) – INTEGRATING ISLAMIC VALUES INTO FINANCE

The demand for Shariah-compliant assets is growing very rapidly, with total assets likely to triple to 3 trillion US dollars by 2016. Credit Suisse analyst Stefan Leins explains the basics of Islamic Finance in the article below.

Scientists working with the University of Zurich professor of economics, Dr Ernst Fehr recently made a striking discovery. Based on psychological experiments, they found religiosity to have a significant influence on economic action. The more religious a person is, the scientists concluded, the harder the person punishes unfair economic behavior of other market participants. This result may be surprising to conventional economists, but it is not to those who participate in Islamic Finance. For almost four decades, the faith-based business branch has sought to combine the premises of Islam with those of the financial markets, aiming to establish fair ways of trading and investing. Shariah-compliant assets are expected to triple within the next six years.

Sharia-Compliant Assets May Triple by 2016

Surprisingly, the unusual consolidation of financial and faith-based purposes has been richly rewarded. Islamic Finance is today one of the fastest-growing business segments in the world, attracting investors worldwide. Its compound growth rate was 26 percent between 2004 and 2009, totaling a market value of 822 billion US dollars by end-2009. Islamic Finance performed comparatively well during the financial crisis, and its future growth rate seems unabated. Shariah-compliant assets are likely to triple within the next six years, expected to reach 3 trillion dollars by 2016.

Interest, Speculation, Gambling Banned

Islamic Finance is the reconciliation of economic action with the Islamic legal practice of the Sharia – Islamic law. Based on a permanent exchange between banking experts and renowned Islamic scholars, a few basic concepts of prohibition have been defined throughout the past decades:

- No interest: The ban on interest (Riba) stands at the very center of all Sharia-compliant investment strategies. All interest is defined as usury. Trade, on the other hand, is explicitly promoted by the religious legal sources of Islam.
- No speculation and gambling-like transactions: Islamic scholars stress the fact that trade must be beneficial to the community. This link between economic action and social responsibility is emphasized by Islamic Finance's prohibition of speculation (Gharar) and gambling-like transactions (Maisir/Qimar).
- No "immoral" business branches: To be Sharia compliant, Islamic investors are not allowed to invest in sectors that are considered to be immoral. This means that Islamic portfolios must be free from all companies that are involved in adult entertainment, alcohol, tobacco, pork or the production of weapons.

The Dow Jones Islamic Market Index has outperformed MSCI World Index in recent years.

There are a number of equity indexes that screen companies with regard to their compatibility to Islam. Even though these indexes have to cope with a limited investment universe, the Dow Jones Islamic Market Index, currently the best-known Sharia-compliant equity index, has managed to outperform the MSCI World Index lately. In the case of Sukuk (Islamic bonds), structured products and funds, most financial institutions cooperate with so-called Sharia boards, normally consisting of three Islamic scholars that evaluate and categorize every financial product as either Halal (pure) or Haram (impure).

Grass Root Movement Has Turned Into a Unique Selling Point

Islamic Finance started off as a grass roots movement. In the beginning, many governments, even those of traditional Islamic countries, tried to avoid any entanglement with Islamic Finance. The reason was that they were scared to harm the country's economic development by following a different way than developed markets. As a consequence, most governments refused to accept Sharia-compliant investment opportunities. However, due to the strong demand from Muslim clients, Islamic Finance emerged and the fear of an Islamic way of doing business proved to be unfounded. Today, many countries are starting to rethink their attitudes toward Islamic Finance: Islamic Finance-friendlier policies are established, Islamic banking licenses are provided. Various global players have announced plans to enter the Islamic financial market during the course of 2011. As a matter of fact, Sharia-compliance has become a unique selling point to many companies and countries in the Islamic, as well as in the non-Islamic world. What used to be perceived as a restriction to economic action has thus become a beneficial resource to modern finance.

EIGHT) – UGANDA: BETTER COFFEE BRINGS BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS

Producing quality Arabica coffee beans on the slopes of Mount Elgon in eastern Uganda is only viable once farmers are assured ready access to the global market. Fair trade has made this possible.

Rural communities in eastern Uganda have gained much-vaunted access to the global market by supplying coffee to Cafédirect, a British company in which founders, growers and employees alike own shares. And coffee consumers thousands of miles away benefit by enjoying organically cultivated coffee.

Taking bumpy road farmers in Bukalasi sub-county in Bududa district, about 275 km east of the capital Kampala were visited.

Stanley Nasasa, 63, has worked almost his entire life as a coffee farmer but feels he is only now enjoying real benefits. The reason: fair trade.

Nasasa is secretary of the Bukalasi cooperative society. The society is a member of the Gumutindo coffee

cooperative, or grower organisation, that works with Cafédirect to ensure ready market access and better prices for the Arabica coffee farmers of the area. Gumutindo means “excellent coffee” in the vernacular Lugisu.

Getting prices on which livelihoods can be sustained is of uppermost importance to farmers as that allows them to build houses, educate their children and transform communities.

At Nasasa’s home discovered why he has become a fair-trade crusader. His family had just moved into a newly built brick-walled house with a cement floor after living in a mud and tin-roofed house in a mudslide-prone area.

“I bought this piece of land for three million shillings (1,300 dollars) and the house has so far cost me 10 million shillings (5,000 dollars). These are the fruits of fair trade under Gumutindo,” he said.

Flanked by his wife Stella, Nasasa said the money came from savings after receiving good fair-trade prices and “social premiums”.

Gumutindo pays a social premium with each kilogramme of coffee that is produced, which comes in the form of a bonus that farmers can use for support projects that are also aimed at people not engaged in coffee production.

Nasasa told that, “the fair-trade arrangement has saved us from predatory coffee dealers who give farmers far less than the market price of coffee. We have come a long way, I tell you.

“There was a time when we would carry coffee all the way to Chebukube market in Kenya. It was not easy because some people lost their lives.” He was referring to the coffee-smuggling days of the 1970s during dictator Idi Amin’s reign.

Amin’s policies caused an economic meltdown that affected the marketing of coffee. Farmers stored coffee in their houses because of lack of markets. They had to trek through the mountains to neighbouring Kenya to sell their coffee in order to survive.

Nasasa said the new house is a relief to his wife who always had difficulty climbing the hilly area where their original house was located. “Life is better here. We lived in fear after several people near to where we stayed were killed by mudslides last March (2010).”

Behind the house is a barn with two Friesian cows producing milk for the family. There are three raised stands with wire mesh in the compound. The stands are used to ensure a clean space for the drying of the Arabica coffee beans.

Inside Nasasa’s house one big room has been reserved for storing and drying coffee. He squatted, showing very white coffee beans in his hands while smiling: “This one is surely AA grade, the highest quality according to Gumutindo standards,” he remarked.

About 50 m from the Nasasa home lives Wilson Mabala, another Gumutindo supplier. Asked about the benefits of supplying coffee under fair trade rules, Mabala replied that, “since we joined Gumutindo we have maintained our lands using organic manure. We are getting a good price for our coffee.

“I have personally benefited a lot. With the better earnings, I have sent my children to better schools than I could afford in the past,” he added.

Primary education in Uganda is free of charge but many parents concerned about the quality of education opt to take their children to private schools where they foot the bill. Mabala told that he spends over one million shillings (500 dollars) per year on school for two of his children.

A short walk farther IPS came across a project where the Bukalasi cooperative society stores are being expanded to create more storage facilities for coffee.

Mabala, who is also chairperson of Bukalasi cooperative society, said that the stores’ expansion is financed with social premium receipts.

“The farmers sat and decided that we should expand the store so as to create more room for the storage of coffee. You cannot have ‘gumutindo’ (excellent coffee) when you store it badly,” he explained.

Behind the store, found Sera Nafungo tilling a garden where coffee has been planted with beans and yams. Nafungo, who has four children, remarked that fair trade has taught farmers to preserve their soil using organic manure. “We get free coffee seedlings and have been taught how to prevent pests and keep the nutrients in the soil,” she enthused.

“I have managed to buy some Friesian cows and now have a constant supply of milk at home, some of which is sold,” she added.

Mabala told that other farmers in the area have witnessed the benefits of fair trade farming and were eager to join. “We hope to expand our membership but we are doing it systematically. A new member must be taught about quality requirements before we can admit him or her,” he insisted.

According to Cafédirect’s website, the company is the result of “Oxfam, Equal Exchange, Tradecraft, and Twin Trading’s decision to bypass the conventional market and buy coffee direct from disadvantaged growers in developing countries”.

Over a period of five years, it had paid growers more than 13,4 million dollars over and above market prices for raw materials.

NINE) – SOUTHERN COUNTRIES CALL FOR EU BURDEN SHARING ON REFUGEES

European Union countries bordering the Mediterranean are asking the EU to take in refugees in cases of humanitarian crises such as the unrest in North Africa, saying they alone shouldn't be forced to shoulder the burden. Italy's interior minister invited counterparts from Malta, Cyprus, Greece, France and Spain in Rome on Wednesday to forge a common position as waves of Tunisian migrants – 6,200 in recent weeks – reach Italian shores. Rome fears tens of thousands of Africans may also be on their way if the chaos in Libya continues. In a joint statement, the six countries urged the EU to establish a “common and sustainable asylum system” that includes relocating migrants within the EU by the end of 2012. **CALL FOR SOLIDARITY FUND** They also asked the EU to create a solidarity fund to help Mediterranean countries that initially receive them. The communiqué warned of the danger of “uncontrolled flows of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers into Europe, with serious consequences and potential risks to EU internal security.” The question of spreading refugees around Europe has long stumped the EU and it wasn't clear how the request of the Mediterranean members would be met when all 27 EU interior ministers meet Thursday in Brussels. The ministers said it was the first time such a common position had been put to the EU. Italian Interior Minister Roberto Maroni, of the anti-immigrant Northern League party, estimated that as many as 300,000 people –most of them non-Libyan Africans- could attempt to leave Libya if conditions there degenerate. “We can absorb the impact, yes, but not for the long term, thus the request to the European Union to share this burden with us,” Maroni told a press conference after the meeting, his five counterparts sitting with him. Italy has already convinced the EU border control agency Frontex to patrol sea and air ports and process migrants once they arrive. The joint statement called for Frontex to be beefed up. The International Organization for Migration says it is difficult to estimate how many people might flee Libya, which until 2008 had been a major point of departure for Africans and others seeking to reach Europe aboard smugglers' boats. Italy and Libya signed an agreement in 2008 that, among other things, called for Italy to return would-be migrants intercepted at sea to Libya without screening them first for asylum. The deal reduced illegal arrivals in Italy from 36,000 in 2008 to 4,300 in 2010. The agreement, though, was condemned by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, which said it violated migrants' rights to seek asylum and flee oppression, human crises or war. Maroni said about 60 Egyptians reached Italy over a week ago, but they were immediately sent back. The Tunisians are being held in various immigrant holding centers in southern while they are processed for asylum claims. Maroni said only a few had actually asked for asylum.

TEN) – BURDEN SHARING MUST BE VOLUNTARY, SAYE EU COMMISSION

Italy cannot hope to off-load to other European Union countries some of the migrants it predicts will land on its shores in the wake of unrest in Libya, unless they volunteer to take them, the EU warned Wednesday. The message from the EU Commission came as Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said in Rome that the EU “must play its part” in helping his country cope with what he predicted could be an influx of up to 300,000 immigrants trying to reach Europe. “On the basis of existing legislation, all solidarity in this sense is on a voluntary basis,” European Commission spokesman Michele Cercone told reporters in Brussels. Italy has been clamouring for EU help since over 5,000 people arrived on its tiny southern island of Lampedusa following a democratic upheaval in Tunisia. Since unrest spread to Libya, a country that serves as a gateway for illegal migration into Europe, Italy's fears have increased. In response, the EU border patrol agency FRONTEX has deployed a mission in the Southern Mediterranean to help Italian authorities, while the commission has said some EU funding may be redirected towards the emergency. **FRONTEXT PREPARING CONTINGENCY PLANS** Frontex director Ilkka Laitinen said his agency was working on contingency plans for sudden influxes of migration, but refused to be drawn on Frattini's forecasts. “I'm not going to give you figures or estimations because they are related to scenarios, and to start talking about scenarios would lead to unnecessary speculation,” he said. He said that according to the International Organization for Migration, between 500,000 and 1.5 million non-Libyans, “mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa” live in the country, but did not say how many are expected to leave for the EU if border controls are dropped. EU interior ministers are due to discuss the situation further on Thursday, acting on a specific Italian request. Ahead of the meeting, diplomats warned that while Italy could expect financial and technical aid, any “burden sharing” of the flows of irregular

migrants that may come from North Africa was out of the question. “A country of 60 million should not have problems in accommodating a few thousand migrants,” one source noted. “Besides, I don’t remember Italy offering to take up people when Malta was facing an immigration crisis,” the diplomat added. However, Laitinen said Italy would be « partly » refunded for the cost of supplying patrol boats for FRONTEX missions.

ELEVEN) – FRENCH INTERIOR MINISTER SENDS STERN WARNING TO WOULD BE MIGRANTS

Le ministre français de l’Intérieur, Brice Hortefeux, est resté évasif mercredi à Rome sur la possibilité que la Cœur accueille des immigrés pour aider l’cœur en cas d’afflux massif de clandestins de Libye, qui pourraient s’élever à environ 300.000 personnes. Interrogé par l’AFP sur la possibilité que la Cœur accueille une partie de ces immigrés, le ministre est resté très évasif : « En Europe, dans chaque pays, nous avons le droit de choisir qui nous voulons et qui nous pouvons accueillir », a-t-il déclaré à l’issue d’une réunion avec ses homologues espagnol, italien, grec, chypriote et maltais. « Il n’y a pas d’avenir pour les immigrés clandestins. Un étranger qui vient en situation irrégulière, sans avoir respecté les règles et les conditions pour venir sur le continent européen, a vocation à être reconduit dans son pays d’origine », a-t-il ajouté. « Le ministre (italien Roberto) Maroni nous a indiqué que selon ses estimations il y avait 2,5 millions de migrants en Libye et que parmi eux il estimait à 300.000 ceux qui voudraient émigrer dans des délais relativement rapides. Et sur ces 300.000, on sait qu’il y en a très peu qui voudraient repartir en Afrique sub-saharienne, mais en revanche un certain nombre qui souhaiteraient se rendre en Egypte, mais aussi en Europe », a expliqué Hortefeux. « Ce sont des ordres de grandeur, nous n’avons pas d’estimations sensiblement différentes », a-t-il ajouté, confirmant implicitement la validité des chiffres avancés par Rome. Au cours de la réunion, les six pays ont annoncé leur intention de demander de « mettre au point, dans un esprit de solidarité européenne, un système européen d’asile commun et durable ». « Je suis favorable à des critères d’harmonisation d’ici à 2012 », a indiqué de son côté M. Hortefeux.

TWELVE) – ARMED SOUTH SUDAN POLICE RAID SOUTH NEWSPAPER

Armed south Sudanese police raided an independent newspaper, its editor said on Tuesday, raising fears of a crackdown on press freedom ahead of the region’s declaration of independence in July. Nhial Bol, editor-in-chief of the Citizen, said the newspaper’s offices were raided early on Sunday by five policemen wearing civilian clothing, waving pistols and criticising the paper’s content. “They were carrying pistols ... they were yelling that we were writing nonsense,” Bol said. “They were from a branch of the police, I recognised one of them from a function I attended.” Bol said he thought the raid was in retaliation for a recent article he wrote saying that the south’s police force was a cause of insecurity and lacked good leadership. He said interior ministry officials had told him to stop criticising the police in print. Southern media leaders hope press freedom will be better protected when a media bill now awaiting parliamentary approval becomes law. “We don’t have a law so police do not know what they can do ... they terrorise whoever they want,” Bol said. “They are refusing to investigate the officers who (carried out the raid) ... The media law may help in situations like this.” The south’s information minister, Barnaba Marial Benjamin, said “This was an isolated incident by the police ...” of which the internal affairs ministry knew nothing. Protecting freedom of expression for media outlets is at the heart of government media policy, and the new media law will be passed before independence, Benjamin said.

THIRTEEN) – SOUTH AFRICA LOSING INTEREST IN SADC CUSTOMS UNION

A schism about the division of revenues in the world’s oldest customs union threatens to derail the process of regional economic integration in Southern Africa.

The internal problems plaguing the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) for the past year have entered a new phase. A concept study looking into revenue sharing from the SACU pool proposes a radical overhaul in which South Africa receives more money, while Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland (BLNS) see their shares drop.

In some cases this drop is significant. In the SACU-commissioned study the Australian Centre for International Economics proposes a drop in revenue for Swaziland from nine to three percent of the pool by 2019.

Botswana in the same period would go from 17 to a paltry 6.7 percent, while Namibia's share declines from 15 to nine percent. Only Lesotho would see a marginal increase from 8.5 to nine percent.

South Africa, which presently receives less than 50 percent, would receive 72 percent of the pool.

While it is unlikely that the proposal will be accepted in its current form, it is a welcome stick for Pretoria. South Africa has long lamented the pressure the current system puts on its treasury while the BLNS states use their share to fill their coffers.

In the case of Swaziland, the mighty Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has openly condemned the use of SACU revenue for "extravagant activities such as the purchase of luxury cars for the king's birthday", referring to the ruling autocrat Mswati III.

The South Africans want the money used for development while the BLNS argue it is a rightful compensation for allowing the sub-region's behemoth to usurp their economic policy space.

"South Africa's insistence on putting the money towards development projects might very well be interpreted as another drive to access markets for South African industry," says Sanusha Naidu, research director of communication network Fahamu's emerging powers in Africa programme.

"South Africa needs to take care it respects the sovereignty of the other members in the discussion that takes place."

This is a major concern in the region where South Africa's dominance is increasingly frowned upon. It could harm the fragile process of regional integration in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). States Naidu: "SADC wants to have a fully fledged customs union by 2016. That means that SACU, as a building block for such a customs union, needs to sort out its issues."

The current tiff between the SACU members has a much wider impact, she argues. "It is not just about revenue sharing. The outcome of this process will affect how other SADC countries structure tariffs or introduce trade barriers."

On the other hand, as Roman Grynberg of the Botswana Institute of Development Policy Analysis recently pointed out in an opinion piece in the South African press, it is very unlikely that SACU would agree to let additional members benefit from the current revenue-sharing arrangement.

In that sense successful reform of SACU would be a prerequisite for building it into a larger SADC customs union.

"The showdown in SACU has been a long time coming," according to Paul Kruger, researcher with the independent Trade Law Centre of Southern Africa (TRALAC), based near Cape Town, South Africa.

"Integration in the region will depend on the outcome of this process but South African policymakers have come to see SACU – with its common negotiating mechanisms – as an irritation."

This has consequences for the regional integration agenda: "South Africa is getting less and less interested in a SADC customs union. The other countries favour the idea because of the transfers they currently see in SACU but South Africa knows that, in a customs union, it is at the short end."

Instead, South Africa is eyeing a tripartite free trade area (FTA) between SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC), argues Kruger.

This would give Pretoria the benefits of liberalised trade without the headache of administering a customs union. Says Kruger: "South Africa has discovered a customs union is not necessary to access the benefits of liberalisation and lowering tariff barriers."

Moreover, South Africa's foreign policy agenda has shifted since the formation of the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) tripartite grouping and the invitation to South Africa to join the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) formation. It is keen to project itself as "the gateway to Africa" within these international partnerships.

Whether SACU can formulate a common outlook is unsure. "Namibia and South Africa seem to be playing a subtle game geared towards structural change in SACU," remarks South African trade expert Dot Keet.

"Botswana is restructuring its economy entirely differently, while Swaziland and Lesotho are almost completely dependent on a combination of SACU revenue and foreign aid.

"It is possible that reform of the revenue stream will lead to a development fund, controlled for instance by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). However, countries would need to be ensured proper representation on the board of such a fund for it to work," she adds.

But the problems in SACU might run too deep.

Grynberg warned that other SADC countries are weary of South Africa controlling almost all of the production benefits in SACU. Because of the customs union, SACU members have no means of protecting their industries from competition by South African products.

It is a point that was recently made by Namibian deputy finance minister Calle Schlettwein, chairperson of the workgroup tasked with SACU reform, when he said that South Africa's dominance prohibits other countries from developing.

In the past, SACU revenue compensated for that. Abandoning this arrangement would cause polarisation, said Schlettwein, which could culminate in the trade barriers Naidu warns of.

FOURTEEN) – MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT VERY WORRIED

Le Maroc est « extrêmement préoccupé par la spirale de violence » en Libye, a déclaré mercredi à Lisbonne le ministre marocain des Affaires étrangères Taieb Fassi Fihri, qui a notamment exprimé son inquiétude concernant la « sécurité sous-régionale ». « Le Maroc est extrêmement préoccupé par la spirale de violence à laquelle nous avons assisté ces derniers jours », a déclaré M. Fassi Fihri, la jugeant « inadmissible ». « La stabilité de la Libye est en jeu. Et lorsqu'on parle de la stabilité d'un pays au cœur de l'Afrique du Nord, qui respire en Méditerranée, nous sommes préoccupés aussi par la sécurité sous-régionale », a-t-il ajouté à l'issue d'une rencontre avec son homologue portugais Luis Amado. « La violence doit cesser et l'impact sur la sécurité régionale doit être maîtrisé », a souligné M. Fassi Fihri, défendant « une solution pacifique à l'ensemble des revendications légitimement exprimées ». « Nous sommes confiants (dans le fait) que le peuple libyen saura trouver la voie qu'il mérite, la voie du progrès », a-t-il dit. Le chef de la diplomatie portugaise a pour sa part estimé que le régime de Mouammar Kadhafi, confronté depuis le 15 février à un mouvement de contestation sans précédent, était « dans une situation de blocage ». « C'est un régime régime anachronique, très spécifique dans ses aspects internes, et qui doit pour cette raison faire l'objet d'une adaptation sans délai », a déclaré M. Amado au cours d'une conférence de presse commune. Tandis que l'Union européenne s'approche de l'adoption de sanctions à l'encontre du colonel Kadhafi et de son régime, M. Amado a jugé « naturel qu'une dynamique de confrontation avec le régime libyen puisse s'affirmer très rapidement, au cours des prochains jours ou semaines ». « Je suis convaincu que le régime libyen s'est placé dans une situation d'isolement incontournable », a-t-il ajouté.

FIFTEEN) – MOROCCAN YOUTH, NGOs CALL FOR CONTINUED MOBILIZATION

Un réseau d'associations et de jeunes Marocains ont annoncé mercredi à Rabat la poursuite de « la mobilisation pour des revendications politiques urgentes », sans fixer de date pour d'éventuelles manifestations, a constaté un journaliste de l'AFP. « Tout en condamnant les violences qui ont eu lieu après les manifestations du 20 février, nous déclarons que la mobilisation va continuer pour que les revendications de réformes politiques soient réalisées », a indiqué Mohamed Lâaouni, l'un des membres du réseau lors d'une rencontre avec la presse. Le Réseau démocratique marocain pour la solidarité avec les peuples est composé de jeunes et d'ONG dont l'[Association marocaine des droits humains](#) (AMDH). « Le peuple marocain veut une nouvelle Constitution, une Constitution qui puisse lui assurer dignité et justice sociale », a déclaré Khadija Ryadi, présidente de l'AMDH. « Nous allons continuer la mobilisation à travers des sit in et des manifestations pacifiques dans toutes les villes du Maroc jusqu'à la réalisation des réformes », a-t-elle ajouté. Aucune date n'a été annoncée. **KING PROMISES 'MORE REFORMS'** Au lendemain des manifestations du 20 février auxquelles de jeunes Marocains avaient appelé sur Facebook, le gouvernement a assuré avoir « saisi le message ». « Maintenant il faut passer à la vitesse supérieure » en matière de réformes, avait dit le ministre de la Communication et porte-parole du gouvernement, Khalid Naciri. Dans une allocution, le roi Mohammed VI s'est dit attaché à la « poursuite des réformes » et a exprimé sa volonté de « consolider (le modèle marocain) par de nouvelles réformes ».

SIXTEEN) – KEY MOROCCO PARTY WANTS REFORMS AGENDA

L'USP, un des principaux partis de la coalition gouvernementale marocaines, réclame un « agenda pour des réformes politiques soit fixé », en « reconnaît l'importance » des manifestations de rue récentes, a déclaré jeudi à l'AFP l'un de ses dirigeants. « Les réformes politiques commencées il y a 15 ans au Maroc sont maintenant consommées. Notre parti doit être en phase avec les revendications des jeunes marocains », selon Ahmed Zaïdi, président du groupe parlementaire de l'Union socialiste des forces populaires (USFP). Cette déclaration intervient peu après les manifestations du 20 février dans plusieurs villes du pays pour exiger des réformes politiques « urgentes », en réponse à des appels de jeunes Marocains sur Facebook. « Ces réformes sont de nature à préserver la crédibilité de l'action et du pluralisme politiques », a également souligné un communiqué de l'USFP publié mercredi. Contrairement aux autres partis politiques de la coalition

gouvernementale, ainsi que le parti islamiste Justice et développement (PJD, opposition parlementaire), l'USFP « n'avait appelé ni à boycotter ni à soutenir les manifestations du 20 février », a indiqué M. Zaïdi. « Les réformes dont le Maroc a besoin sont de nature institutionnelle, pour donner de la crédibilité à l'action politique à travers le rétablissement de la relation entre les élections et la décision politique », selon le responsable de l'USFP. Il faut « des réformes constitutionnelles visant à édifier des institutions fortes et capables de promouvoir les affaires du pays », lit-on par ailleurs dans le communiqué de l'USFP.

SEVENTEEN) – SENEGAL SEVERS TIES WITH IRAN OVER REBEL WEAPONS

Senegal severed diplomatic ties with Iran on Wednesday, accusing Tehran of supplying weapons to separatist rebels in its southern Casamance region that killed three Senegalese soldiers and wounded six this week. "Senegal is outraged to note that Iranian weapons brought about the death of Senegalese soldiers. Consequently, Senegal has decided to sever its diplomatic ties with the republic of Iran, starting this day," a foreign ministry announcement on state TV said around midnight.

EIGHTEEN) – 49 SOMALIAN IMMIGRANTS DIE IN GULF OF ADEN

Quarante-neuf migrants somaliens qui tentaient de gagner le Yémen ont péri dans le naufrage de leur embarcation dans le golfe d'Aden, a annoncé jeudi le ministère yéménite de l'Intérieur

NINETEEN) -TUNISIA WILL NEED LOTS OLF FOREIGN AID, SAYS CENTRAL BANK

Le gouverneur de la Banque centrale de Tunisie, Mustapha Nabli, a prévenu mercredi depuis Washington que le pays aurait "besoin de financements" de la communauté internationale dans les prochains mois pour répondre aux aspirations de son peuple. "Il est probable que nos besoins de financement soient en augmentation, à la fois en matière extérieure et budgétaire", a déclaré M. Nabli lors d'une conférence de la Fondation Carnegie pour la paix internationale. "Nous allons avoir besoin de financements et nous travaillons avec la Banque mondiale, le FMI et d'autres partenaires: la Banque africaine de développement, l'Union européenne, des fonds arabes et ainsi de suite. Nous nous attendons à un soutien qui soit plus élevé que la moyenne", a-t-il souligné. Interrogé pour donner une idée des montants qu'il espérait, il a répondu qu'il ne donnerait "pas de chiffre aujourd'hui". "Le grand défi que nous avons aujourd'hui, ce sont les pressions sociales. Avec l'ouverture du système politique, il y a beaucoup de pression pour essayer d'avoir un rattrapage par rapport au passé en matières de salaires, d'emplois. Et cela crée des risques pour l'économie", a rapporté le chef de la banque centrale. "Le risque important que j'entrevois est que si dans trois, quatre mois, la production et l'activité ne reviennent pas à la normale, alors nous pourrions être confrontés à des pressions venues d'un point de vue extérieur [...] et d'un point de vue budgétaire également", a-t-il considéré. Après douze ans à Washington comme économiste à la Banque mondiale, M. Nabli, 63 ans, a pris ses fonctions en janvier, six jours après la fuite du président Zine el Abidine Ben Ali.

TWENTY) - GUN SHOTS IN ABIDJAN

De violents échanges de tirs, certains "à l'arme lourde", étaient entendus mercredi après-midi à Abidjan dans un quartier favorable à Alassane Ouattara, théâtre de combats depuis plusieurs jours, ont rapporté à l'AFP des habitants.

Fernando Matos Rosa

Brussels

