

**Question for written answer P-000143/2014
to the Council**
Rule 117
Mário David (PPE)

Subject: Lifting of sanctions on Zimbabwe

Twelve years have passed since the EU adopted measures under Council Decision 2002/148/EC to suspend cooperation with Zimbabwe, and gradual steps have been taken by the Government of Zimbabwe and the opposition to restore the country's political and economic stability. These include the signing, under the mediation of the Heads of State and Government of the South African Development Community (SADC), of the 2009 Global Political Agreement between the ZANU-PF and MDC groupings which led to the establishment of a Government of National Unity (GNU), and the subsequent adoption of a new constitution on the basis of a national referendum on 16 March 2013. Council Decision 2012/97/CFSP of 17 February 2012 recognised that the creation of the GNU afforded an opportunity to re-establish a constructive relationship between the EU and Zimbabwe. More recently, the EU has given an undertaking to respect both the outcome of the Harmonised Elections of 31 July 2013 and the assessment of those elections by the ACP Group, SADC and African Union observation missions. The elections that were deemed by most international observers as the most free, fair and peaceful to have been held in Zimbabwe's history were, to the surprise of the international community, those that gave President Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF the largest and most credible victory.

Since then, EU sanctions have been eased on several occasions. On 23 September 2013, the EU decided to withdraw the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation from the sanctions list.

The grave economic and social consequences of the sanctions have caused deep suffering among the Zimbabwean people, in particular among the poorer members of society, by restricting employment, social services provision and development opportunities. When the EU reviews the subject in February 2014, it will be time for it to lift the sanctions against Zimbabwe and to restart mutual political and economic cooperation in all fields, which will only prove beneficial to both sides. The EU should not employ double standards in dealing with its partners.

If the EU were to appraise respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law seriously and coherently, how many countries would face sanctions? No matter what kind of 'excuses' are found to justify the lifting of sanctions on the export of diamonds, no one would understand it to be anything but a hypocritical decision taken in the interests of the EU industry.

Does the Council agree that it is time for the EU to lift its sanctions against the people of Zimbabwe?