

EU assures on funding

Friday, August 06, 2010

Fiji Times

THE European Union has reassured of the same level of funding or higher for the Pacific region.

These as questions are being raised on the availability of funds for the region when the European Development Fund expires in two years.

EU representative at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting Christian Leffler was confident funding would continue.

In effect, he said, discussions on this have already started.

Meanwhile, Mr Leffler said the EU would be determined to have the Pacific region sign an Economic Partnership Agreement.

It has been three years now since the deadline of the EPA, which was December, 2007.

To date, only Fiji and Papua New Guinea have signed interim EPA.

Mr Leffler said the agreement would assist the region. But he did not believe that the EU and Australia and New Zealand were desperate competitors for the Pacific market.

He said the EPA with the EU and PACER Plus could complement each other.

"Of course in trade, there is competition but we are not desperate competitors," Mr Leffler said.