

Brussels, 11 March 2005

## European Commission welcomes launch of the Commission for Africa report

***European Commission President José Manuel Barroso today welcomed the simultaneous publication in London and Addis Ababa of the report of the Africa Commission as an important contribution in what is a key year for development. President Barroso said “I want Africa to be a flagship issue for this Commission. Both the European Commission and the Commission for Africa recognise that more should be done both for and by Africa. The European Commission will come forward in April with its proposals on accelerating progress in reaching the Millennium Development Goals”.***

This is a year of opportunity for development, with the June European Council, the G8 Summit in July, the UN High Level Review of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in September as well as the Hong Kong WTO Ministerial in December.

The European Commission has a major role to play in shaping these agendas. Next month Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Michel will present a package of proposals on the future orientation of EU development policy, including a specific focus on Africa. Trade Commissioner Mandelson will continue to exercise leadership to ensure that the Doha Round of trade talks delivers on its development promise.

The European Commission remains at the forefront of the commitment for sustainable development, democracy, peace and security in all under-privileged countries. Its key role in promoting coordination and complementarity between the Community, its Member States and multilateral organisations for reducing and eradicating poverty is enshrined in the EU Constitution. In that perspective, the Commission is working on an ambitious initiative on Africa, in connection with the updated development policy statement (a public consultation is taking place at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/theme/consultation/index\\_fr.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/theme/consultation/index_fr.htm)), due later this year.

The European Commission welcomes the Commission for Africa's emphasis on the role that trade can play as a driver of growth for Africa's development. The EU, which is already a main importer from Africa is also the main provider of Trade Related Assistance (50 per cent of total TRA is provided by the EC and Member States) and supports additional, targeted funding to help poor countries in Africa develop that capacity. The EU "Everything But Arms" scheme fully opens the EU market to least developed countries. The Commission is also committed to use the ongoing negotiations of Economic Partnership Agreements with four African regions to help Africa integrate into the global economy. The core rationale of the process is to contribute to development and growth.

The Commission for Africa <http://www.commissionforafrica.org/index.html> was created in February 2004 at the initiative of Prime Minister Tony Blair, and comprises 17 members, nine of whom are from Africa.