



**European Union**  
Delegation of the European Commission  
in South Africa

**... this week  
in review**

*This publication seeks to provide information on EU activities of interest to SA readers.*



## 1 – 7 April 2005

### Headline News

#### **Statement by President Barroso on death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II (02/04/2005)**

"I wish to express my deep sorrow on learning of the death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. To the Vatican and to the entire Catholic community, the European Commission offers its condolences. I send a special message of solidarity to the Polish nation which has known in Karol Wojtyla one of its most distinguished sons. John Paul II will be remembered as someone who played an essential role in the reunification of Europe and in the advance of ideas of freedom and democracy in our continent. Europeans will never forget his struggle for peace and human dignity. I had the enormous privilege of knowing this great European and world figure. His disappearance leaves a void in the hearts of all those, believers and non believers, who have been inspired by his example of courage and humanity."

#### **Pretoria Agreement on the peace process in the Ivory Coast (07/04/2005)**

The European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the meeting between the main actors in the Ivorian crisis. The meeting took place in Tshwane (Pretoria) from 03-06/04/2005, within the framework of the mandate given to South African President, H.E. Mr Thabo Mbeki, as mediator, by the African Union (AU). Com Michel, recently having visited the Ivory Coast to revive a political dialogue between the various parties, reiterates his full support for the efforts of Pres Mbeki and calls on all participants to follow a path of reconciliation.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/401&format=HTML&aged=0&language=fr&guiLanguage=en>

#### **Ambassador's tour of duty ends and new Head of Delegation takes over reigns in Pretoria (07/04/2005)**



Mr M Lake

At a recent farewell function in his honour, Amb Michael Lake noted: "With the end of my tenure as the EU's Ambassador to South Africa now imminent, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the staff of our Delegation, to our South African partners, to my EU Member State colleagues and their staff, and to the many friends that my wife and I have made over the past four years. You have made our stay an experience to remember." Mr Lake is succeeded by Mr Lodewijk Briët, former director in charge of Common Foreign and Security matters at the European Commission, who took over as Head of Delegation on 04/04/2005.

See: **Booming SA-EU Trade Ties See Envoy Leaving in High Spirits (05/04/2005)**

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200504050624.html>

See also: **EU-SA Trade Deal Has Paid Off – Envoy (04/04/2005)**

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200504040078.html>



Mr L Briët

### Other News

#### **President Barroso congratulates new Iraqi President Talabani on his nomination (07/04/2005)**

"On behalf of the European Commission, I wish to express my sincere congratulations on your appointment as President of Iraq. The Commission has been pleased to follow attentively the political process in Iraq over the last months. On this occasion, I wish to confirm to you our intention to continue supporting the Iraqi reconstruction as well as the political and constitutional processes that lie ahead and which should translate into a better and prosperous life to the entire Iraqi population and future generations of Iraqis. In this context, I particularly welcome your ambition to make this process as inclusive as possible so that all sectors of the Iraqi society can take part in these important challenges..."

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/399&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

#### **Security and space research - a new focus (07/04/2005)**

Security and space research together form a new priority under the proposal for the 7th Framework Programme for Research & Development published today. Security and space research will share a budget allocation of €500 million per year. Vice President Verheugen said "Security research will contribute to increasing security for our citizens. Space applications have important benefits to citizens, contributing to the fields of agriculture, fisheries, environment, telecommunications, security and transport. Both research fields will help create a favourable business environment, not

only for the security and space industry, but also in many other economic sectors, thereby making a significant contribution towards increasing growth and employment in Europe”.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/397&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **Louis Michel sees clear opportunity to enhance political dialogue with Cuba (26/04/2005)**

European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, welcomed today in Havana the commitment of Cuban authorities to enhance political dialogue with the European Union, based on mutual respect and frank exchanges on all issues without taboos. On Friday night, Commissioner Michel met the Cuban President, Fidel Castro, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Felipe Pérez Roque. Their four-hour meeting took place in a positive and constructive atmosphere. Commissioner Michel and Minister Pérez Roque agreed to explore ways to launch a structured dialogue on issues which include Human Rights and the cooperation in judicial matters, elections and the situation in prisons. Louis Michel declared: “There is a clear mutual interest in developing closer relations and political dialogue, on the basis of respect of sovereignty and reciprocity”. He recalled the EU’s position on the release of all political prisoners

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/380&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **EC provides €500,000 in humanitarian aid to help tackle Marburg outbreak in Angola (24/03/2005)**

The European Commission has allocated €500,000 for emergency measures aimed at preventing the spread of the Marburg virus in Angola. The province of Uige in the north of the country has been struck by a serious outbreak of the deadly haemorrhagic disease which has a mortality rate of more than 90%. The aid is being provided through ECHO, the Commission’s Humanitarian Aid department, which comes under the responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel. It involves the use of the fast-track ‘primary emergency’ procedure that enables a speedy humanitarian response in sudden onset crises. See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/381&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

**Ahead:**

- **10-11/04/2005 - EU-African Union (Troika), Luxembourg**

See: <http://www.eu2005.lu/en/calendrier/2005/04/11ueua/index.html>

**For further information please contact Frank Oberholzer at 012-452-5200**

## **A European Constitution: questions and answers (06/04/2005)**

### **Why do we need this new Constitution? Can’t we live with the treaties we already have?**

- The European Union works reasonably well under its present treaties. But the system has become very complex and hard for most people to understand.
- That’s why, several years ago, the EU’s presidents and prime ministers asked a team of experts to draw up a single, simplified Treaty - the “Constitution for Europe”. EU leaders finalised the new text in 2004.
- The Constitution brings together the achievements of the last fifty years. It makes the European Union clearer and more transparent for everyone. Simpler decision-making rules also make the EU work more effectively.
- The Constitution makes the European Union more democratic by giving a bigger role to the European and national Parliaments, and by giving EU citizens the right to ask the Union to launch new initiatives.
- All in all, the Constitution is a big improvement over the present treaties, and brings important new benefits to the EU’s citizens and its Member States.

### **Will the Constitution create a European “super-State”?**

- No, it won’t. Although it is called a “Constitution”, it is quite simply an international treaty agreed and ratified by sovereign countries, which remain in charge of the Union.
- Article I-1 of the Constitution clearly states that the Union reflects the will of its citizens and its Member States, and that its powers are given to it by these States.
- The Constitution will make the Union stronger and more effective, but not by taking any powers away from its Member States.
- The basic relationship between the Union and the Member States will stay the same, and any further major changes to the Constitution will still have to be decided unanimously by the Member States.
- Article I-5 of the Constitution explicitly requires the Union to respect the national identities of the Member States, including their systems of regional and local self-government.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/112&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>