



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.



11 – 17 February 2005

Headline News

Climate change: Commission hails entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol (16/02/2005)

The European Commission joined 140 nations in celebrating the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, which gives the international community its most powerful instrument yet to combat global climate change. Industrialised countries that have ratified the Protocol are legally obliged to meet their targets for limiting or reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2012. The EU has already made this binding for Member States under EU law. Since it was agreed in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 140 countries plus the European Community, thus covering 80% of the world's population. Its entry into force comes 90 days after Russia handed its ratification to the United Nations on 18 November.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/187&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **The Kyoto Protocol (16/02/2005)**

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/49&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

An Observatory for Environment and Sustainable Development for Africa (16/02/2005)

In a week that sees European development ministers meet for the first time under the Luxembourg Presidency, ministers from across the world come together to develop a Global Earth Observation System of Systems, and the anniversary of the signing of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, the European Commission launches a dedicated Environmental Information System based on satellite and computer-mapping technologies. This tool, developed by the Joint Research Centre, supports EU development activities in Africa, by providing information on food needs, helping the European Commission Humanitarian Office provide aid in the aftermath of natural disasters and other emergencies, and assisting long-term development through sustainable management of natural resources.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/50&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **Earth observation: Global co-operation becomes reality (16/02/2005)**

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/185&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Other News

Commission calls for enhanced co-operation in space (17/02/2005)

At the 'Winning through co-operation: sharing the benefits of space' conference, over 40 nations and around 20 international organisations have come together to discuss international co-operation in space. Space is already an international endeavour, as demonstrated by a large variety of science projects. The conference has provided a forum between those States capable of providing space technology – the supply side – and those willing to make use of it – the demand side. European space industry has become a key actor in the world-wide commercial market of satellite manufacturing, launch services, and satellite operators. Sustaining a competitive industry requires new research and technologies.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/191&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **The EU's Space Policy – an overview (17/02/2005)**

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/53&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

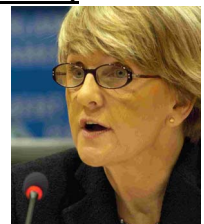
The Importance of Space – Speech by Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen (17/02/2005)

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/99&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Solidarity in the European Constitution – Speech by Commissioner Danuta Hübner (15/02/2005)

In closing "The European Constitution and Solidarity" Conference at the European Parliament, Commissioner Danuta Hübner (Regional Policy) stated: "Solidarity is a basic value of the Union. It is highlighted in the draft Constitutional Treaty, which recognises economic, social and, for the first time, territorial cohesion as one of the cornerstones of the European project. ... According to the Treaties the Community shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions. Indeed, the key idea is that solidarity expressed through Cohesion Policy was vital for the harmonious development of the Union and that it should remain so in the future. With the help of the structural funds weaker regions and member states have been given the resources to accelerate their development."

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/95&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>



Air transport: Europe reinforces passengers' rights (16/02/2005)

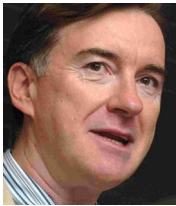
As of 17/02/2005, citizens enjoy new rights when flying. Thanks to a new Regulation applicable in all the Member States, greater protection is being afforded to air passengers in the event of denied boarding, flight cancellation or long delays. It should help bring about a dramatic reduction in the frequency of denied boarding, for which airlines will have to pay compensation as a deterrent (€250 for flights of less than 1 500 km, €400 for flights of between 1 500 and 3 500 km and €600 for flights of more than 3 500 km). Passengers will be compensated for late cancellation and will receive assistance in the event of long delays. There is no right to compensation for cancellation if the airline can provide evidence of extraordinary circumstances which could not have been avoided. The Regulation applies to all flights, including charters, operated by European airlines from or to a European airport and to any flight departing from the European Union.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/181&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **Transport with a human face: new rights for passengers (16/02/2005)**

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/182&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Strengthening the Lisbon Strategy: External Trade's role in EU Growth and Competitiveness (15/02/2005)



In an address to the High Level Seminar on the Lisbon Agenda in Stockholm, Sweden, European Commissioner for Trade Peter Mandelson said: "... the European Union is arguably the most open economy in the world. But further opening our own markets, and other countries' markets, across the range is how best the Barroso Commission can contribute to its "number one" strategic objective - Growth and Jobs. The second leg of my argument today is that an active and modern trade policy is a vital component of this strategy. The aims of our trade policy should be to achieve better market access for European goods and services world-wide, with better enforceable international rules to ensure fair competition, and a new drive to achieve regulatory convergence with our biggest trading partners so as to lower non-tariff barriers to trade. But the last leg of my argument is that the outward looking policy I advocate – of more open trade, more competition and a faster rate of economic change - will only be achievable, and politically viable, with more effective policies to help and equip working families, particularly the less skilled, to benefit from change."

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/91&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Asian Tsunami: European Commission reconstruction mission to Sri Lanka and Indonesia (14/02/2005)

Senior European Commission officials and experts will arrive in Asia today to identify potential projects and select priorities for action in tsunami-hit areas. The joint DG Relex/Europaid mission will visit affected areas and discuss with the governments of Sri Lanka and Indonesia how EU assistance worth up to €350 million can best be used to support reconstruction efforts. The mission will also co-ordinate with other donors. The European Investment Bank will join the mission to plan implementation of its loan package (Indian Ocean Tsunami Facility), which will finance large scale infrastructure redevelopment and initiatives to revitalise private sector activity in the region. Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, will visit Sri Lanka and Indonesia next month.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/172&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Ahead:

- **23/02/2005 – EC-ACP Ministerial Meeting (revision of the Cotonou Agreement), Brussels**

See: <http://www.eu2005.lu/en/calendrier/2005/02/23ceacp/index.html>

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Delegation Website

For technical reasons the Delegation's Website address remains:

www.eusa.org.za