



**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 March 2005**



**Headline News**



**Joint EU-SA launch of R32 million Conflict and Governance Fund (15/03/2005)**

After months of preparation the EU-funded Conflict and Governance Fund was launched this week. With its objective of positively impacting on foreign and domestic policy, decision-making and policy implementation by providing support for research on conflict causing and mitigating issues, the project is well placed to contribute to the deepening of democracy and good governance in South and Southern Africa. Civil Society participation, invited by this Programme, is a crucial element in achieving its objectives. EU Ambassador Michael Lake said: "... our involvement in this initiative demonstrates to all our clear commitment to support and strengthen democratic growth throughout the continent. This Fund is expected to contribute to capacity building in research institutions and on a continent-wide level we hope that through its work, the Fund will contribute positively towards the development of research networks."



**WTO Panel upholds EU system of protection of "Geographical Indications" (15/03/2005)**

A report by a WTO panel confirms that the EU system of protection of geographical indications for agricultural products complies with WTO rules. Geographical indications provide protection for products identified with a particular geographical location, for example Roquefort or Prosciutto di Parma. Rejecting the arguments of the United States and Australia, the WTO ruled that the EU's system for protecting these names is essentially compatible with WTO rules, including the requirements of the TRIPs Agreement. The WTO confirmed in particular that Geographical Indications can coexist with prior trademarks. The ruling confirms the rights of the holders of Europe's approximately 700 Geographical Indications. "I am very pleased with this outcome and look forward to working together with all WTO Members to strengthen the protection of quality agricultural production," said Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/298&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

**European Commission welcomes launch of the Commission for Africa report (11/03/2005)**

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.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/285&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

**Other News**

**Customs: Commission proposes strategy for simplified rules of origin (17/03/2005)**

The Commission has adopted a strategy to establish new simplified rules of origin for the purposes of the EU's preferential trade arrangements with certain third countries. The rules of origin, which determine which goods can benefit from the lower rates of customs duty under the preferential trade arrangements, are currently too complicated, as well as being susceptible to abuse. The Commission suggests replacing the current rules with a single value-added method for determining origin that would make them clearer as well as more development-friendly. The Commission also envisages improving the management of the system and introducing a monitoring programme. The changes would be made via legislative measures. Work on the first measure will commence immediately.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/320&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **Customs: Strategy for simplified rules of origin - Frequently Asked Questions (17/03/2005)**

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

### **Energy for the future - Hydrogen and Fuel Cell industry sets out its blueprint (16/03/2005)**

At its second General Assembly, the European Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Platform will present its proposals for the medium- and long-term development of hydrogen and fuel cells for carrying and converting energy cleanly. Europe faces the challenge of fluctuating oil prices, concerns about global warming and growth in energy demand. Hydrogen, with fuel cells as its primary application, is now widely recognised as a flexible and environmentally friendly energy carrier, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions, improves local air quality and enhances security of energy supply.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/315&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **EC notifies Member States on delays in implementing European legislation on biofuels (16/03/2005)**

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/318&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **Post-tsunami relief effort: ... the need for sound aid management – Speech by Louis Michel (15/03/2005)**

During a recent European Parliament round table organised in cooperation with the European Institute for Asian Studies, Commissioner Louis Michel (Development and Humanitarian Aid) noted that to date the European Commission had entered into partnership with 55 recognised humanitarian aid organisations; 84% of the humanitarian aid funds pledged had already been committed; contracts had been awarded for 37%; and nearly 23% had been paid out. He said: "I am convinced that the speed with which ECHO, the Commission Directorate-General in charge of humanitarian aid, and its partners reacted to this disaster to meet the basic needs of the survivors was crucial in helping save thousands of lives. I would have you note that, looking beyond the media hype in the days following the disaster, the Commission has kept its word. We have been criticised for not doing enough. But on the basis of the figures, the Commission alone has contributed one third of the EU's humanitarian response to date (€103 million out of a total €343 million).

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/177&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **Statement to the Trade Committee of the European Parliament – by Peter Mandelson (15/03/2005)**

In an address to the European Parliament Trade Committee, Peter Mandelson, European Commissioner for Trade, said: "Let me start with some thoughts on where I think we are in the WTO talks on Doha. It is a most complex game. But it is also where big economic benefits lie, both for us and for developing countries ... We must inject ambition and a sense of urgency in the Round. While respecting the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, which is at the heart of this Round, WTO members must offer real new market access opportunities in manufactured goods and trade in services. It is not about agriculture alone. It is a package, one that we cannot disentangle, ... I have made this clear on many occasions to our trading partners. The Round cannot be limited to the interests of one group of WTO countries."

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/176&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **Creating a Europe of opportunities – Speech by José Manuel Barroso (14/03/2005)**

During the 2005 Robert Schuman Lecture for the Lisbon Council, Commission President José Manuel Barroso, said: "When the European Council launched the Lisbon strategy back in March 2000, the future looked bright. The dot com boom was in full swing, and world economic forecasts looked rosy. But as Paul Valéry once said: 'The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be'. The dot com bubble burst, the terrible events in America on 11 September 2001 seemed to cast a chill over economies the world over, and in Europe we became more aware of the demographic squeeze and the effects of global competition, and the consequences these will have on our economy and social model if nothing changes. Five years later, the future has changed. It is time to rethink the Lisbon strategy...."

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

See also: **Lisbon strategy can make a significant contribution to growth, a Commission report shows (17/03/2005)**

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/323&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

*Ahead:*

• **04/04/2005 – New Head of Delegation, Mr Lodewijk Briët, takes office, Pretoria Delegation**

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

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

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#### **General Information**

##### **General Report on the activities of the European Union in 2004 (11/03/2005)**

See: <http://europa.eu.int/abc/doc/off/rq/en/welcome.htm>

##### **Conclusions of 21st Quadripartite Meeting: Council of Europe/European Union (16/03/2005)** See:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/05/52&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

##### **Information note of the European Court of Auditors on Special Report No 10/2004 concerning the audit of Devolution of EC external aid management to the Commission Delegations**

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=ECA/05/4&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>