



European Union
Delegation of the European Commission
to South Africa

EU Perspectives

Regular publication that seeks to provide information
on EU-related activities of interest to SA readers



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Headline News

[Commission outlines response to mitigate effects of rising global food prices](#)

The European Commission adopted a Communication setting out potential policy responses to mitigate the effects of rising global food prices. The Communication analyses structural and cyclical factors and proposes the monitoring of the retail sector; initiatives to enhance agricultural supply and ensure food security, including the promotion of sustainable future generations of biofuels; and initiatives to contribute to the global effort to tackle the effects of price rises on poor populations. Commission President José Manuel Barroso stated: "The EU has reacted rapidly to the sudden surge in food prices. We are dealing with a problem that has many root causes and many consequences. The possible policy responses we have put on the table complement the measures we have already taken. The Commission calls on Member States to give a united European response to this global challenge. We will co-ordinate our response with our international partners within the UN and the G8".

[Hans-Gert Pöttering expresses sympathy with China following the earthquake](#)

The President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering, expressed his deep sympathy with all those affected by the serious earthquake in China. In a letter to the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao, the President of Parliament extended his sincere condolences in view of the large number of victims and persons still missing. "Our thoughts are with the injured and with the relatives of the victims of this serious earthquake. We all hope that many people can still be rescued alive from the rubble. Our sympathies are with all those people in China affected by this catastrophe," he said.

Council conclusions on the humanitarian situation in Burma/Myanmar and on the earthquake in China

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/100310.pdf

[Report on strategies for successful growth in developing countries](#)

Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy, and Nobel Laureate Michael Spence, presented a report titled 'Growth Report: Strategies for Sustained Growth and Inclusive Development', which concludes two years of work by the Commission on Growth and Development. The report identified distinctive characteristics of successful growth, using 13 high-growth economies as examples (Botswana, Brazil, China, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Malta, Oman, Singapore, Taiwan (China) and Thailand), and explores how developing countries can emulate them. Commenting on the report, Commissioner Hübner said: "We agreed in our discussions that growth should be inclusive to be sustainable and that growth strategies should be based on equal opportunities for all. Leadership and credible, pragmatic governments play an important role".

Other News

[Proposed changes to the Common Agricultural Policy](#)

The European Commission proposed to further modernise, simplify and streamline the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and remove remaining restrictions on farmers to help them respond to growing demand for food. The so-called CAP Health Check will further break the link between direct payments and production and thus allow farmers to follow market signals to the greatest possible extent. Among a range of measures, the proposals call for abolishing the requirement for arable farmers to leave 10% of their land fallow, a gradual increase in milk quotas before they are abolished in 2015, and a reduction in market intervention. "The Health Check is all about freeing our farmers to meet growing demand and respond quickly to what the market is telling them" said Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. "It also aims to simplify, streamline and modernise the CAP and give our farmers the tools to handle the new challenges they face, such as climate change."

[Nigeria - EU Ministerial Troika Meeting](#)

A ministerial troika meeting between Nigeria and the European Union (EU) was held in recognition of the importance that Nigeria and the EU attach to their relations and to follow up on previous initiatives that have been progressively expanding the list of topics of mutual interest and/or concern. Topics in the agenda of the Nigeria-EU dialogue included: peace and security issues; migration; development; food security, environment; global challenges including climate change; democratic governance; sustainable economic development; achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); trade development and EPAs; and HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other pandemics.

[Statement by Louis Michel on the political situation in the Central African Republic](#)

Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, welcomed the signing of a ceasefire and peace agreement between the government of the Central African Republic and the People's Army for the Restoration of the Republic and Democracy. The agreement was a preliminary to the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement and the launch of an inclusive political dialogue in Central Africa under optimal conditions. Commissioner Louis Michel stated, "I warmly welcome the signing of the Libreville Agreement. It will open the way to a process of peace and national reconciliation in Central Africa which the European Commission wishes to support unreservedly. It is only through dialogue that the Central African Republic can put itself back on the path of national recovery and development".

[EU and Korea complete 7th Round of FTA negotiations](#)

The EU and Korea concluded the 7th round of negotiations for an EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The four-day negotiations covered a wide range of issues, including non-tariff barriers and rules of origin. EU and Korea will continue contacts at various levels, including a meeting between the EU Trade Commissioner and chief negotiator Peter Mandelson and the Korean Trade Minister, Kim Jong-hoon. The timing of the next round of negotiations has not been confirmed. However, both sides agreed to schedule it once they are ready to conclude. EU lead negotiator Ignacio Garcia Bercero said: "Both sides are convinced that on the basis of the progress made during this round that it is feasible and desirable to conclude the EU-Korea FTA negotiations during the course of 2008. Both sides agree to accelerate the process so as to reach agreement as early as possible".

[Directive on the protection of the environment through criminal law](#)

Within the EU Council and under the co-decision procedure with the European Parliament, the Slovenian Presidency succeeded in reaching agreement at first reading on a Directive on the protection of the environment through criminal law. "The adoption of the Directive is a great success for the Slovenian Presidency, as well as for the Member States and the European Parliament. The adoption of the Directive is very important as it represents the first legislative act under the first pillar which contains penal provisions and, thus, provides a model for the instruments which will follow," said Slovenian Justice Minister, EU Justice and Home Affairs Council President Lovro Šturm.

[European Maritime Day celebrated](#)

Surrounded by 2 oceans and 4 seas, with a continental mass a third of Africa and a coastline 3 times its length, maritime policy remains key to the EU. To celebrate the achievements and potential of Europe's ocean and seas, the EU declared 20 May 2008 "European Maritime Day". The official launch ceremony was held in Strasbourg with the presidents of the Parliament, Commission and Council. The aim was to highlight the crucial role that oceans and seas play in the everyday life, not only of coastal communities, but of all EU citizens, and their importance for Europe's sustainable growth and jobs at large.

[Proposal to enhance the partnership between the EU and its Mediterranean neighbours](#)

The European Commission adopted proposals for upgrading relations with its Mediterranean partners through the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean". Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, presented the outline of the structures of the Barcelona Process, which aim at giving renewed vitality and visibility to the EU's relations with neighbours in the Mediterranean region. These structures include the setting up of a Secretariat and the creation of a permanent committee of Euro-Mediterranean representatives. The policy paper also outlines ideas for the kind of projects that would constitute visible and tangible efforts at improving the lives and livelihoods of the region's citizens. The proposals contained in the Communication will be presented at an inaugural Summit in Paris in July.

For further information please contact Frank Oberholzer on 012-452-5200

