



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.



14 – 20 January 2005

Headline News

Trade Commissioner puts development at heart of EU trade agreements with ACP countries (20/01/2005)

EU Commissioner for Trade Peter Mandelson told European NGOs and Civil Society representatives that he would put development at the heart of the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. He announced that he would set up a review mechanism for regions negotiating EPAs to ensure that the EPA process was closely tied to the delivery of development goals. The Commissioner also launched a discussion paper that is designed to answer questions about the nature and function of EPAs. Com Mandelson said: "In the past the poorest countries have not got their fair share of the benefits of global economic integration. I want EPAs to be tools of trade and development; building regional markets among developing countries, strengthening regional producers and integrating those markets and producers into the global trading system."



See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/74&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguage=en>

See also: **Economic Partnership Agreements – Speech by Com Peter Mandelson (20/01/2005)**

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/23&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguage=en>

Economic Partnership Agreements: putting a rigorous priority on development Brussels (20/01/2005)

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/18&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguage=en>

The European Commission supports the UN Disaster Reduction Conference in Kobe (17/01/2005)

The European Commission is providing €360,000 to support a key United Nations conference on disaster reduction in Kobe, Japan on 18-22/01/2005. The event, coming less than a month after the tsunami tragedy in the Indian Ocean, is expected to attract several thousand participants including government and community representatives and scientific experts in disaster reduction from around the world. It is being organised by the UN's International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). The funds from the Commission are being channelled through ECHO, the Humanitarian Aid department, whose mandate includes disaster preparedness activities. They will cover, among other things, the presentation at the conference of 24 good practice initiatives in reducing disaster risks around the world.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/51&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguage=en>

Other News

Rural development and the Lisbon Strategy – Speech by Com Mariann Fischer Boel (19/01/2005)

During an address to the European Parliament Agricultural Committee, Mariann Fischer Boel (European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development) said: "It is ... with great satisfaction that I have sensed a general support in this committee for the overall concept of our proposed new rural development policy and for the need to secure the funds to implement this policy properly. I am convinced that we will be strong allies in securing an ambitious and modern rural development policy for the EU. ... The proposed new rural development policy offers the tools to accompany this process and contribute together with Member States to support their farmers, their forestry sector and farm processing industry in the necessary restructuring of these sectors."

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/22&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguage=en>

State of Play: Enlargement process – Speech by Com Olli Rehn (18/01/2005)

In an address to the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, Commissioner Olli Rehn (EU Enlargement) noted: "Let me first recall that last year we welcomed ten new countries into the Union, which was a great success. After this "big bang" the EU needs to pace itself. Further enlargements must be carefully managed, to ensure that European citizens support them and that the Union maintains its capacity to act, or 'the momentum of European integration'. My goal for my mandate until 2009 is to ensure that Bulgaria and Romania enter the Union fully prepared for membership; that negotiations with Croatia and Turkey get onto a good track, that we get started at least with FYROM, too; that Cyprus gets our full support in moving towards reconciliation and a final settlement; and that the pre-accession strategy for the Western Balkans is consolidated and moved forward, based on our previous work on enlargement."

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/20&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguage=en>

Structural Funds well used in 2004 to contribute to more competitiveness in the regions (18/01/2005)

Commissioner Danuta Hübner (Regional Policy), presented 2004 results for Structural Funds and Cohesion instruments. Budget commitments and payments represent the highest amount ever available per year in the history of the Structural Funds. Payment requests by Member States exceeded this time even budgetary resources. This made an additional amount – €2,4 billion that were fully used - necessary to be agreed upon by the Council and the European Parliament. Com Hübner presented these results by saying: “Structural Funds invest into the future of a more competitive Union. The absorption of about 100% of commitments and payments in 2004 shows that the Structural Funds are well used and that they are necessary for the regional economic development.”

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/55&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Commissioner Louis Michel awards the Natali Prize gold medal to Juan Cristóbal Fletcher (17/01/2005)

Com Louis Michel awarded Chilean journalist Juan Cristóbal Fletcher the Natali Prize gold medal for his report ‘The Blood of a Poet’ on the 1973 killing of Chilean singer Victor Jara. Four other journalists also received Natali Prizes for their commitment to human rights and democracy as key factors in any sustainable development process. Congratulating Mr Fletcher, Commissioner Michel expressed his personal belief that principled and skilled journalists are vital to the defence of democracy and human rights. Juan Fletcher was chosen by an independent jury from among 15 nominees, all of whom were present at the ceremony. The journalists Abdoulaye Ibbo Daddy (Niger), Sarah Boseley (United Kingdom), Ahmed Benchemsi (Morocco) and Zulfiqar Shah (Pakistan) also received €10,000 prizes.

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

Airbus A 380 rollout: Commission calls “Super-Airbus” a “European success story” (17/01/2005)



Commissioners Günter Verheugen, Jacques Barrot and Peter Mandelson have hailed the unveiling of the new Airbus A380 in Toulouse as a “European success story”. The development of the A380, the world’s largest passenger jet, shows what Europe can achieve by working together and by investing in skills, research and technology. In a series of initiatives over the last 15 years, the Commission has worked consistently to develop an EU wide regulatory and research framework. Industrial cooperation in the EU is crucial for the success of new aerospace products in an intensively competitive global market. Com Verheugen, responsible for Enterprise and Industry said “The Super-Airbus demonstrates that

working together in the EU pays off. It also shows that with the right policy framework EU industry can perform even in the most fiercely competitive and high-tech businesses. We must extend this approach to all aerospace issues.”

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/47&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Ahead:

- **31/01-03/02/2005 – EU Parliamentary Visit to South Africa**
- **31/01/2005 – Launch of the Civil Society Advocacy Programme, Constitution Hill**
- **02/02/2005 – Launch of the national Legislatures Support Programme**

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