



**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**

### **[Declaration by the EU Presidency on Zimbabwe](#)**

"The European Union is following the situation in Zimbabwe closely and welcomes the holding of the Extraordinary SADC Summit to discuss Zimbabwe, hosted by President Mwanawasa of Zambia in his capacity of Chair of SADC. It shares SADC's concern about the situation and welcomes its efforts to find a regional solution. The EU supports the Summit's call for the expeditious release of the Presidential election results, in accordance with the due process of law. It reiterates its concern at the prolonged and unexplained delay in releasing the Presidential results which is undermining the credibility of the process. The EU expresses its deep concern about the current deteriorating situation in the field of human rights and the increasing reports of violent incidents".

### **[EU Trade Commissioner comments on rising food prices](#)**

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson argued that higher global food prices were not an argument for barriers to global farm trade. Addressing a conference on the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries at the European Parliament, Mandelson said that higher food prices could be an opportunity for farmers in the developing world so long as they are aided by "the means and the markets to exploit them". He warned against "chasing an illusion of food security" through food protectionism and said that high food prices should reinforce the commitment of the developed world to reform their farm subsidies through the WTO Doha Round of trade talks. Mandelson said that policies that restrict farm exports such as export taxes could reduce domestic production, cut supplies to others and risk a spiral of agricultural protectionism. "As some commentators have pointed out, such policies are less beggar-thy-neighbour than starve-thy-neighbour. We are not going to meet food shortages by creating greater scarcity. Erecting new trade barriers is the last thing we should be contemplating" he said.

### **[Development Commissioner announces €117.25 million food aid boost](#)**

The European Commission plans to provide a further €117.25 million for food assistance as a response to the impact of the increase in food prices on the world's most vulnerable people. Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said: "The rise in basic food prices is a worldwide humanitarian disaster in the making. Ongoing humanitarian food programmes are under enormous pressure with less food available for people already on the brink of starvation. Millions more, who were just about coping before, now risk going hungry. Addressing food price issue is a global challenge requiring long-term solutions but the emergency is now. We have an obligation to act – and act quickly." The latest humanitarian funding consists of €57.25 million taken from the existing food aid budget run by the Commission's Humanitarian Aid department, and a requested €60 million in new money. Today's announcement of €117.25 million will raise the total humanitarian food aid budget so far in 2008 to €283.25 million.

## **Other News**

### **[Report shows EU imports from developing countries growing](#)**

The Commission presented to the European Parliament its regular report on the openness of the European market to imports from developing countries. The report sets out how the EU has continued to use its trade policy to advance a pro-development agenda. The report shows that the EU continues to offer market access for developing country exports that is unmatched by any other major economy. EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said: "This report demonstrates the EU commitment to putting trade at the service of development not only in theory, but in practice. The new Economic Partnership Agreements with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries have taken EU openness for developing country exports to new levels, eliminating all duties and quotas for ACP countries. This gives them the same beneficial terms of access already

enjoyed by Least-Developed Countries under the Everything But Arms scheme. The EU is active on many fronts to ensure that all Developing Countries have greater opportunity to share in the benefits of trade with the world's largest Single Market. Our goal remains a trade policy that promotes development and provides greater opportunities to developing countries in support of their own individual development priorities".

#### **[EU Trade Commissioner rules out renegotiation of Economic Partnership Agreements](#)**

Any renegotiation of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) already initialled with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific would be a disaster, Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson told members of the European Parliament's International Trade Committee. The Commissioner was speaking during an information session on the agreements organised by the Trade Committee at which negotiators from the ACP countries were also present. Mandelson restated his goal of concluding "full EPAs with comprehensive regional coverage" in the six geographical regions. These accords are being negotiated by the Commission with the aim of updating the partnership between the EU and the 79 ACP states and bringing it into line with WTO rules.

#### **[European Parliament wants European Development Fund to be incorporated into EU budget](#)**

European Parliament MEPs adopted a report urging that the European Development Fund be incorporated into the EU budget "in order to increase the consistency, transparency and effectiveness of development co-operation and guarantee democratic scrutiny". MEPs want to see democratic scrutiny by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) of national Country Strategy Papers, the main instruments for implementing the EDF, as this would be a step towards conferring institutional power over development policy on the JPA and the Parliament. The report was adopted with 637 votes in favour 23 against and 14 abstentions.

#### **[17th EU Japan summit held](#)**

Mr Yasuo Fukuda, Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Janez Janša, Prime Minister of Slovenia, in his capacity as President of the European Council, and Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, met in Tokyo for the 17th Summit between Japan and the EU. Summit leaders reaffirmed their willingness that Japan and the EU continue to play leading roles, for example, in addressing climate change, in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with special reference to the development of Africa, as well as in maintaining international peace and security. Summit leaders noted with strong concern the trends of high price of natural resources and commodities, in particular, prices of food and oil, which could slow down the growth in global economy and have negative effects on developed and developing countries. They underlined the urgent need to address the issue particularly in light of its acute impact on developing countries' efforts to overcome poverty and to meet the MDGs.

#### **[EU welcomes welcomes the swearing-in of the new coalition government in Kenya](#)**

Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, welcomed the swearing-in of the new coalition government in Kenya. Commissioner Michel stated, "I am delighted that this important day has finally come for Kenya and its people. This is the political solution that Kenya needs". Commissioner Michel also reminded all parties of the crucial need to make this coalition work for the sake of all Kenyans. "The creation of this coalition government is only the first step on the path towards sustainable and peaceful development. The hard work begins today since many fundamental reforms are needed to address the root cause of the recent crisis. And so I call upon Kenya's leaders and this new government to work together for all Kenyans so that they can look forward to a better and more peaceful and prosperous future.", he said.

#### **[European Economic and Social Committee hearing urges caution on biofuels targets](#)**

At a Public Hearing on Sustainability Criteria for Biofuels, organised by the European Economic and Social Committee's Sustainable Development Observatory, representatives of organised civil society urged the EU institutions and its Member States to exercise extreme caution when considering the role and use of biofuels. The ambitious target of 10% biofuels in vehicle fuel by 2020, set by the European Council in March 2007, was widely questioned. The main topic of the Hearing was setting the sustainability criteria linked to biofuels. Without such criteria there is a strong risk of biofuels exacerbating the environmental problems they are supposed to help overcome. The implementation of the 10% target on biofuels, participants heard, will lead to strong competition for land use, in Europe and even more so in developing countries.

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