



European Union

Delegation to South Africa  
Head of Delegation

# EU Perspectives

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



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## **Headline News**

### **[Chile earthquake: €3 million in fast-track funding](#)**

A fast-track "primary emergency" decision has been adopted by the European Commission to provide €3m for immediate relief following the earthquake in Chile. The funds will be managed by ECHO, the Commission department dealing with humanitarian aid and civil protection, under the responsibility of Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva.

### **[Letter of President Barroso to EU Heads of State and Government on climate action](#)**

In a letter sent to all EU Heads of State and Government, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso stressed that fighting climate change remains a top priority for the European Union and that the core goal must be to bring all international partners closer to the EU's ambitions and commitment to a multilateral agreement. "We need to show that we have not given up on our ambitions, even if many of our partners found it easier to limit themselves to the lowest common denominator," wrote President Barroso. "We should rather show our commitment to press ahead with delivery – implementing our climate and energy package showing how tackling climate change is a dynamic element in a strategy for growth by creating jobs and boosting energy security under the Europe 2020 approach." Noting the urgency of coming up with a global solution to climate change, President Barroso has asked his newly appointed Commissioner for Climate Action, Connie Hedegaard, to consult key international partners to find ways to reinvigorate the international process.

### **[Commission creates two new Directorates-General for Energy and Climate Action](#)**

The European Commission has created two new Directorates-General: DG Energy (ENER) and DG Climate Action (CLIM). The Energy DG consists of the departments in the former Transport and Energy DG dealing with energy issues and of the Task Force Energy, which will be transferred from the External Relations DG. The position of Director-General will be assumed by Philip Lowe, a British national, currently Director-General in DG Competition. The Climate Action DG will be created from the relevant activities in DG Environment, the activities in the External Relations DG related to international negotiations on climate change and the activities in the Enterprise and Industry DG related to climate change. Jos Delbeke, a Belgian national and currently Deputy Director-General in the Environment DG, has been appointed Director-General of the Climate Action DG.

### **[Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on situation in Zimbabwe](#)**

The Foreign Affairs Council adopted conclusions on 22 February concerning the situation in Zimbabwe and the renewal of targeted measures imposed by the EU on a limited number of individuals, owing to insufficient progress with internal reforms. These measures can only be lifted in response to concrete steps in the implementation of the 2008 power-sharing deal known as the Global Political Agreement (GPA). The Council recognised the ongoing efforts of the national unity government, formed last year by President Mugabe and Prime Minister Tsvangirai, to implement the GPA, particularly in the economy. Nevertheless, it noted with concern the lack of progress with regard to the rule of law, respect for human rights, constitutional reforms, power sharing on equal terms, security sector reform and the protection of investors. These measures are not aimed at the people of Zimbabwe. In fact, the EU remains the largest provider of assistance to the country, in particular through its support for agriculture and food security, social sectors, education and GPA implementation. In 2009, the EU paid out €274m in Zimbabwe.

## **Other News**

### **[Rebuilding Haiti is a priority for the EU](#)**

On the eve of a meeting of Development Ministers in Brussels, Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, underlined the EU's determination to help Haiti in overcoming the consequences of the devastating earthquake. High Representative Catherine Ashton said: "While we are making sure that Haiti receives the immediate and urgent support it needs, we also have to get ready for the very important next step in helping Haiti to rebuild the country". The European Commission has swiftly responded to the crisis by providing immediate assistance through its humanitarian aid department (ECHO), and the Monitoring and Information Centre for Civil Protection. The EU Member States are providing additional significant support. HR Ashton continues to coordinate the different activities of the European Union with the EU Member States and the international community.

### **[European Parliament's priorities for the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva](#)**

Addressing human rights violations, clarifying counter-terrorism detention rules, and resolving the conflict in Gaza and southern Israel, are some of the key issues the European Parliament wants to see tackled at the 13th UN Human Rights Council session, which takes place in Geneva from 1-26 March. MEPs welcomed the fact that the impact of the global financial crisis on human rights situation worldwide is high on the UN HRC agenda, as effective enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, are being challenged due to the crisis.

### **[Report on effectiveness of EDF support for Regional Economic Integration in East and West Africa](#)**

The European Court of Auditors Report analysed whether European Development Fund (EDF) support for regional economic integration has been effective in East Africa and West Africa, which together account for well over 50% of the total amount allocated to regional EDF programmes. The Court examined the European Commission's approach, its management of the support provided and a sample of individual projects and concluded that, overall, EDF support for regional economic integration has so far been only partially effective, due to a number of factors. On the basis of its observations, the Court recommended that the Commission should make the continuation of its support for regional integration conditional on an early agreement on how to achieve the necessary convergence between the various Regional Organisations and on the national authorities taking greater ownership of the regional integration process. The Commission should improve coherence between its regional and national strategies; examine whether the financial allocation in the 10th EDF to regional programmes is too high; define the responsibilities of the Delegations in the regions concerned, set up an appropriate coordination mechanism between them and review their staff capacity.

### **[EIB, European Commission welcome report on EIB external lending](#)**

The European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) welcomed the final report into the EIB's external financing activity by a committee of "wise persons" chaired by former International Monetary Fund Managing Director Michel Camdessus. The report proposes an extra €2bn of EIB loans for projects that further the fight against climate change and makes a number of recommendations for improving EIB activity outside the EU. It also suggests for further study longer-term options for consolidating the EU's external financing instruments. European Economic Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn said: "The European Commission will study the short-term recommendations of the report carefully as it prepares its legislative proposal for the EIB's external mandate for the period 2011-2013. The report will also certainly nourish debate on the longer-term future external activity of the EIB in the context of the reshaping of the European financial architecture."

### **[The Spanish Presidency renews the EU's commitment to gender equality before the UN](#)**

In her opening address of the 54th session of the UN Commission of the Status of Women, which was attended by representatives from some 70 countries, Spain's Minister of Equality, Bibiana Aído, reminded the gathering that 15 years ago the Beijing platform defined "12 sphere of special concern" on which measures needed to be taken to strengthen gender equality. According to Minister Aído, defining these spheres was "very important" and represented a "milestone" which today provides "a valuable strategy for achieving gender equality", an objective included in EU policy since 1997, but which received a "significant boost" from the Treaty of Lisbon.

### **[European Commission launches comic book on humanitarian aid](#)**

A fictitious tale to illustrate how the Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) responds to crises from a humanitarian interest angle - this is what "Hidden disaster" is about. Its author is Belgian comic book artist, Erik Bongers. This free-of-charge publication is currently available in five language versions: English, French, German, Dutch and Italian, and a copy can be ordered online (or downloaded in pdf format) from the [EU Book Shop](#).

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