



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

[EU leaders nominate European Commission President José Manuel Barroso for new term](#)

EU leaders unanimously endorsed President Barroso for a second five-year term. The nomination now goes before the European Parliament. The new assembly holds its first meeting in July. If it backs him for another term, Mr Barroso will be charged with putting together a new Commission. The President urged member countries and the Parliament to support his plans for an ambitious agenda over the next five years.

[European Development Days](#)

The 4th edition of the European Development Days is to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, on 22-24 October, 2009, a flagship event which showcases, in just a few days, the EU's continuing and enduring commitment to development. The European Development Days is hosted jointly by the European Commission and the EU Presidency, bringing together some 4 000 people and 1,500 organisations from the international development community. Delegates from 125 countries are represented, including heads of state and leading world figures. The event aims to make development aid more effective, to build a global coalition against poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Through frank and sometimes controversial debates on pressing issues, such as governance, poverty and environmental sustainability, the European Development Days provides unprecedented opportunities for sharing ideas and launching innovative partnerships.

[EU and West Africa move forward on regional Economic Partnership Agreement](#)

The EU and West African countries agreed to conclude a regional agreement on trade in goods and development cooperation by October 2009. EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton, and Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel, met Presidents Chambas and Cissé of the two regional organisations ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and UEMOA (Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine) and West African Ministers in Brussels. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to moving forward the longer term process to build a lasting partnership between the EU and West Africa. Commissioner Ashton said: "The decision today has set us on the road to concluding a comprehensive trade partnership with the full West African region." Commissioner Michel said: "Our latest meeting is a clear sign that we are back on track - making steady progress with our West African partners. Our goal must remain to reach an agreement on a full EPA that brings development support and benefits for all countries in the region. This will support regional integration: regional markets that attract investment and sustain jobs and regional governance that can address problems which individual countries can no longer solve on their own."

[Commission allocates €8 million for refugees and drought victims in Kenya](#)

Ahead of World Refugee Day (20 June), the European Commission allocated €8 million in humanitarian aid to help vulnerable people in Kenya, including Somalis in the Dadaab refugee camp. Dadaab is now the largest refugee camp in the world. Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said: "On the eve of World Refugee Day, it is important to highlight the enormous humanitarian challenge we face in tackling the suffering of millions of refugees and uprooted people worldwide. Their basic rights should not be forgotten. The Commission is fully engaged on their side and deploys considerable resources to bring them relief, and improve their living conditions." He added: "I am particularly concerned about the way the situation is developing in Dadaab. The camp was designed for 90,000 people and has now become the biggest of the world, hosting a staggering 275,000 refugees."

Other News

Commissioners Ferrero-Waldner and Michel on the outcome of the presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, underlined the importance of these presidential elections for the consolidation of the democratic process in Guinea Bissau: "I congratulate the people of Guinea Bissau, who have demonstrated their aspiration for democracy, as well as the authorities, for the orderly and peaceful conduct of these presidential elections, which took place in a very delicate political context". Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid added: "The first round of this Presidential election shows that the people and the authorities of Guinea Bissau are committed to a full restoration of the normal functioning of the country's institutions". The European Commission deployed an EU Election Observation Mission for the presidential elections, which took place on 28 June 2009.

Declaration by the EU Presidency on the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

"The European Union reaffirms its commitment to the global eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and to the full rehabilitation of torture victims. The absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is unequivocally established under international law. The European Union continues to support diplomatically, politically and financially, the fight against torture within the framework of the EU Guidelines against torture. Special attention is given to the rehabilitation of victims of torture through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights".

EU and UN discuss key humanitarian priorities

Louis Michel, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid and John Holmes, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator, met in Brussels to discuss key humanitarian priorities and ways of strengthening the response capacity of the international humanitarian system. They also focused on a number of current humanitarian hot spots including, in particular, Somalia, where millions of people are in need as a result of the long-running conflict there. Commissioner Michel stressed: "The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the European Commission pursue the same goals of ensuring the delivery of relief aid to civilian populations throughout the world in an impartial and non-discriminatory way. But humanitarian access is becoming ever more difficult and the security of humanitarian workers is increasingly at risk. In countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Sri Lanka and the occupied Palestinian territory, we face wholly unacceptable humanitarian situations. The violation of International Humanitarian Law is as deadly as any weapon. And no reason can justify it."

Council Conclusions on integrating environment in development co-operation

"Sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change, as well as energy saving and promotion of renewable energy, are fundamental to ensure sustainable urban and rural development and progress in poverty eradication, in particular the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The EU approach for supporting environment integration in developing countries will be implemented in full respect of the Paris and Accra agendas on aid effectiveness. The Council also recognizes the necessity for the EU to work closely with other donors and stakeholders, including the UN, the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank and other Multilateral Development Banks, as well as civil society".

International Drugs Day – launch of the European Action on Drugs

Faced with a serious drug problem the European Commission launched on 26 June, International Drugs day, a new awareness and information initiative, the European Action on Drugs (EAD), to mobilize society and raise awareness about drugs within the EU. The EAD aims to build on the principle of 'shared responsibility', and encourage everyone, whether groups or individuals, or professionals, or just every member of society, to sign a pledge and undertake a commitment that addresses the drugs problem in some way. Vice-President Barrot, Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, said: "Urging European organisations and citizens to play an active role is one of the priorities stated by the new 'EU Drugs Action Plan (2009-2012)', of which the EAD is one of the key actions. With the EAD, we are reaching out to Europeans in their everyday lives, by providing them with the means of expressing their views and committing to action"

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