



European Union

Delegation to the Republic of 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

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

"The Council recognises the legitimate democratic aspirations and grievances of the Egyptian population. These should be listened to carefully and addressed through urgent, concrete and decisive measures.....The Council reiterates its support for a democratic, pluralist and stable Egypt as a key partner of the EU, mindful of its important regional role, and sharing the goal of building stability, peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean and Middle East region. The EU is committed to accompanying, through a partnership, the Egyptian transformation process by mobilising, reviewing and adapting existing instruments to support political, economic and social reforms. The EU stands ready to assist the Egyptian people in this transformation process, taking into account future developments."

[EEAS senior officials on mission to Tunisia](#)

On behalf of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton, a mission at the level of EEAS senior officials visited Tunisia. The mission, led by the EEAS Managing Director for the Middle East and Southern Neighbourhood, Hugues Mingarelli, met with the transitional authorities, as well as with representatives of political forces, civil society and trade unions. The mission also planned to hold discussions with the committees set up to work on political and constitutional reform, to investigate into corruption and fraud and to examine abuses in the past few weeks by police and other public authorities. Meetings are also expected to take place with representatives of former opposition political parties.

[Statement by European Commissioner for Employment at the World Economic Forum in Davos](#)

"Priority should be given to creating jobs and reducing unemployment, especially youth unemployment. The main challenge now is to prevent short unemployment spells becoming long-term, so called "structural unemployment". Governments must have as a top priority job creation. In Europe, right now, we are experiencing a jobless recovery. The intervention of EU governments on the labour market has helped to lessen the impact of the crisis on job loss, but now the EU needs to make the structural reforms, such as shifting away taxes from work and reducing segmentation, as highlighted in the Annual Growth Survey, in order to avoid a persistent unemployment as already experienced in the past".

[Catherine Ashton commends successful holding of historic referendum on Southern Sudan's self determination](#)

Statement by Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, on the conclusion of Southern Sudan's self-determination referendum: "I would like to express my great satisfaction that the Southern Sudan Referendum was held on time and conducted peacefully. This was an historic event and a major milestone in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), of which the European Union is a witness. I commend both Sudanese parties to the CPA for their leadership and for their pledges that the safety and security of all peoples in Sudan will be respected throughout this process. I welcome the commitment made by President Bashir that his Government will respect the outcome of the Referendum".

Other News

[Joint EU statement on the situation in Haiti, 1 year after the earthquake](#)

Joint Statement of Vice-President and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, EU Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, and EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, Kristalina Georgieva, on the situation in Haiti, 1 year after the earthquake: " One year after the terrible earthquake that struck Haiti and hurt more than one million people, we want to reaffirm that helping the country to recover remains a EU priority....Upon the request of Haitian authorities, the Commission focused its support on consolidation of the core functions of the state, notably the payment of salaries for teachers, health workers and civil protection, and on reinforcement and reconstruction of the strategic infrastructures and roads. The EU has combined relief and recovery; we have ensured coordination, both with our Member States and other international donors, and with the Haitian government; we delivered within specific sectors such as health, water, shelter and food".

[Doha talks - Statement by EU Trade Spokesman John Clancy](#)

EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht invited trade ministers from Australia, Brazil, China, India, Japan and the United States to meet informally on the side-lines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, to discuss the way ahead for the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) talks. A statement released by EU Trade spokesman, John Clancy, noted that it was important to underline that whilst 2011 presented a real opportunity to conclude negotiations, the meeting was just a first step in exploring the way forward and was without prejudice to the format of any future meetings. Clancy said the EU hoped that the Doha gathering could help to build a renewed momentum to the Doha talks in the coming months, which could eventually lead to a successful outcome for all sides."

[Strengthening Parliament's scrutiny over EU external financing instruments](#)

The need to strengthen Parliament's power of scrutiny over EU funding of projects in third countries (e.g. promoting development cooperation, stability, or democracy and human rights), was reiterated by MEPs in the Development, Foreign Affairs and International Trade committees. With the Lisbon Treaty in force, Parliament co-decides with the Council on almost all new laws, but lacks real control over EU instruments for development co-operation, promoting stability in third countries, co-operating with industrialised countries and promoting democracy and human rights.

[EU economic governance: Commission sets the yearly priorities for EU growth](#)

The Annual Growth Survey charts a clear direction on where Europe should be heading in the next year, with ten pressing actions focused on macro-economic stability and fiscal consolidation, structural reforms and growth-enhancing measures. Once agreed by the European Council, Member States will reflect these recommendations, in both their policies and national budgets. European Commission President Barroso said: "A new phase of European integration begins with the Annual Growth Survey. We are setting out to break new ground and to decisively improve the way in which we manage and coordinate our interdependent economies in the European Union. This is our economic governance in action. The Annual Growth Survey is a coherent and comprehensive plan to return Europe to growth and higher employment. If it is fully implemented, I'm confident that Europe can return to strong economic growth and higher employment".

[European Parliament hosts Citizens' Agora](#)

The European Parliament hosted the third Citizens' Agora, on economic crises and various forms of poverty, on 27 and 28 January. All three parallel workshops concluded that social exclusion, and the new forms of poverty, are some of the most serious problems that the EU has to face today. The first workshop, on the economic and financial crisis and new forms of poverty, called on Parliament and other EU Institutions to monitor the social impact of budgetary austerity measures. The second workshop, on migration flows and integration processes, highlighted the issue of fundamental human rights, asking for the networking of civic platforms at European level in the field of immigration and integration. The third workshop, on the access of persons in situation of precariousness to a decent and sustainable way of life, stressed the need to take a holistic approach when dealing with poverty.

[EU Regional Policy - key to achieving the Union's 2020 sustainable growth goals](#)

The Commission launched a call to action to those in Member States managing Cohesion funds, urging wider use of the money to finance sustainable growth projects, and offering advice on how to improve the quality of investments. The call to action is the fruit of co-operation between the Commissioners for Regional Policy, Environment, Energy and Climate Change. Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy said: "Regional policy is a key instrument in implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy because success in achieving Europe 2020 goals will in large part depend on decisions taken at local and regional level. I and my colleagues urge those in Member States who manage EU funds, to invest more in sustainable growth, and draw on the experience of others, to ensure that the available funds achieve the greatest possible impact.

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