



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.



18 – 24 February 2005

Headline News

President Barroso welcomes US President Bush at European Commission headquarters (22/02/2005)



On 22/02/2005, US President George W. Bush met European Commission President José M. Barroso at the European Commission in Brussels. Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson also participated. At the press conference after the meeting, President Barroso declared: "I think that, on behalf of the European Commission, that the visit of President Bush is really a very, very important one. Europe and America have reconnected. This visit has highlighted all that unites Europe and America; it has focused the eyes of the world on all that we share. I believe that the relationship between the United States and Europe is the world's strongest, most comprehensive and strategically important partnership. The United States, a united Europe, this is really the indispensable partnership."

See: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/us/bush/index.htm

See also: **President Barroso welcomes US President Bush at European Commission headquarters (18/02/2005)**

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/202&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

European Economic and Social Committee President Anne-Marie Sigmund: Declaration on the occasion of the Brussels visit of U.S. President George W. Bush (21/02/2005)

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=CES/05/26&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Conclusion of the EU-ACP Negotiations on the Revision of the Cotonou Agreement (24/02/2004)

Ministerial Negotiations on the revision of the Cotonou-Agreement between the EU and 77 countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific were concluded successfully yesterday night. European Commission President Barroso welcomed the agreement saying: "Poverty reduction is at the heart of these Agreements with countries from Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific; they are a vital spur to development. This agreement is an important step in strengthening the efficiency and quality of our partnership with ACP countries. This is a balanced package. It has financing which aims to be sustainable over the long term and stronger security and human rights provisions. These partnership agreements are an important building block for strong and durable development".

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/211&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Other News

A New Agenda for the Enlarged EU – Speech by Günter Verheugen (24/02/2005)

During an address in Sweden, Günter Verheugen (Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Enterprise and Industry) observed: "The gap in terms of growth to the United States is starting to widen and economies like India and China are growing four to five times as fast as the EU. We are also facing a major demographic challenge with low birth rates and ageing and we are facing a number of longer-term challenges such as climatic change. There is in my view only one way forward, if we are not to step by step lose ground. We need to improve competitiveness, we need to be more productive and we need to get more people into employment. We need to be better in anticipating and managing change in a global world. We also need a more dynamic economy to fuel our wider social & environmental ambitions."



See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/106&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Parliament adopts joint resolution on World Economic Forum and World Social Forum (24/02/2005)

The European Parliament believes that globalisation must be accompanied by greater efforts to reduce poverty. MEPs welcome the G7 compromise to launch a debt relief programme for poor countries. Parliament recognises debt cancellation as a measure to fight poverty in countries progressing towards democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and a sustainable economy. MEPs reject, however, an unconditional cancellation of debt for countries that do not prioritise these issues.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+DN-20050224-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N#SECTION6>

Commission adopts favourable opinion on the accession of Bulgaria and Romania (22/02/2005)

The European Commission adopted a favourable Opinion on the accession to the European Union of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania. This decision follows the successful conclusion of the accession negotiations by the European Council meeting in Brussels on 17/12/2004 and the finalisation of the Treaty of Accession in February 2005. On the occasion of the adoption of the opinion, Commissioner Rehn said: "Today's decision is another milestone in our relations and a clear signal that the Commission welcomes Bulgaria and Romania in the European family. However the authorities in the countries can not lie back and relax: in 2005 and 2006 a lot of hard work will be needed to progress on reforms in order to fully and timely meet all conditions for membership".

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/204&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Taking the CAP Forward – Speech by Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel (21/02/2005)

During an address to Britain's National Farmers' Union, EU Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel (Agriculture and Rural Development) noted: "In recent months much has been said about the idea of introducing import quotas for the "Everything but Arms" countries. I am not alone in the Commission in thinking that such a change in the agreement with these poorer countries is not an option. Re-opening this agreement would give out a wrong signal when the Community is trying to convince the rest of the developed world to follow the EU example. The Least Developed Countries' request includes the wish for "remunerative prices", by which they mean high prices. All our analysis shows that such high prices cannot be maintained for EU agriculture in the long term. Any investments made in the sugar industry in the Least Developed Countries, on the basis of these prices, would also be unsustainable. However, our prices will remain above world market levels, at least initially. As such, our market should remain attractive for the LDCs."



See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/103&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Togo: European Commission calls for immediate return to constitutional rule (20/02/2005)

The EC strongly deplores the announcement made by Mr Faure Gnassingbe, son of the late President Gnassingbe Eyadema, that he intends to remain in power as interim President, in violation of the constitution and the law. The Member of the European Commission responsible for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, said that Mr Faure Gnassingbe's decision "clearly creates a rift between Togo and the international community". The EU is drawing up a declaration concerning Togo. "I am sure the declaration will be adamant. By acting in this way, Faure Gnassingbe and those who support him bear responsibility for their country's isolation. I urge them to return to constitutional rule immediately", said the Commissioner.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/203&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the political situation in Togo (24/02/2004)**

http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/83853.pdf

Ahead:

- **28/02/2005 – Visit to South Africa by Giorgio Bonacci, Africa Personal Representative for the President of the European Commission.**
- **15/03/2005 – Launch of the EU's Conflict and Governance Fund, Pretoria**

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Delegation Website

For technical reasons the Delegation's Website address remains:

www.eusa.org.za