



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 April 2003

Environment Commissioner Wallström at the G8 Environment Ministers meeting in Paris (24/04/2003)

The European Commissioner for the Environment, Margot Wallström, will participate in the meeting of G8 Environment Ministers this weekend (25-27 April) in Paris. At the meeting, ministers will discuss Africa, notably support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD); sustainable production and consumption; and finally governance in the environment field.

See: http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=MEMO/03/900|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Declaration of President Prodi on breakthrough in talks on new PA cabinet (23/04/2003)

The President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, gave this reaction to the announcement of a breakthrough in talks on a new PA cabinet: "I very much welcome the news concerning the agreement on the composition of the new cabinet of the Palestinian Authority. We now look forward to its early presentation to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in the hope that it can gain parliamentary confirmation and take up its duties as soon as possible. This marks a major step forward for the Palestinian Authority (PA) as it pursues the reforms necessary to build an administration that will provide the foundations of a viable Palestinian state. The European Commission now expects the Road Map to peace, as agreed last December by the Quartet of the EU, the US, the UN and Russia, to be presented to partners in Israel and the PA so that they start implementing it without delay. The people of Israel and the Palestinian Territories have already waited too long for peace: there is no more time to lose."

Pascal Lamy to visit West Africa to prepare the launch of negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement (23/04/2003)

From 24 to 26 April EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy will be in Ghana and Senegal on a visit intended to strengthen trade links between West Africa and the EU. Today he attended a meeting of the trade and finance ministers of the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) in Accra, to discuss the launch of negotiations for the EU-West Africa Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the ongoing Doha Development Agenda talks in the WTO. He will also meet President Kufuor, the ministers for trade and foreign affairs and representatives of civil society and the private sector. In Senegal Mr Lamy will participate in a meeting of African Heads of State on trade and investment. Speaking shortly before his departure Pascal Lamy said: "My visit to West Africa should give fresh impetus to the on-going negotiations between the EU and ACP regions, aimed at helping them better integrate into the global trading system. West Africa has already expressed its willingness to open negotiations with the EU and I hope to discuss with my colleagues the outline and timetable of negotiations for an EU-West Africa Economic Partnership Agreement."

See: http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/5590|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Commission proposes EU Water Fund worth €1 billion (23/04/2003)

The European Commission proposed the establishment of a European Union Water Fund, with a budget of €1 billion, to help give people in the 77 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) signatory countries to the Cotonou Agreement access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Today's Communication builds on the EU Water Initiative, launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in September 2002. The WSSD confirmed the target, set by the Millennium Development Goals, of halving, by 2015, the number of people across the world without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The fund is intended to be a catalyst - promoting initiatives, providing information, being a clearing-house, building research and management capacity in ACP countries - as well as an instrument which can provide the missing link in financing sustainable projects and activities. The Commission will now discuss this proposal with the EU Member States and the ACP partners, and give due consideration to the necessary steps to allow the financing to be mobilised from the European Development Fund to set up the Fund.

See: http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/5560|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Statement by the EU High Representative Javier Solana welcoming the agreement upon the composition of the Palestinian Authority's Cabinet (European Council, 23/04/2003), See: <http://ue.eu.int/en/summ.htm> (Latest News)

Law and order the key to humanitarian aid in Iraq (European Parliamentary Committee on Development and Cooperation, 23/04/2003)

Hostilities ended a week ago in Iraq. However, following the subsequent images of looting broadcast round the world, members of Parliament's Development Committee this Wednesday took up the appeal issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reminding the coalition countries that under the Geneva Convention the occupying forces are responsible for keeping order in the country. The chaos in Baghdad and other major Iraqi cities is currently the main obstacle to improving conditions for civilians. See: http://www.europarl.eu.int/press/index_en.htm

Widespread electoral fraud in Nigeria (European Parliamentary Committee on Development and Cooperation, 23/04/2003)

Max van den Berg (PES, NL), who led the EU's electoral observer mission to Nigeria, told Parliament's Development Committee on Wednesday of his first impressions following the elections of 19 April. A total of 118 observers had been sent to 31 of the 36 states that make up the Nigerian federation, to monitor the elections for president and governors.

See: http://www.europarl.eu.int/press/index_en.htm

WTO: fisheries subsidies - EU tables proposal for sustainable fishing (22/04/2003)

The EU tabled a proposal to the WTO to ban all subsidies that cause over-capacity in the fisheries sector. In line with the EU's internal fisheries reform adopted last December, today's proposal to the WTO calls for international action to put an end to over-fishing. EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said: "This is another example of the EU's commitment to sustainable development, a key goal of the Doha Development Agenda. By banning these subsidies today, we can indeed help to ensure a sustainable future for fishermen around the world". EU Farm and Fisheries Commissioner Franz Fischler said: "In its internal reform, the EU recognised the link between subsidies and the over-capacity which exists in the fisheries sector and that measures need to be taken to ensure a balance between the fishing fleets and the resources available. The solution to deal with this problem is simple: the complete ban of all subsidies which enhance capacity."

See: http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/555|0|RAPID&lq=EN&display=

Commission decides to airlift first part of emergency medical aid to Iraq (22/04/2003)

The European Commission has adopted an emergency humanitarian aid decision for €10 million to meet urgent medical needs in Iraq. The new decision is an immediate answer to the breakdown of law and order that followed the fall of the Iraqi regime and that has affected all aspects of civilian life. This is part of a wider co-ordinated effort involving EU Member States and the Commission, as announced by the President during the European Council in Athens last week. The funding, channelled through the Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), was announced today by Poul Nielson, the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid. Speaking in Brussels, he said; "It is clear that the war has seriously affected the delivery of basic health services in Iraq. As always, children are among the worst-affected and it is vital that adequate treatment should be available for these innocent victims of the conflict."

See: http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/554|0|RAPID&lq=EN&display=

Over a million new child slaves every year (European Parliamentary Committee on Development and Cooperation, 22/04/2003)

The number of child slaves in the world is currently ten times greater than at the peak of the slave trade to the United States. This was one of the facts that led MA Carlotti (PES, F) this week to urge her fellow MEPs on the Development Committee to back practical proposals to ensure that EU co-operation and development policy gives priority to children's rights.

See: http://www.europarl.eu.int/press/index_en.htm

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What is Europe Day?

On the 9th of May 1950, Robert Schuman presented his proposal on the creation of an organised Europe, indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. This proposal, known as the "Schuman declaration", is considered to be the beginning of the creation of what is now the European Union.

Today, the 9th of May has become a European symbol (Europe Day) which along with the single currency (the euro), the flag and the anthem, identifies the political entity of the European Union. Europe Day is the occasion for activities and festivities that bring Europe closer to its citizens and peoples of the Union closer to one another.

To find out more, see: http://www.europa.eu.int/abc/symbols/9-may/index_en.htm