



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 – 31 March 2005

Headline News

EC pledges wholehearted support for President Mbeki's mediation in Côte d'Ivoire (21/03/2005)



Visiting Côte d'Ivoire, Louis Michel, the member of the European Commission responsible for development and humanitarian aid, pledged his wholehearted support for the efforts of the African Union's mediator, South African President Thabo Mbeki, and appealed for political dialogue. Louis Michel met Côte d'Ivoire's President Laurent Gbagbo, Prime Minister Seydou Diarra, representatives of the country's main political movements, European ambassadors and members of the committee set up to monitor the January 1993 Linas-Marcoussis agreements. He also visited Bouaké in the north of the country to meet representatives of the Forces Nouvelles, which control the city.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/354&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Commission welcomes G8 commitment to put Africa and Development high on its agenda (18/03/2005)

European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, welcomed the clear commitment of the G8 members to put Africa high on its agenda and to coordinate its efforts to increase the international support for development. Louis Michel took part in the G8 Environment and Development Ministerial meeting in Derbyshire, UK. The European Commission welcomed the report of the Commission for Africa as an important contribution in what is a key year for development. The EC shares its emphasis on the role that trade can play as a driver of growth for Africa's development. The EU "Everything But Arms" scheme fully opens the EU market to least developed countries.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/342&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Conference on Africa – Speech by Peter Mandelson (18/03/2005)

Addressing the BBC Conference on Africa European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said: "Where I think the Africa Commission marks a break in the outflow of rhetoric and passion is that the Report offers a real, concrete plan of action. It has a clear purpose – to put Africa on a sustainable path of at least 7% annual growth. This is not simply a plan for redistribution from the world's rich to the world's poor. Of course the plan involves a 50 billion dollar two stage increase in aid, as well as a programme of debt cancellation.



See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/184&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Other News

Louis Michel pledges EU support for transition in Haiti (29/03/2005)

On a visit to Haiti the European Commissioner responsible for development and humanitarian aid, Louis Michel, pledged the EU's support for the political transition process and the holding of presidential elections with broad participation in a climate of security before the end of the year. "The European Union is active here with large-scale resources and will remain so throughout the rehabilitation phase. The electoral timetable must be adhered to and a feeling of national unity created so that all Haitians feel involved", said Michel. He praised the courage displayed by the President of the Republic, Boniface Alexandre, and the Prime Minister, Gérard Latortue, in undertaking political / economic reforms vital for the country's stability.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/366&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Commission confirms quality of European GMO legislative framework (22/03/2005)

The European Commission took stock of the EU legislative framework on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). During the debate, the Commission confirmed its full confidence in the existing regulatory framework on GMOs, one of the strictest in the world, which provides for a high level of scientific assessment and at the same time safeguards the consumers' right to choose. The Commission concluded that it would continue to comply fully with its legal obligations and proceed with the approval of pending authorisations as appropriate. While continuing to fulfil the responsibilities imposed on it by the EU legislative framework, the Commission has reflected on the need to develop consensus between all interested parties.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/355&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **Questions and Answers on the Regulation of GMOs in the European Union (22/03/2005)**

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/104&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Space has a security dimension, security has a space dimension (22/03/2005)

The global security environment has undergone dramatic, fundamental and profound change in recent years. Space technologies can make a significant contribution to how we face a wide range of threats, from natural disasters to terrorist attacks. These are the main findings of a report by the Space and Security Panel of Experts on the security issues on European Space Policy the Commission published today.. It recommends setting up a coherent European framework to contribute to the space-based elements of a global situation awareness system. Vice President Verheugen said "It is time for the EU to play a much greater role in international security. Space is a unique tool to help achieve this strategic goal and this report points the way to ensure that it makes that contribution".

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/351&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Presidency Declaration on behalf of the European Union concerning the situation in Liberia (21/03/2005)

The European Union is closely watching the situation in Liberia, which is at a particularly crucial point in its transition process. The long years of civil war, systematic looting of resources and atrocities against the population have left significant scars and had a considerable impact on the stability of the whole Mano river region. Now that peace has returned, reconstruction of the country has begun and demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration programmes are being implemented, every effort must be made, above all by the Liberian authorities, to enable the country to regain the political, economic and social stability necessary for its development, thus enabling those who are still displaced to return home.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PESC/05/28&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Louis Michel invites Paul Wolfowitz to Brussels to present his views on Development (18/03/2005)

European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, invited Mr Wolfowitz to present his views on Development and the role of the World Bank. Wolfowitz has been nominated by the US President, George W. Bush, as the candidate to the Presidency of the World Bank, a key actor in Development. Commissioner Michel said: "I am looking forward to meeting Mr Wolfowitz in Brussels to listen to his ideas on Development, the main challenges ahead and his vision for the World Bank as a major actor." The Commissioner underlined that "as the world's largest aid donor, the European Union has built a strategic partnership with the World Bank to pursue its main goal, which is poverty alleviation.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/340&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EU Election Observation Mission to Ethiopia Deployed (18/03/2005)

The European Commission has deployed an EU Election Observation Mission for federal and state parliamentary elections in Ethiopia. The Mission will be led by Ms Ana Gomes, Member of the European Parliament, who will travel to Addis Ababa this week to meet relevant stakeholders in the electoral process. The EU will deploy more than 160 observers to Ethiopia. This includes a core team of 9 staff which will arrive in Ethiopia on 18 March, 50 Long-Term Observers arriving in mid-April and some 100 Short-Term Observers to be deployed in early May. The mission will be present in all regions of the country and will cover the election campaign, polling and the counting of ballots up to the announcement of the official results.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/331&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

World Water Day, 22 March - Water is Life (18/03/2005)

The international observance of 22 March as World Water Day is an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United National Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. This background note details some of the policies and projects underway in the European Commission to address issues related to water management and supply, both within the EU and abroad. The United Nations will announce 2005 to 2015 the "Decade of Water" in order to support the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals and the European Union will use this decade to achieve good water status for all European waters.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/102&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Ahead:

- **04/04/2005 – New Head of Delegation, Mr Lodewijk Briët, takes office, Pretoria Delegation**
- **10-11/04/2005 - EU-African Union (Troika), Luxembourg**
See: <http://www.eu2005.lu/en/calendrier/2005/04/11ueua/index.html>

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General Information

Presidency Conclusions: European Council, Brussels (22-3/03/2005)

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=DOC/05/1&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>