



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*



2 - 15 November 2009

Headline News

[Czech President signs the Lisbon Treaty](#)

Clearing the final hurdle in the way of the Treaty of Lisbon, Czech President Vaclav Klaus signed the Treaty on 3 November 2009. Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt said: " I am very pleased that President Klaus has signed the Lisbon Treaty. It opens up for a more democratic, transparent and efficient Union". All EU Member States have now ratified the text of the Treaty, which will enter into force on 1 December 2009.

[EU Presidency Declaration on the recent arrests in Zimbabwe](#)

"The European Union is concerned by the arrest on Sunday 8 November of five prominent members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, including ZCTU President, Mr Lovemore Matombo, and their continued detention. This follows a number of other recent cases of harassment and intimidation directed against political activists and members of Zimbabwean civil society. The European Union also finds it most disturbing to learn about the alleged torture in incommunicado detention of MDC member Pascal Gwezere. The EU calls for the early release of Mr Matombo and his colleagues and for a halt to all state violence and intimidation of members of civil society and political activists in Zimbabwe".

[Think "Fragile First" warns European Development Report](#)

The first ever European Report on Development (ERD) was launched at the recent European Development Days in Stockholm, Sweden. Europe's top experts put the focus on the challenges faced by fragile African countries in an unstable global economic context. Their report highlights the destabilising effect of the global economic downturn, makes recommendations for the way forward and calls on donors to keep their aid promises. EU Commissioner for Development, Karel De Gucht, said: "This report highlights the need to keep developing countries in our minds as we emerge from the economic downturn. We need to think "Fragile First" - those experiencing situations of fragility are most at risk from the effects of the economic crisis and will feel the effects for the longest time, well after other countries recover. Fragility affects populations, surrounding regions and has implications for Africa and Europe as a whole. "

Other News

[EC President Barroso congratulates the people of Mozambique on the holding of successful democratic elections](#)

Following the successful holding of Presidential, Legislative and Provincial elections in Mozambique on 28 October, the fourth general elections and the first provincial elections since a multi-party system was established in 1994. European Commission President, José Manuel Durão Barroso, sent the following message. "I would like to congratulate the People of Mozambique for showing their commitment to democracy by having successfully passed these fourth consecutive multiparty elections since the Peace Agreement in the early 1990's. The European Commission is satisfied in particular with the generally efficient and organised polling-day, which took place in a serene and peaceful atmosphere. This shows raising maturity and awareness by all actors involved. I am confident that the subsequent steps in the process will take place in an equally peaceful atmosphere. I would like to reiterate the continuous commitment of the European Commission to the strengthening of democratic governance that will ensure enduring stability and growing prosperity of Mozambique."

EU gives €200 million support to increase energy access in ACP countries

The European Commission announced the launch of a second phase of the ACP-EU Energy Facility under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) for the period 2009-2013. Following a first successful implementation phase, the EU and the ACP Group of States agreed to set aside €200m to continue activities to improve access to sustainable and affordable energy services for the poor, while contributing to the fight against climate change by focusing on renewable energy solutions and energy efficiency measures. Karel De Gucht, European Commissioner for Development, declared: "If we are going to see real economic and social development for the world's poorest, there must be access to reliable energy services. The Energy Facility will contribute to helping to reach this goal, whilst also encouraging greater energy efficiency and clean energy solutions, which are critical as developing nations also take-up the fight against climate change".

Review shows EU has provided €1 billion for trade facilitation in developing countries

The EU presented to the World Trade Organization a review of the trade facilitation projects which it financed between 2006 and 2008. The review showed that the EU spent €1.01bn on 95 projects related to capacity building and technical assistance. The projects have helped simplify import and export procedures, boosting the ability of developing countries to benefit from trade and open global markets. The projects are part of an overall commitment to Aid for Trade by the European Union worth more than €7bn every year. EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton said: "Developing countries cannot take full advantage of the benefits of open and fair trade if their exports fall at the first hurdle. Trade facilitation is vital for developing countries' growth prospects."

16th EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika Meeting

The Sixteenth Ministerial Troika meeting between the European Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held on 11 November 2009. In their opening statements, the Co-Chairmen underscored the constructive political dialogue and the close and fruitful co-operation between the EU and ECOWAS. They underlined the decisive positive role played by the jointly agreed EU-Africa Strategy in achieving closer EU-Africa relations, and in particular the crucial importance of its strategic partnerships on Peace and Security, Governance, Environment and Climate Change, Energy, and other political, trade and development-related issues of mutual interest.

EU and Egypt step up co-operation on employment and social affairs

Vladimír Špidla, EU Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Commissioner, travelled to Egypt to discuss co-operation with the EU on employment and social issues. The two sides exchanged experiences on tackling the social impacts of the economic crisis and discussed progress towards social and employment objectives under the EU's neighbourhood policy. "Egypt is a key partner for the EU in the Mediterranean region and we want to step up our cooperation on employment and social issues while promoting social justice," said Commissioner Špidla. "We call on Egypt to continue its reforms in line with the employment and social objectives agreed under the European Neighbourhood Policy. Through our cooperation we can help transform the Mediterranean into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity." As part of the European neighbourhood policy, the EU and Egypt agreed on a series of social and employment objectives for the period 2007-2010 and beyond, including co-operation on combating poverty, tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, fostering employment and strengthening social dialogue.

Kimberley Process Plenary meeting further strengthens international efforts to combat trade with conflict diamonds

The Kimberley Process Plenary meeting was held in Swakopmund, Namibia from 2-5 November 2009 and adopted important decisions to enhance the international fight against conflict diamonds. The European Community fully endorsed the decisions adopted at the meeting. Zimbabwe's commitment to undertake a series of ambitious actions to bring diamond mining in the Marange area in compliance with the minimum requirements was welcomed. In addition, the EC welcomed the adoption of a decision to enhance co-operation on enforcement, as well as the decision to increase oversight of Guinea's diamond production and trade. The EC also supported the continuing engagement and monitoring of diamond production in Côte d'Ivoire, in light of UN Security Council Resolution 1893 (2009). The Democratic Republic of Congo has been selected as the 2011 Kimberley Process Chair.

European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009: Award ceremony of the "Imagine a new world" photo competition

Photographers from Hungary, France and United Kingdom have won the EU photo competition organised within the framework of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, with the theme "Imagine a new world". Photographers were encouraged to provide an original work, in which they expressed their vision of a "new world" and showed what creativity and innovation means to them. Education, Training, Culture and Youth Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič said: "I am pleased at the high level of interest from across Europe in this photo competition: it shows that it captured the imagination of European citizens. And the many different approaches the entrants took to express their vision of what the future holds for them, Europe or the world, are proud examples of the originality and creative potential that are the central themes of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation".

Official website of the competition : www.imagine2009.eu

For further information please contact Frank Oberholzer on 012-452-5200