



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.



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Headline News

[Women's Rights are Human Rights – Speech by Com B Ferrero Waldner \(25/01/2006\)](#)

At the Conference on Joint Action of Member States against Harmful Traditional Practices, Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner (External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy) categorically stated: "Removing the road block from women's paths is exactly what we are trying to achieve. We want to empower women to make their own choices. We want them to have the same opportunities in life as men. And above all, we want to protect them from violence, discrimination, and persecution. The title of my speech is "women's rights are human rights". To people in this room that is self-evident – of course women's rights are human rights. Human rights are universal. They are the rights of every man, woman and child anywhere in the world. But unfortunately, this message still hasn't been heard or understood in many parts of the globe. ..."

[EU Trade Policy after Hong Kong – Speech by Com P Mandelson \(23/01/2006\)](#)

Addressing the Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft in Berlin, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, said: "In this speech, delivered to an audience of business and political leaders in Berlin on 23 January 2006, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson reaffirms his commitment to a EU Trade Policy that reflects global economic change. Turning to the Doha Round of WTO trade talks he argues that the onus for saving the Doha negotiations lies not with Europe but with its negotiating partners, none of whom have yet made "offers or concessions that remotely match Europe's"

See also: [Mandelson: Europe still ambitious for the Doha Round, but it is time for others to move \(23/01/2006\)](#)

Other News

[Debate on Plan D: Europe must enhance its presence in the public debate \(26/01/2006\)](#)

On 25/01/2006, a conference on Communicating Europe at regional and local level was attended by some 400 representatives of regional and local authorities, regional parliaments, European and national associations of local and regional authorities, and European campaign organisers. This conference kicks off a series of events to be held in Brussels and Member States by the Committee of the Regions in 2006. The aim is to help the European Commission and European Parliament implement Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, which was launched on 13/10/2005 by Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the Commission, in order to stimulate "a wide public debate on the European Union".

[Competition: Commission reaction to Microsoft announcement \(25/01/2006\)](#)

The European Commission will study carefully the announcement made by Microsoft today once it has received the full details. The Commission is looking forward to receiving, no later than 15/02/2006, Microsoft's reply to the Statement of Objections sent by the Commission on 21/12/2005 (see [IP/05/1695](#)).

[EU Export Helpdesk service for developing countries draws 1.2 million visitors in 2005 \(24/01/2006\)](#)



The European Commission's Export Helpdesk for Developing Countries received an average of 3700 hits a day in 2005, establishing a "one-stop-shop" service for developing country exporters looking to export to the European Union. The Export Helpdesk is a concrete demonstration of the European Union's commitment to facilitating trade between developing countries and the European Union.

[Improving animal welfare: EU Action Plan adopted \(23/01/2006\)](#)

Concrete measures to improve the protection and welfare of animals over the next five years are outlined in a new Action Plan on the protection and welfare of animals, adopted by the Commission today. The Action Plan aims to ensure that animal welfare is addressed in the most effective manner possible, in all EU sectors and through EU relations with Third countries. See also: [Questions and Answers on the Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals \(23/01/2006\)](#)

[Role of Community conditionality in triumph of democracy – Speech by Com D Hübner \(21/01/2006\)](#)

At a conference entitled European Strategies for Promoting Democracy in Postcommunist Countries, Commissioner Danuta Hübner (Regional Policy) said: "... on its way to democracy Poland benefited in a crucial way from gradual integration into the EU. With the Cooperation Agreement followed by the Europe Agreement, we decided to bind our policy-making hands by

agreeing to implement significant parts of the *acquis communautaire* and to liberalise trade. But in doing so we also confirmed the values of the Union as our own. The sharing of values was fostered by the institutional arrangements associated with these agreements but also through the opening up of Community programmes to our citizens ...”

[Enlargement in the evolution of the European Union – Speech by Com O Rehn \(20/01/2006\)](#)

Giving a public lecture at the London School of Economics, Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn, noted: “... we need both an economic Europe and a political Europe. We need economic reforms to enhance competitiveness, and political reforms to make the Union more effective and democratic. ... The same goes for deepening and widening of the European Union – or strengthening European political integration and extending the zone of peace, democracy and prosperity in our continent. Widening versus deepening is a false dichotomy. The EU has always pursued these two objectives in parallel. ...”

[Presidency declaration on behalf of the EU on the serious incidents in Côte d'Ivoire \(18/01/2006\)](#)

The European Union resolutely condemns the orchestrated acts of violence which have been taking place in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in Abidjan, since 16/01/2006, and also the attacks on the UNOCI contingent. These acts constitute a serious impediment to a peace process. The EU calls on all political players to bring these unacceptable acts to an end immediately, and requests that all necessary measures be taken to ensure the safety of the international and diplomatic presence.

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