



European Union
Delegation of the European Commission
in South Africa

**... this week
in review**



21 – 27 March 2003

Trade And Enlargement - Why is enlargement good news for third countries? (27/03/2003)

Ten countries will join the EU on 1 May 2004. As of their day of accession, the new member states will apply the EU's Common Commercial Policy in its entirety, including the Common External Tariff, EU preferential trade agreements, WTO commitments and EU trade defence measures. Third countries will fully benefit from enlargement: An even larger market than before. With a population of almost 455 million and a GDP of around €9231 billion, the enlarged EU will account for some 19% of world trade and be the source of 46% of world outward FDI and host to 24% of inward FDI. Third countries will benefit from an increased single market, and a simplified and enhanced access to the current acceding countries' markets. See: http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=MEMO/03/72|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Eurobarometer survey: Europeans see the environment as top priority (27/03/2003)

European Environment Commissioner, Margot Wallström presented the results of a Eurobarometer Survey entitled "The attitudes of Europeans towards the environment." The results, which reflect the views of 16,000 EU citizens who were polled last autumn (Sept 2002), show that while environmental issues remain top of their list of priority issues, opinions have evolved with regards to the main causes of pollution and what action should be taken. Commenting on the survey results, Commissioner Wallström said: "Europeans clearly see the environment as a top priority and want more action at European level. The views expressed in this survey will of course be taken into account in our future policy initiatives on environment matters. Europe plays the leading role in environmental protection but we can not rest on our laurels. This survey shows that more needs to be done." See: http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/443|0|RAPID&lg=EN;

Report on the Spring European Council by Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, 26/03/2003

"Today's debate focuses on the recent European Council. A Council that took place against the backdrop of a grave international crisis, which made the task of the Greek Presidency all the more difficult. ... The Spring European Council is the time the Union traditionally looks at the economy. But the Iraq crisis cast a shadow over the whole Brussels Council. And so I will begin with that....". See:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=SPEECH/03/156|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the first action of the Special Court of Sierra Leone (25/03/2003)

The European Union welcomes the prompt and diligent action of the Special Court of Sierra Leone. This constitutes an important milestone on the path for peace, justice and reconciliation for the people of Sierra Leone. The European Union reiterates its strong support for the Special Court of Sierra Leone in its crucial task to bring the main perpetrators of serious violations of international humanitarian law in Sierra Leone to justice. The EU also reiterates its appreciation for the work of the truth and reconciliation Commission in its endeavours to contribute to the healing of the Sierra Leone society. The Acceding Countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the Associated Countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.

World Tuberculosis Day: EU-funded research in the fight against Tuberculosis (24/03/2003)

The global impact of TB is devastating, especially in developing countries where poverty and the prevalence of HIV lower resistance and encourage further transmission. Tuberculosis causes about 2 million deaths a year, about 98% in developing countries. The EU has channelled €28 million into TB drug and vaccine research in the last four years, within the 5th EU research framework programme, and will be committing significantly more during the course of the current research framework programme (2003-2006). See:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=MEMO/03/66|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Brussels European Council 20 and 21 March 2003, Presidency Conclusions (21/03/2003)

The European Council met in Brussels on 20 and 21 March for its third annual Spring meeting on the economic, social and environmental situation in the Union. Heads of State or Government, Foreign and Finance Ministers also came together with their counterparts from the thirteen acceding and candidate countries to discuss the Lisbon Strategy and its implementation as well as international issues. See:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=DOC/03/2|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Iraq: Commission provides details of immediate humanitarian relief through the Red Cross (21/03/2003)

The European Commission has released further details of its first humanitarian aid decision (adopted 21/03/2003) for civilians in Iraq. €3 million has been allocated by the Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) under the fast-track "primary emergency" procedure to provide at least 75,000 internally displaced people with emergency relief, through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). See:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/422|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Racism and Xenophobia: Anna Diamantopoulou supports call for "a culture of healing" (21/03/2003)

Speaking following a European Round Table on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia on 20 March, European Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou commented on the dangers of the conflict in the Gulf for communities in Europe. "We saw during the last Gulf War a dramatic increase in attacks on Muslims and people of Arab origin. And more recently, we have witnessed violent anti-Semitism as a reaction to tensions in Israel and Palestine. We must do everything we can to avoid a repetition of those excesses in response to the new conflict in the Gulf." See:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/421|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Water for Life: Europe Day at the World Water Forum (21/03/2003)

The 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan, convened from March 16th to March 23rd, 2003, offers a unique platform for 10,000 participants to exchange their ideas and experiences, and discuss the global water crisis. Building on the 2002 EU Water Initiative launched at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the Commission will reinforce the EU's commitment to cutting by half the number of people living without drinking water and basic sanitation. During special sessions at Europe Day in Kyoto delegates had the opportunity to learn about a series of issues relating to sustainable management of water resources as well as the European Union's achievements in international scientific and technological development co-operation on issues relating to water, on a global scale. The events offered an opportunity to hear about progress in implementing the Water Initiative, to discuss with partner regions (Africa, Newly Independent States (NIS) and Mediterranean) and explore research, innovation and further development of EU action programmes. See:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=MEMO/03/63|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the recent ceasefire declarations in Uganda (21/03/2003)

The EU welcomes the recent ceasefire declarations by the Lord's Resistance Army and the Ugandan Government. The EU hopes that these declarations will lead to a sustained cessation of hostilities and to peace talks. The EU extends its appreciation of the work of the Acholi religious and traditional leaders in helping to create the conditions for a ceasefire. The EU calls on all parties to seize this opportunity to make progress through dialogue and help bring an end to this 16-year conflict. See: http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=PESC/03/37|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

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