



European Union
Delegation to South Africa

EU Perspectives

Regular publication that seeks to provide information
on EU-related activities of interest to SA readers



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Headline News

[Copenhagen conference must produce global and comprehensive agreement to avert dangerous climate change](#)

The EU has emphasised the crucial importance of reaching a global, ambitious and comprehensive climate agreement at the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen on 7-18 December. Commission President Barroso said: "In Copenhagen world leaders must take the bold decisions needed to stop climate change from reaching the dangerous and potentially catastrophic levels projected by the scientific community. We must seize this chance to keep global warming below 2°C before it is too late. But Copenhagen is also an historic opportunity to draw the roadmap to a global low-carbon society, and in so doing unleash a wave of innovation that can revitalise our economies through the creation of new, sustainable growth sectors and "green collar" jobs. The EU has set the pace with our unilateral commitment to cut emissions 20% by 2020 and our climate financing proposals for developing countries. We will be ready to scale up our emission reduction to 30% provided our partners in both the developed and the developing world take on their fair share of the global effort."

EU press pack for Copenhagen:

http://ec.europa.eu/climateaction/news_media/index_en.htm

[European Commission welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon](#)

The Treaty of Lisbon entered into force on 1 December 2009. The occasion was marked by a ceremony in the City of Lisbon organised jointly by the Portuguese Government, the Swedish Presidency and the European Commission. President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso said "The Treaty of Lisbon puts citizens at the centre of the European project. I'm delighted that we now have the right institutions to act and a period of stability, so that we can focus all our energy on delivering what matters to our citizens". The Treaty of Lisbon amends the current EU and EC treaties, without replacing them. It will provide the Union with the legal framework and tools necessary to meet future challenges and to respond to citizens' demands. The Treaty will ensure European citizens have their say in European affairs and see their fundamental rights set out in a charter. The EU will be better equipped to meet expectations in the fields of energy, climate change, cross-border crime and immigration. It will also be able to speak with a stronger voice on the international scene.

[Memo on Explaining the Treaty of Lisbon](#)

[First permanent EU President and High Representative for Foreign Affairs appointed](#)

Herman Van Rompuy was appointed permanent President of the European Council, while Catherine Ashton was appointed High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Van Rompuy, who was elected Belgian Prime Minister last year, has held high posts in the Belgian political leadership since 1975. Now, he will have the task of representing all the EU's Member States. This was something he spoke of when commenting the decision: "The EU belongs to us all and should be there for each Member State. We are on a common journey heading towards a common destination, but we all have our own luggage and we must be allowed to be different from one another", he said. The new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, who currently holds the post of European Trade Commissioner, said she was deeply honoured and privileged. "Working with both the Council and the Commission will be a challenge, and being the first person ever to hold this post will be a challenge. I was the first woman British European Commissioner, then I was the first woman Trade Commissioner and now the first woman on this post."

Other News

[EIB funds for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects across SA](#)

The European Investment Bank (EIB) agreed to provide a €40m loan to FirstRand Bank to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy projects across South Africa. The package marks the first dedicated energy efficiency loan in SA made by the EIB. The funding will enhance South Africa's contribution to combating climate change and facilitate economic development through improving the reliability of electricity supply in the country. "This loan is part of the EIB's continued strong commitment to promoting economic development across SA. Working closely with FirstRand Bank to increase electricity generation capacity and promote use of renewable energy will make a key contribution to sustainable growth in the country" said Plutarchos Sakellaris, EIB Vice-President responsible for activities in South Africa.

[EU statement on World AIDS Day 2009 Stockholm/Brussels, 1 December 2009](#)

"Today, on the World Aids Day 2009, the European Union remembers and honours all women, men, children and young people who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS, and reaffirms its commitments to all those who today live with HIV/AIDS or are affected in other ways by the disease. The European Union also stresses today the need to further strengthen the response to HIV/AIDS, at national and international levels, by all partners, private, public, civil society and international organisations taking into account the need for a broader participation by all stakeholders in partner countries. The forthcoming World AIDS Conference in Vienna in 2010 will be an important opportunity in our common endeavour to achieve this aim".

[EU donates €2m to WTO training programmes for developing countries](#)

The EU has donated €2m to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF) for the years 2010 and 2011. This donation will finance technical assistance programmes and training activities for developing and least developed countries, as well as economies in transition. The aim is to better adapt their practices and laws to WTO rules and disciplines, improve the implementation of their obligations and enhance the exercise of their membership rights. "I welcome this new donation that demonstrates the EC's constant commitments to help developing countries benefit fully from the multilateral trading system and better integrate in the global economy" declared WTO Director General Pascal Lamy.

[Karel De Gucht calls on EU Member States to 'work together' to ensure billions of euros in aid doesn't get wasted](#)

European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Karel De Gucht, called upon EU Member States to work better together to ensure that more than €3bn of aid can avoid being wasted every year. The appeal from the European Commissioner follows upon a first version of an independent study entitled " *Aid Effectiveness: benefits of a European Approach*", which was launched recently at the European Development Days in Stockholm, Sweden. Commissioner De Gucht stated: "At a time of global economic crisis, it is clearly unacceptable that critical aid money is being wasted when the worlds' most vulnerable need it more than ever. The European Commission along with the EU Member States have a responsibility to make every euro count for the world's poor. Our report shows a number of systemic weaknesses in all forms of EU aid delivery. Despite European leadership on the international front to advance the aid effectiveness agenda, we clearly still have a lot more to do and now is the time to press the accelerator."

[Nigeria signs €677 million European Development Fund agreement to support governance, trade and peace actions](#)

The European Commission signed a multi-million euro agreement that aims to help Nigeria tackle development challenges in the areas of governance, trade and peace. The agreement is an ambitious step forward in cooperation and is a direct result of the Nigeria-EU political dialogue. It reinforces cooperation in three strategic areas: peace and security; governance and human rights; trade and regional integration with € 677 million for the period 2009 – 2013 financed through the European Development Fund. The European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Karel De Gucht said: "This agreement shows that Europe stands by Nigeria and its people in the development challenges it faces. I'm delighted that a substantial amount of this financing will go to support conflict resolution and the peace process in the Niger Delta which has been ravaged by years of unrest. We are fully committed to supporting the Government of Nigeria in the process of restoring peace and bringing development to the region."

[Eurobarometer: Climate change the second most serious problem faced by the world today](#)

The main conclusions of a special Eurobarometer survey of public attitudes on climate change showed that Europeans remain concerned about climate change and believe fighting it can boost economic growth in the EU. 63% of citizens considered climate change a 'very serious problem'. 47% of respondents considered climate change to be one of the two most serious problems facing the world today. A majority of Europeans said that industry, citizens themselves, national and local governments, as well as EU, were not doing enough to fight climate change. Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission, said: "The message of the European citizens is clear: the fight against climate change must remain a top priority of EU action. It confirms our belief that tackling climate change and overcoming the economic recession do not exclude each other."

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