



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.



24 – 30 September 2004

Headline News

Statement by President Prodi on the release of hostages (28/09/2004)

Words can hardly express my joy and satisfaction now that the two Simonas are free. This is the event we have been waiting for and hoping for so anxiously. I still find it intolerable that these two girls, who were showing their commitment to peace, not war, who were dedicating themselves to aiding the most deprived sections of the Iraqi people, should have endured such an awful experience that nothing can justify. Their liberation is a huge relief after such worry and anguish. My first thoughts go to the two girls and their families, to whom I send my sincerest best wishes.

Other News

The Commission hails the proposal of the Russian government to ratify the Kyoto protocol (30/09/2004)

The Commission welcomed warmly the decision of the Government of Russia to submit the proposal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to the Duma. The President of the Commission, Romano Prodi praised the Government's proposal. "Once the Duma confirms the ratification it means that the Kyoto Protocol will enter into force. This is a huge success for the international fight against climate change. The Commission looks forward to working with Russia on carrying out the Protocol", the President said. "Today President Putin has sent a strong signal of his commitment and sense of responsibility".

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/1165&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EU-Mercosur: EU presents its completed offer to Mercosur in on-going trade talks (29/09/2004)

In the on-going negotiations for an EU-Mercosur Association Agreement, the EU sent Mercosur a completed offer. This offer matches the approach and the level of ambition in the offer which the Mercosur sent the EU on Friday 24 September. The offer proposes a gradual liberalisation of Mercosur exports of industrial and agricultural goods to the EU, the opening of its services market, access to a public procurement market worth €200 bio as well as non-discriminatory rules for Mercosur investors in Europe. Today's move shows the EU's commitment to creating the world's largest free trade area covering 650 million people. Mirroring Mercosur's approach, the EU offer remains valid until 31 October 2004.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/1160&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Annual ECHO Experts' Seminar – Speech by Commissioner Poul Nielson (27/09/2004)

During the seminar Poul Nielson, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said: "... I have been, I think, a strong defender of the needs-based, neutral and non-discriminatory status of humanitarian aid. ECHO continues to focus on forgotten crises where there is little or no interest from political or media viewpoints or where other donors are reluctant to intervene. ECHO's support to forgotten crises has been steadily growing, reaching 20% of its budget in 2003. ... As clearly stated in the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)", LRRD should become a priority for external relations and development cooperation. LRRD is not easy to measure as it is influenced by the willingness of other donors to engage in the process and also by the specific situation in a given country.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/04/428&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Promotion of EU agricultural products outside the EU (28/09/2004)

The European Commission has approved measures to provide information on, and to promote agricultural products outside the EU. The products covered are wine, fruit and vegetables, olive oil, potatoes and Mediterranean products. The estimated expenditure for the EU is €5 million. "Improving the competitiveness of EU quality products on markets outside the EU is a major challenge. By investing in promotion and information campaigns for our agricultural products outside the EU, the European Union is showing its determination to take up this challenge", Commissioner Fischler, responsible for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, said.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/1147&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Election Support: World key players discuss achievements and challenges (27/09/2004)

On 28-29/09/2004, the European Commission hosted a conference on EU election support with a view to assessing achievements and issuing recommendations for future election assistance and observation. Among others, Commission President, Romano Prodi, the European Parliament President, Josep Borrell, Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, and Vice-President of Guatemala, Eduardo Stein Barrilla, addressed more than 160 participants from key international, governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in election support across the world. The conference provided an opportunity to discuss a number of important issues, including elections in conflict and post-conflict situations, the role of civil society and regional organisations in elections and the impact of election support.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/1144&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: ***Election Support: Achievements and Challenges – Speech by President Romano Prodi (28/09/2004)***

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/04/429&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Election Support: Achievements and Challenges – Speech by the Rt. Hon Chris Patten (28/09/2004)

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/04/425&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Pascal Lamy in Tunisia for Euromed Conference on future of textiles and clothing (27/09/2004)

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy travelled to Tunisia to attend the Euro-Mediterranean conference on the future of textiles and clothing chaired by the Tunisian Trade Minister, Mondher Zenaïdi. The event gathered trade ministers from the EU and the Mediterranean basin to examine the challenges facing the textiles and clothing industry after the disappearance of the remaining WTO quotas on 01/01/2005. Before departing for Tunis Pascal Lamy said: "The way to remain competitive in textiles and clothing is to create an integrated trade and investment area around the Mediterranean rim. Uniting our forces we can make sure 01/01/2005 is no more than the beginning of new opportunities for this important industrial sector."

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/1142&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Enlarged Europe: Reinforced Responsibility – Speech by Commissioner Poul Nielson (24/09/2004)

During the keynote address at the conference on "Enlarged Europe" in Prague, Poul Nielson, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said: "... All successful endeavours require a direction and a road map that guide the action. We need comprehensive development policies, centred on poverty reduction in its many facets. As you are aware, the EU Member States and the Commission are firmly committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and working towards these has to be the starting point both at Community level and in the bilateral programmes. ... I am certain that we can only maximise the effect of what we do if we explicitly share this overarching objective. I can therefore only urge all of you to adopt and develop strategies for your bilateral aid explicitly centred on poverty reduction, and to defend and further develop the poverty focus of European aid policies in Brussels.

See: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/04/418&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Ahead:

- 07/10/2004 – EU Enlargement & Trade Workshop, SAITEX, Johannesburg
- 11/10/2004 – EU Enlargement & Trade Workshop, Durban
- 12/10/2004 – EU Enlargement & Trade Workshop, Cape Town
- 13/10/2004 – EU Enlargement & Trade Workshop, Port Elizabeth
- 14/10/2004 – EU Enlargement & Trade Workshop, East London

Interested? Please call Nathalie at **012-342-3911** for more information.

- 16/11/2004 – President T Mbeki to visit the EU, Brussels

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