



**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*



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## **Headline News**

### [High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra/Ghana](#)

The European Commission called on donor and developing countries to use development aid more effectively and urged governments to commit themselves to concrete actions at the Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, Ghana. Although some progress has been made three years after the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, much more needs to be done to reach the UN Millennium Development Goals in 2015. Louis Michel, Commissioner responsible for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said: "It is now or never. The Accra meeting must provide the necessary wakeup call to both donors and developing countries. The challenge is to ensure that rhetoric is translated into practice on a wide scale."

### [African Union Commission and European Commission Africa-EU Energy Partnership](#)

High-level discussions on the implementation of the Africa-EU energy partnership took place in Ethiopia to establish the Africa-EU Energy Partnership, as part of the EU-Africa Joint Strategy. A "Joint Statement on the implementation of the first Action Plan of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership" was signed. The statement calls upon European countries and the private sector to further mobilise resources for investment in energy sector both in the supply and demand side. The European Commission is planning to replenish the Energy Facility Programme and provide additional contribution to the EU-Africa Infrastructure Partnership and its Trust Fund through the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF Intra-ACP programme and in addition national and regional programmes. The AUC confirmed its willingness to further progress in the implementation of the €55m EC support programme for the period 2007-2011, in order to further improve its expertise on energy sector, launch technical studies, raise awareness and play an effective role as a "motor" for the active participation of the African energy regional, national authorities and stakeholders to the Africa-EU energy partnership.

### [Africa-EU Strategic Partnership website launched](#)

The EU-Africa Summit, held in December 2007 in Lisbon, Portugal, adopted the "Africa-EU Strategic Partnership", thus modernising the relations between the two continents. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy defines the long term policy orientations between the two continents, based on a shared vision and common principles. For further information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/development/services/events/africa-eu-strategic-partnership/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/development/services/events/africa-eu-strategic-partnership/index_en.cfm)

### [New rules on pesticide residues to strengthen food safety in the EU](#)

The European Commission took an important step forward in its efforts to ensure food safety in the EU, as a regulation revising and simplifying the rules pertaining to pesticide residues entered into force. The new rules set harmonised Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for pesticides. They ensure food safety for all consumers and allow traders and importers to do business smoothly as confusion over dealing with 27 lists of national MRLs is eliminated. With the previous regime, different MRLs could apply to the same pesticide for the same crop in different Member States, a situation which gave rise to questions from consumers, farmers and traders. Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 is the result of a considerable joint effort by the Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the Member States. EU Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou said: "Today represents a milestone in our effort to ensure that food in Europe is safe. The new rules apply the principle that food produced or imported in one Member State must be safe for consumers in all of them. They ensure that pesticide residues in food are as low as possible and have no harmful effect on our citizens."

## **Other News**

### **Extraordinary European Council on the situation in Georgia**

Meeting in an extraordinary session following the conflict that broke out in Georgia, the European Council unanimously expressed its concern at the consequences, particularly in human terms, of this situation and its condemnation of Russia's unilateral decision to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It reiterated the unacceptable nature of this decision and called on other States not to recognise this proclaimed independence, emphasising once more that a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia must be based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity recognised by international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

### **Commission welcomes signing of agreement for the Re-liberation of Somalia**

Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, welcomed the agreement between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia, reiterating the support expressed by the French Presidency of the European Union. Commissioner Michel remarked: "This is a unique opportunity for peace and stability in Somalia which has to be seized for the benefit of Somalia and to end the long suffering of its civilian population." He said further "The Chairman of the Commission of the African Union, Mr Jean Ping, has rightly called for support from the international community to sustain the current momentum towards peace. The Commission for its part will continue to do all in its powers – along with the United Nations and with the rest of the international community – to support the process of continued political reconciliation in Somalia."

### **Strong public support for EU targets on climate change**

A Eurobarometer survey showed that Europeans are highly concerned about climate change and clearly willing to take action against it. A majority of Europeans believes that the European Union's targets for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and increasing the share of renewable energy by 2020 are about right or even too modest. However, a significant proportion of people feel poorly informed about climate change and ways to help fight it. Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission, said: "Surveys of this kind are important components in our policy-making. It is striking to see that European citizens take the issue of climate change so seriously and it confirms our belief that continued, coherent EU action in this area is imperative". Stavros Dimas, European Commissioner for Environment, added: "The message is that a majority of Europeans supports the EU's targets or wants us to do even more. It is essential that the European Parliament and Council approve the Commission's climate and renewable energy proposals from January so Europe will be able to deliver fully on these targets and meet citizens' expectations."

### **EU film support programme triggers interest in Asia and South America**

The results of the first call for projects of a new EU initiative, the MEDIA International Preparatory Action, showed interest from audiovisual professionals around the world in working with Europe's film and audiovisual sector. The EU will provide nearly €2 million in funding to 18 projects involving partners from Canada, Latin America, India, China, South Korea, Japan, Morocco, Bosnia, Turkey and Georgia. The projects include joint training of film professionals, reciprocal promotion of films and cooperation between cinema networks. This could set the stage for a broader EU film cooperation programme called MEDIA MUNDUS, coming in 2011. "The idea of a culturally diverse and innovative film sector is triggering a strong desire for cooperation between Europeans and third country professionals. The positive reactions to the Commission's call for projects is a good preview of the EU's role in supporting cooperation that can create new business opportunities and boost Europe's audiovisual industries," said Viviane Reding, EU Media Commissioner.

### **The Geneva Trade and Development Forum (17-20 September 2008)**

The Geneva Trade and Development Forum (GTDF) is a welcome neutral platform to engage in an ongoing and substantive debate on trade and development challenges faced by developing countries. Under the auspices of the GTDF, eleven theme groups are currently analyzing highly relevant trade issues for developing countries based on case studies and existing research.

### **Conference Agenda**

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

