



European Union

Delegation to South Africa
Head of Delegation

EU Perspectives

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



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Headline News

[Europe Day celebrates 60th anniversary](#)

On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman, French Foreign Minister, called the press together for a major announcement. He called on France, Germany and other European countries still recovering from the Second World War to pool their production of coal and steel. This was a major step on the road towards lasting peace in Europe and the first step towards later economic integration. Today, this announcement – the Schuman Declaration – is seen as the birth certificate of the European Union and, every year, 9 May is celebrated as Europe Day.

[Europe Day statement by HR/VP Catherine Ashton](#)

[Statement of President Barroso on Greece](#)

"I welcome the agreement in Athens with the Greek authorities of a multi-annual programme of fiscal consolidation and structural reform, jointly prepared by the European Commission together with the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The Greek government, under the determined leadership of Prime Minister Papandreou, has committed to a difficult but necessary reform process to put the Greek economy on a sustainable path and restore confidence. The Commission considers that the conditions for responding positively to the request by the Greek Government are met and recommends that the coordinated European mechanism for assistance to Greece be activated, on the basis of the agreed multi-annual adjustment programme. The assistance, and the basis on which it is set to be provided, shows the joint determination of the members of the Euro area and our institutions, to act in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility".

[EU Development Commissioner attends G8 Development Ministerial meeting in Halifax](#)

The European Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs represented the European Commission at the G8 Development Ministerial meeting in Halifax from 26 to 28 April 2010. He promoted the EU action plan proposed by the European Commission in support of the Millennium Development Goals ahead of the UN MDG Summit in September. This G8 Development meeting takes place before the G8 of June when Heads of States will discuss the way ahead to foster achievement of Millennium Development Goals. These high level political meetings pave the way towards the UN Meeting on MDGs in September 2010. European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, said: "I'm happy to attend the G8 development meeting for the first time, in such a crucial year for development. I will call EU partners to commit to ambitious targets: we will all need to join forces to fighting poverty in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Ahead of the UN MDG Summit in September, we have to confirm the global political will in support of the most disadvantaged. "

Other News

[Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the EU on World Press Freedom Day](#)

"On the occasion of this World Press Freedom Day, 3 May, the European Union recalls those journalists and other media professionals who have sacrificed their lives or liberty in their efforts to present news and comment to the public at large. The European Union is a strong advocate of the right to freedom of expression. It is firmly committed to the respect for freedom and pluralism of the media as outlined in Article 11 of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights. It

regards this as a cornerstone of democracy and a vital component in the protection of all other freedoms and liberties. The EU is deeply concerned by the threats that exist towards media freedom and considers the killing, intimidation and imprisonment of journalists as a serious infringement of media freedom. It strongly condemns any deprivation of the liberty to exercise freedom of expression as a violation of human dignity, and reaffirms freedom of expression as a Fundamental Right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

World Press Freedom Day: Commission launches 2010 Lorenzo Natali Prize for development journalism

The European Commission launched the Lorenzo Natali Prize for 2010 on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day. The international prize is awarded in partnership with Reporters Without Borders and the World Association of Newspapers to the best journalism on development, democracy and human rights. European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, said: "Through the Lorenzo Natali Prize, the European Commission recognises journalists who contribute to the cause of development, democracy and human rights. Many work in what are often difficult conditions, but the light they shed on the realities on the ground is key to raising public awareness of the importance of development policy. That is why we wish to help them to continue providing information in the cause of combating poverty." The Natali Prize is an international prize awarded to the best journalistic work on development, democracy and human rights. It is open to journalists working in TV, radio, the press and online. Interested journalists have until 31 August 2010 to apply (<http://www.nataliprize2010.eu>).

Outcome of re-launched EU-US Development Dialogue on joint action on MDGs, Food security and Climate change

The EU-US dialogue on development was re-launched in Washington. The dialogue provides a framework for cooperation between the two largest donors in the world in their efforts to tackle poverty worldwide. This initiative has been a priority for EU development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs and USAID Administrator Dr Rajiv Shah in the first few months since they both took up office. With five years remaining to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the relaunch is a sign of new political will to work together in the fight against poverty. European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, said: "Today's commitment of the two biggest donors, the EU and US, to join forces in the fight against poverty is good news for poorest countries. I'm confident that the three roadmaps agreed for joint action on Millennium Development Goals, Food security, and Climate change will ensure concrete progress on the ground."

European Investment Bank to support unique microfinance fund for Africa

The European Investment Bank confirmed its commitment to microfinance in Africa, as a leading investor in REGMIFA, a unique €116m (USD 150m) microfinance fund targeting small enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa. REGMIFA was developed by leading donor finance institutions following a G8 initiative to improve access to finance in Africa. Plutarchos Sakellaris, European Investment Bank Vice President responsible for Sub-Saharan Africa, said "The European Investment Bank is playing a leading role in supporting REGMIFA and its unique contribution to improving access to finance for entrepreneurs across Africa. Offering local currency loans, engaging a broad investor base and attracting private support will allow African companies to grow, create jobs and reduce poverty over the coming years." The Fund will provide direct funding for 50 microfinance institutions. They, in turn, will lend to over 300,000 small businesses in local currency. The key benefit will be the removal of currency risk and therefore a lower debt burden. Experience shows that the vast majority of borrowers will be women, whose social position and income earning role as entrepreneurs will be strengthened.

European Development Finance Institutions to establish joint climate change fund

Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Development Finance Institutions (EDFI) will establish a joint climate change fund. AFD, EIB and EDFI members will sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the Interact Climate Change Fund. The Parties intend to establish an investment matching facility to invest in private sector climate change projects in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, Asia and Latin America before the end of 2010. The institutions have extensive experience operating across developing countries and emerging markets and share a joint interest in financing climate change and climate efficiency projects with the aim of creating a portfolio of climate friendly private sector investments in target countries. The initiative has the twin aim of promoting sustainable development of private sector climate change projects and strengthening meaningful co-operation between European Development Finance Institutions, AFD and the European Investment Bank.

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