



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

[SA-EU Strategic Partnership Joint Communiqué](#)

Within the framework of the South Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership, a Ministerial Troika was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 3 June 2008. The meeting of the Troika, the third since the adoption of the SA-EU Strategic Partnership Joint Action Plan on 14 May 2007, and held less than two months before the first SA-EU Summit, demonstrated the strengthening of relations between SA and the EU, based on open and concrete dialogue aimed at addressing the challenges being faced by both partners. Ministers welcomed and discussed areas of cooperation being developed under the Joint Action Plan, including peace and security cooperation, environment, science and technology, customs, energy, migration as well as transport. Both sides welcomed the progress made in the existing cooperation and policy dialogues and agreed that new areas for structured dialogues would be formalised during the first SA-EU Summit in Bordeaux, France, on 25 July 2008.

[Commissioner Louis Michel calls for immediate lifting of ban on humanitarian actions in Zimbabwe](#)

European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, expressed deep concern at the ban imposed by the Zimbabwean authorities on the international humanitarian relief effort in the country. Commissioner Michel stated "This ban must be lifted right away. I am deeply distressed to think that hundreds of thousands of people who depend on aid from the European Commission and others for their very survival now face an even more uncertain future. It is essential that relief workers be given unrestricted and secure access so they can provide assistance to the most vulnerable." Commissioner Michel stressed the neutrality of humanitarian relief efforts saying, "It is essential to remember that all humanitarian relief efforts are based upon the principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality. Further clarification from the Zimbabwean authorities is needed on the claims of inappropriate actions by certain relief organisations so that humanitarian operations can be restored in full without further delay."

[Statement on rising food prices by the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development](#)

Mariann Fischer Boel, EC Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, issued a statement at the recent food summit held in Rome. "In the first instance, we need to mitigate the immediate effects of the food price shock. We stand ready to scale up the EU contribution to the global effort to tackle the effects on poor populations in the developing world as well as in the EU. In parallel, we need to boost agricultural supply. New crop varieties, improved cropping systems, more efficient use of water, greater resistance to diseases and environmental stress are amongst the ways forward to put global agriculture on a sustainable footing. In that context, the European Commission will maintain an open but vigilant GMO policy. Finally, we need to address the crisis at international level. Strengthening of agricultural policies and investments are necessary to ensure a lasting supply response in developing countries. All parts of this comprehensive policy response are essential – they need to go hand in hand".

[Trade Commissioner argues against trade barriers](#)

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson criticised attempts to use food security in the face of high food prices as a pretext for agricultural protectionism. Writing in the International Herald Tribune, Mandelson argued that instead what was needed was much greater investment in helping countries develop farm capacity and the reform of global farm trade. Mandelson said that barriers to the export of farm goods to capture local production did more harm than good by cutting off the market signals that would encourage farmers to grow more to meet growing demand. They could also cut off supplies for the countries, like most of Africa, that depend on food imports. Mandelson also argued that the food crisis made it even more important to use the Doha Round of WTO trade talks to reform global farm trade so that "Poor farmers would no longer be forced to compete with subsidised goods from the rich world, either in their own or export markets".

[Statement by Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, on "Africa Day"](#)

"Africa Day is a chance to reaffirm Europe's commitment to Africa. Together, as two continents, we can work to tackle the challenges of the twenty first century – such as globalisation, climate change, energy, peace and security. Africa Day is an opportunity for all of us to recognise and support the huge potential of this continent. It is an opportunity for us to recognise that reliable partnerships are critical for long term progress. Europe's commitment to Africa is as strong as ever. Our relations are now framed by a joint strategy covering eight partnerships from governance to trade, migration and employment. This year is also the 50th anniversary of the European Development Fund reflecting the EU's solidarity with developing countries across the world". Africa Day on May 25 each year commemorates the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, which is now the present African Union.

Other News

[European Chemicals Agency inaugurated](#)

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) was officially opened by European Commission President José Manuel Barroso and Vice-President Günter Verheugen, together with Gérard Onesta, Vice-President of the European Parliament, and Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen. Located in Helsinki, ECHA is responsible for managing the implementation of the REACH requirements in relation to the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction processes of chemical substances. ECHA formally began its activities a year ago and its work has been devoted to intensive preparations, including staff recruitment and establishing support structures and procedures. On 1st June 2008, two key processes of REACH entered into operation: Registration of chemicals and pre-registration of the some 30,000 chemicals currently in use (e.g. acids, metals, solvents, surfactants). Manufacturers or importers of chemicals have to pre-register them by 1 December 2008 if they want to continue manufacturing or importing them without interruption. It has been estimated that over 180,000 pre-registration files will be submitted.

[European Chemicals Agency](#)

[Erasmus Mundus: more than 2,000 new Master's students to receive scholarships](#)

More than 2,000 students and 450 teaching staff from outside Europe have been selected to receive an Erasmus Mundus scholarship for the academic year 2008/09. These scholarships will allow them to study in Europe for one or two years and obtain a Master's degree from one of the 103 top-quality Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses offered by consortia of European higher education institutions. In 2008, a total number of 17 new partnerships of Erasmus Mundus Masters Consortia with higher education institutions in non-European countries were selected. Altogether, they encompass 62 universities from 28 different third countries. South African students from a number of institutions, including the Universities of Pretoria, Stellenbosch and Cape Town, were among those selected. They will study a range of subjects, including environmental management, arts and humanities, science and technology and vintage management. The second phase of Erasmus Mundus (2009-13) is expected to start in 2009.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html

[Commission welcomes treaty to ban cluster munitions](#)

The European Commission welcomed the adoption in Dublin of a multilateral convention to ban all cluster munitions within eight years. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy, commented: "The convention banning cluster munitions is an important step towards enhancing the security of victims of conflicts in many regions across the world. I hope that many countries will sign and ratify it." The Convention will enter into effect once at least 30 countries have ratified it. The European Commission is one of the world's leading donors in the clearance and destruction of land mines, as well as in mine victim assistance, and has already supported projects covering also cluster munitions in highly affected countries such as Afghanistan, Laos, Cambodia, Lebanon and Sudan.

[Eurostat Yearbook 2008](#)

"Europe in Figures - Eurostat Yearbook 2008" provides users of official statistics with an overview of the wealth of information that is available on Eurostat's web site and within its online databases. It shows how key indicators have developed during the last eleven years in the EU27, the euro area, the Member States and the Candidate countries. Data for the EFTA countries, the US and Japan are included when available. The 2008 Yearbook has fifteen main chapters on different statistical areas. The first chapter covers demographic change; other chapters cover all major statistical domains: economy, education, health, living conditions and welfare, labour market, industry and services, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, international trade, transport, environment, energy, science and technology, Europe's regions and finally a chapter devoted to the links between statistics and European policies. An annex contains a useful glossary and details of the nomenclatures used.

Vacancy in the Delegation: Officer in the Political, Economic and Trade section

<http://www.eusa.org.za/en/Vacancies.htm>

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