



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.



27 January – 2 February 2006

Headline News

[Cartoons published by a Danish newspaper – Statement by Vice-Pres F Frattini \(02/02/2006\)](#)

"As Commissioner responsible for integration policy as well as the promotion and respect of fundamental rights, integrating communities with different religions, cultures and political affiliations is an objective that I strive for in my everyday activities. This is an objective that flows from the liberal principles that govern the EU and its institutions, and indeed the life and history of our continent. I can understand the feelings of indignation, frustration and sadness of the Muslim communities over the last few days as they viewed the cartoons published by a Danish newspaper. Such events do not facilitate dialogue between faiths and cultures and provide barriers to the integration process to which the Member States of the Union are committed ..."

[Commission launches the 2008–2013 programming cycle on Aid to Development \(30/01/2006\)](#)

Commissioner Louis Michel launched the programming cycle for Aid to Development under the 10th EDF (European Development Fund). It took place during the first Regional Seminar, held in Brazzaville, and in which countries from Central Africa are participating. Based on Commission proposals, the programming exercise will constitute the first concrete step towards the implementation of the EU commitments taken in 2005, in particular the improvement of co-ordination and aid effectiveness, increase in aid allocations and a focus on Africa.

Other News

[International Symposium on Climate Change - Opening remarks by Com J Potočnik \(02/02/2006\)](#)

Speaking at the Belgian Royal Academy of Sciences, Commissioner Janez Potočnik (Science and Research) noted: "... awareness of our changing climate is probably the highest it has ever been; the UN Conference in Montreal was concluded successfully two months ago. Equally, we are negotiating the 7th Research Framework Programme with Parliament and Member States. Climate change is at the centre of these discussions. Everybody can observe changes in temperature and ice-cover; we are seeing more frequent natural disasters, causing ever greater human, physical and economic damage of natural hazards. Discussions have also started on Post-Kyoto measures and associated costs and benefits."

[A further €38 mil for conservation and sustainable management of Central Africa's forests \(31/01/2006\)](#)

With its new €38 million ECOFAC IV programme, the European Commission is stepping up its funding for the conservation of Central Africa's wet tropical forests. The aim is to guarantee the long-term conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in seven Central African countries: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe. The return to the programme of the DRC, which accounts for half of the region's woodlands, means that the programme will now cover 180 000 km² of tropical forest and savannah ecosystems.

[Relationship between implementing Schengen agreement & freedom of movement \(31/01/2006\)](#)

Arising from the case: Commission of the European Communities v Kingdom of Spain (Case C-503/03) the European Court of Justice explains, for the first time, the relationship between the convention implementing the Schengen agreement and freedom of movement for persons. Where third country nationals who are the spouses of Member State nationals are persons for whom alerts are entered in the Schengen Information System for the purpose of refusing them entry, a Member State must verify whether the presence of those persons constitutes a genuine, present and sufficiently serious threat affecting one of the fundamental interests of society before refusing them entry into the Schengen Area.

[Europe's capital markets in a global marketplace – Speech by Com C McCreevy \(31/01/2006\)](#)

Addressing the 4th Annual Financial Services Conference in Brussels, Commissioner Charlie McCreevy (Internal Market and Services) reflected: "When we look at the financial services arena today, it's a completely different picture to a decade ago. Real progress has been made. We have a huge and well-functioning Euro bond market. International issuance in Euros is increasing exponentially – almost reaching the level of the US. IPO's and private equity are strong. Pan-European financial business is developing. We have a single set of accounting and auditing rules, and have implemented sensible corporate governance and company law reforms."

[Presidency declaration on behalf of the EU on the appointment of the AU Chairman \(30/01/2006\)](#)

The EU congratulates the Republic of Congo and its President Denis Sassou Nguesso for having been chosen to lead the African Union for the coming year. President Sassou Nguesso has already played an important role in the adoption of the AU Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact. ...The Chairmanship of the AU is a very important and challenging task. The AU and its organs are the concrete translation of a new African determination to make the continent a better place to live and where the problems of development, regional integration, democracy, and peace and security are effectively addressed.

[Commission proposes to strengthen the EU Civil protection Mechanism \(27/01/2006\)](#)

The European Commission has adopted a series of proposals to improve the response of the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism to natural and manmade disasters. The measures will allow the Commission to better address any shortage of transport and equipment needed at the site of a disaster. Moreover, additional measures will contribute to the development of early warning systems, improve coordination and provide logistical support.

See also: [Questions and Answers on the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism \(27/01/2006\)](#)

[Presidency statement on behalf of the EU on Palestinian Legislative Council elections \(26/01/2006\)](#)

The European Union welcomes the successful holding on 25 January of elections for (PLC). The Palestinian people have demonstrated a clear commitment to determine their political future via democratic means. These elections saw impressive voter participation in an open and fairly-contested electoral process that was efficiently administered by the independent Palestinian Central Elections Commission.

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