



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

[EU celebrates Europe Day celebrated under the banner of the European Year of Inter-Cultural Dialogue](#)

For almost 60 years the EU has celebrated Europe Day. On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman presented his proposal, ([Schuman Declaration](#)), to bring European states together to maintain peace in post World War 2 Europe. This year, the 'Europe Day in Schools' initiative, organised in collaboration with EU regional authorities, aimed to raise awareness among young people of the EU's actions to fight poverty in the world.



In his [Europe Day address](#), held at South Africa's new monument to those who gave their lives for freedom, EU Ambassador Lodewijk Briët, noted: "This magnificent location, Freedom Park, provides a suitable location to repeat what President Barroso said at last year's celebrations: '... on this day I want, above all, to focus on the values that, more than anything else, define the European Union and its history: freedom and solidarity.' These values are particularly relevant here tonight".

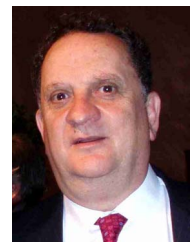


Amb Briët sharing a lighter moment with the Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, Ms Ntombazana Botha (MP)



[7th SA-EU Joint Science and Technology Co-operation Committee meeting](#)

The 7th SA-EU Joint Science and Technology Cooperation Committee meeting was held in Pretoria on 5 - 6 May 2008. The JSTCC is tasked with reviewing scientific and technological co-operation between SA and the EU and developing initiatives to improve collaboration. The SA Delegation was led by the Director-General of the SA Department of Science and Technology, Dr Philemon Mjwara; the EU delegation was led by the Director General of the European Commission's Directorate General Research, Mr José Manuel Silva Rodríguez (pictured right). To date, there have been 47 SA participations in FP7, with the participants receiving a total amount of just over €6m in funding. SA's participation in the previous Framework Programme, FP6, also proved to be very successful, with SA researchers participating in 117 international research projects. SA received some €14m under FP6.



[EU expresses support to the people of Myanmar after the tragedy caused by cyclone Nargis](#)

Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, sent a message of sympathy and support to the people of Burma/Myanmar after cyclone Nargis hit the country: "I am deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic loss of thousands of human lives in Burma/Myanmar caused by cyclone Nargis. I wish to express my heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of the victims and my support to all those who have lost their homes and properties and who are suffering the consequences of the cyclone. I want to underline that the EU is ready to provide direct assistance to the population affected by the disaster."

[EIB €12.5m loan to SA Steel Industry](#)

The European Investment Bank has loaned €12.5m to Safal Steel to support the establishment of a Greenfield metal coating production facility in Cato Ridge, Kwa Zulu Natal. The Safal Group is the leading manufacturer and distributor of steel used for residential roofing in Africa and a successful exporter to other continents. The loan to the private company is the first to be granted under the EIB's new €900m lending mandate for SA, which promotes investment in priority public sector infrastructure, private sector growth for economic development and the improvement of living conditions in the country

Other News

Progress in EU-West Africa Economic Partnership Agreement in 2008

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson met Soumaïla Cissé, President of the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. They discussed the state of play of in the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations between the EU and West Africa and responses to the recent rise in world food prices. After the meeting, Commissioner Mandelson said: "President Cissé and I are both pleased that work on our Economic Partnership Agreement is now proceeding well and we are committed to maintaining a highly constructive atmosphere and to keeping up the current momentum. On food prices we agreed on the need for investment in agricultural capacity in West Africa and access to markets for African farmers. West Africa has one of the world's highest levels of unused farm capacity. In the long run the region can benefit from greater global food demand and open farm trade. Our new Economic Partnership Agreement will remove all tariffs and all quotas for all farm exports from West Africa to Europe".

EU re-affirms support to the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement

The European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, attended the Sudan Consortium conference in Oslo. Speaking at the conference, Commissioner Michel said: "Stability and democracy are vital for Sudan, Africa and the international community. Significant progress has been made since the signing of the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement in December 2004, which brought an end to the oldest and deadliest civil wars in Africa. But much remains to be done." The European Commission will allocate another €300m for development assistance for the five coming years, in support of the CPA. In addition, the Commission will continue to provide vital humanitarian assistance in the order of €100m for 2008.

EU celebrates 10 years of Economic and Monetary Union

The euro, the EU's single currency, was launched on 1 January 1999. Euro banknotes and coins were introduced in 2002. Ten years later 320 million European citizens, more than the population of the United States, share the same currency and fully enjoy the benefits brought about by the integration of the EU. EMU and the euro are a resounding success, shared by 15 European Union countries. Against this background, the European Commission adopted on 7 May 2008 a Communication which takes stock of what has been achieved over the past ten years and makes proposals and seeks the views of stakeholders on the way forward. [Communication](#)

EU election observer missions: objectives, practices and future challenges

A European Parliament report on election observation missions underlined the importance of the missions, especially in developing countries. The report called for the missions to play an increased role , especially in the immediate post-election period when the new parliaments are called, and legislators need advice on how to function in a democracy. The report noted that the holding of elections cannot be regarded as the sole indicator of democracy, but that, nevertheless, it has a positive effect on the democratisation process as measured by improvements in civil liberties, provided that political pluralism, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of expression, equal access to the media, secret ballots and respect for human rights are secured.

Europe's top innovation prize winners announced

The inventors of a ground-breaking AIDS treatment, lighter and more environmentally friendly aluminium car frames, a powerful but pain-free laser scanner for the eye, and a robot designed to overhaul medical surgery were presented with the European Inventor of the Year 2008 award. Four outstanding inventors from Belgium, Germany, United Kingdom and United States received Europe's top innovation prize in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

On-line public consultations

The European Commission is currently preparing a policy paper proposing a trilateral dialogue and co-operation between the EU, Africa and China, in view of the Communication on "The EU, Africa and China: Towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation on Africa's peace, stability and sustainable development". The consultation period ends on 13 June 2008. The questionnaire and background documents can be found at <http://ec.europa.eu/development/how/consultation/index.cfm>

"Towards an EU approach to democratic local governance, decentralisation and territorial development". The purpose of this public consultation, open until 16 June 2008, is to gather views from relevant stakeholders regarding future EC policy in the field of local governance. Visit:

<http://ec.europa.eu/development/about/consultation/index.cfm>.

Stakeholder consultation on the review of Directive 2002/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), open until 5 June 2008.

http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/weee_2008_review/library

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