



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 Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson resigns to join UK government](#)

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, submitted his resignation to the Commission President, José Manuel Barroso. Mr Mandelson resigned to accept the invitation by Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to join the government. Following consultations with President Barroso, Brown nominated Baroness Ashton of Upholland as successor to Mr Mandelson. Mr Mandelson's resignation will become effective as soon as Baroness Ashton of Upholland has been appointed by the Council. Until his resignation becomes effective, Mr Mandelson continues to exercise his mandate as member of the European Commission, in the full respect of the treaties.

[Speech of EC President Barroso on the current financial crisis](#)

"The financial crisis is indeed a very serious situation. It requires a major effort on all sides. There is work to be done in the short term – and there is work to be done in the medium and long term. We must first of all address the urgencies and then make our structures future proof. The supervision authorities, the Member States, the central banks and especially the European Central Bank, the Presidency of the Council and the European Commission: we all work together, and the appropriate interventions are taking place where companies are in difficulty. I would underline in particular that this is working well, not only at the national level, but also at cross-border level".

[4th meeting between European Commission and African Union Commission](#)

Almost one year on since the launch of a new strategic partnership between the EU and Africa at the 2007 Lisbon Summit, a joint EC-AU meeting highlighted the increased partnership between the two institutions. Discussions focused on the priority actions to be taken in areas such as migration, energy and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as current concerns surrounding global economic stability and the increase in food prices. EC President José Manuel Barroso said: "Africa is on the move, with less conflicts and better governance across the continent. But progress to achieve the MDGs is essential and still not yet satisfactory. In these times of uncertainty and talks about financial rescue, I call on our Member States not to forget human rescue. I hope that the Member States and the European Parliament will soon approve our proposal of a €1bn Food Facility to support agriculture production in countries affected by the food crisis."

[European Union signs declaration against death penalty](#)

On the occasion of the World and European Day against the Death Penalty, a Joint Declaration was signed by the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission. The Declaration confirmed their commitment to continue to work towards the universal abolition of the death penalty. Jacques Barrot, Commissioner responsible for Freedom, Justice and Security, stated "Europe has created a "de facto" death penalty-free zone stretching from Iceland in the west to Vladivostok in the east and from Norway in the north to the south-east of Turkey – this is one of Europe's greatest achievements".

Other News

[African Union and European Commission launch Science and Information and Space projects](#)

Janez Potočnik, EU Commissioner for Science and Research, Viviane Reding, Information Society and Media Commissioner, Günter Verheugen, Enterprise and Industry Commissioner and Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Louis Michel, agreed with African Union Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, Professor Ezin, that a book of 19 "lighthouse projects" should serve as the framework for implementing the EU-AU Partnership on Science, Information & Communication Technology (ICT) and Space and its Action plan. In a Joint Statement

on "Implementation of the EU-AU Partnership for Science, Information Society and Space", the Commissioners stressed the need to strengthen African capacities in the area of Science and Technology, including ICT, so that Africa can produce and use its own knowledge and services and develop a sound S&T and ICT policy. This Joint Statement is in keeping with the overall spirit of the EU-AU Joint Partnership, agreed during the EU-AU Summit in December 2007, of working with Africa, not only for Africa: a spirit of partnership.

[EU-AU Joint Statement](#)

[Memo on The EU-Africa Strategic Partnership](#)

"The Joint Africa-EU Strategy was adopted at the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007. It is a political vision and roadmap for co-operation between the two continents in existing and new areas, going beyond the traditional donor-recipient approach, and addressing global challenges such as peace and security, climate change, migration, trade and regional integration. Concrete actions and goals for the years 2008–2010 are outlined in eight Africa-EU Partnerships in the First Action Plan. With the establishment of the African Union (AU) in 2002, the EU is now able to discuss pan-African issues with an international organization. It was felt that the time is right to forge a new, politically more mature Africa-EU partnership characterised by equality and the pursuit of common objectives".

[Zambia joins Economic Partnership Agreement \(EPA\) with the EU](#)

Zambian and EU representatives initialled Zambia's final market access offer in the context of the interim EPA that was initialled at the end of 2007. Representatives from the regional organisation Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) were also present at the initialling ceremony. The offer will now be integrated into the EU-ESA interim deal, a move which secures full access to the EU market for Zambian products. EU Trade Commissioner at the time, Peter Mandelson, welcomed the move: "This agreement improves access to European markets for Zambian exporters. It thus provides Zambia with new development tools, fosters its economic growth and increases its integration in the global economy." EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel also welcomed it: "It is a positive step towards regional integration and co-operation for Zambia and its neighbouring countries. In the coming months and years, I believe that the people of Zambia will benefit from this agreement in terms of stronger growth and exports, and more jobs".

[European Commission and Mali join forces to improve the management of migration](#)

The Migration Information and Management Centre (CIGEM) was inaugurated in Bamako, Mali, in the presence of Louis Michel, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Amadou Toumani Touré, the President of the Republic of Mali, and Brice Hortefeux, the French Minister for Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Cooperative Development. The Centre, which is financed by the EU as part of its development co-operation with Mali, is a pilot project that is to be copied in other West African countries. The CIGEM aims to help Mali come up with a migration policy that addresses the concerns of potential migrants, returning migrants and Malians residing abroad. Commissioner Michel has played a very active role in setting up the Centre. "Instead of demonising the migration phenomenon, it should be supported, structured and managed optimally as a positive human element for both Africa and Europe. The Centre paves the way for managing migration flows more effectively and making greater use of the development opportunities provided by migration" he said.

[EU celebrates UN Declaration of Human Rights with tribute to dissidents](#)

To mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the EU paid tribute to human rights defenders around the world, inviting 27 prominent human rights activists to a conference at the European Parliament. The conference also marked the anniversary of another milestone in human rights: the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted in 1998. This document recognises the importance and legitimacy of the work of human rights activists, as well as their need for better protection. The EU followed suit in 2004, issuing a [set of guidelines](#) that encourages EU countries to do more to support activists at risk.

[EU Trade Commissioner says global boom in export duties for raw materials must be reversed](#)

Former EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said that European trade policy will take a tougher line in tackling an explosion of export duties and other restrictions for raw materials among the EU's trading partners. Speaking to representatives of European industry and Member States in Brussels, Mandelson said that recent rises in commodity prices had produced a proliferation of dozens of new export taxes and other restrictions on raw material exports in the global economy. He said that ensuring access for European manufacturers to the raw materials on which they are critically dependent would now be a key priority of EU trade policy. The European Commission now counts at least 450 export restrictions on raw materials in the global economy, covering products including metals, wood, leather, ceramics, chemicals, textiles and skins.

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