



European Union

Delegation of the European Commission
to South Africa

**... this week
in review**

*This publication seeks
to provide information
on EU activities of
interest to SA readers.*

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4 – 10 February 2008

Headline News

[Commissioner Michel welcomes open-minded approach to Kenyan talks](#)

Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, expressed his encouragement at the open-minded attitude being shown by parties in talks to resolve the crisis in Kenya. Commissioner Michel visited Nairobi, holding a series of high-level meetings including discussions with President Mwai Kibaki and Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) leader Raila Odinga. At a press conference, Commissioner Michel expressed his belief that both political leaders had shown a genuine conviction to finding a durable solution, saying, "I am impressed – but not surprised – by the open-minded approach of both President Kibaki and Chairman Odinga". Commissioner Michel also met with former United Nations' Secretary General Kofi Annan to underline the EU's support for his facilitation efforts and the dialogue process.

[EU pledges commitment to development for African Cotton producing countries](#)

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson met with Ministers from two African cotton producing countries to discuss the Doha Development Agenda, EU trade and development policy and the Economic Partnership Agreements that the EU is currently working on with African and Pacific countries. Speaking following the meeting, Commissioner Mandelson said: "The needs and interests of developing countries are at the heart of the Doha Round. Cotton is a development priority. We have demonstrated with the Economic Partnership Agreements that it is possible to bring trade and development together. We need to achieve the same at Doha. That is why the EU has always argued for exceptional treatment for cotton in the Doha agenda". The Commissioner also urged Mali, Benin and Burkina Faso to join negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements with the Western and Central African regions that will continue this year. [Fact sheet](#)

[EU Presidency Statement on the Republic of Chad](#)

"The Presidency of the European Union expresses its great concern over the continued attempts of armed groups in Chad to seize power unconstitutionally. The Presidency calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities. A political settlement of the conflict remains the only viable perspective for peace and stability in Chad. Recalling the accord of 13 August 2007, the Presidency emphasises the urgency of returning to the inclusive political process. The Presidency strongly supports the African Union's call for a peaceful solution. Stressing its deep concern over the implications of the current crisis in Chad for regional stability, the Presidency reiterates the EU's full support for the ongoing UN/AU efforts in the region".

Other News

[Javier Solana receives the Peace Prize of the Children's United Parliament of the World](#)

Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, was awarded the Peace Prize of the Children's United Parliament of the World (CUPW) in recognition of his work in promoting peace and mutual understanding. He was presented with the prize by the chair of the CUPW, sixteen-year-old Henrica Wiksten, and its President, Jyrki Arolinna. Mr Solana said he was "honoured and very pleased" to receive the award and he commended the CUPW for its work, saying: "Children are the future of our planet. The idea of children getting together to discuss how to make the world a better place is a very important one. Your work deserves all support." The Children's United Parliament of the World is an international NGO that was set up in 1998 to provide a forum for children around the world to share ideas, form friendships and promote democracy, peace and prosperity.

[Presidency Declaration on behalf of the EU on the official appointment of the Thai government](#)

"The European Union welcomes the return of democracy in Thailand and offers its congratulations on the formation of the new government of Thailand. The European Union looks forward to close and productive relations with this new government, in the spirit of the longstanding friendship between Thailand and the European Union".

EU Trade Commissioner Mandelson visits Algeria

European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson met with Algerian Président Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Medelci and Algerian Minister of Trade Djaaboub in Algiers. The meetings focused on Algerian progress towards WTO accession, its role in the Euromed economic integration process and the need to improve the investment climate for European companies, including in the energy sector. Commissioner Mandelson said: "I am pleased to have the opportunity to meet my Algerian counterparts at this important stage in our trade relationship. I welcome the recent progress on Algeria's most important commercial priority, which is membership of the WTO. The EU strongly supports Algerian accession to the WTO. There remains a lot of work to do and now is the moment to redouble our efforts to achieve this goal. I would also like to see a more predictable and legally secure investment climate in Algeria, especially in the energy sector".

European Commission and World Energy Council discuss the challenges of a sustainable energy future

The European Commission and the World Energy Council (WEC) held a joint seminar, featuring topics ranging from Europe's vulnerability in terms of security of energy supply to new technologies, which will help ensure a sustainable energy environment. "Security of energy supply and sustainability go hand in hand and figure prominently on the EU's energy agenda. But facing these challenges means that we must know our weaknesses, that we engage in strong ties with our energy partners and last but not least, it means investing in the energy technologies of the future today", declared Energy Commissioner Piebalgs. The WEC has just completed a study on the vulnerability of Europe to energy crises, aimed at assessing the degree to which Europe is equipped to cope with such challenges and providing recommendations for policy makers. The second part of the joint seminar was devoted to an exchange of views on the Commission's Strategic Energy Technology Plan, which was adopted in November 2007. The plan puts forth several proposals aimed at moving the EU towards a high-efficiency and a more sustainable energy future. This involves a range of activities such as the development of second generation biofuels, carbon capture and storage technologies and boosting the competitiveness of photovoltaic electricity. A European Energy Technology Summit will be convened in 2009 to review progress in this area.

European Parliament Climate Change Committee visit

A delegation from the European Parliament's Temporary Committee on Climate Change, visited New Delhi, India. The committee welcomed India's readiness to be part of an international climate agreement. However, the Committee Chair noted that the Indian government is not prepared to accept any binding emissions targets. Committee Chairman Guido Sacconi (PES, IT) made the following statement on the delegation's conclusions: "From our meetings and discussions in New Delhi, we have understood that awareness of the impact and the effects of climate change is taking root in India. At the same time, our hosts also made it clear that, for India, the first priority is growth and the fight against poverty". The delegation is the second, after China in November 2007, that the Committee has sent to a non-EU country with the aim of developing contacts between parliamentarians and forging strong alliances to address climate change.

White Paper on Internationally Compatible Biofuel Standards

The White Paper was drafted by an international Task Force consisting of experts on biofuels standards from the standardisation bodies of the Tripartite Agreement amongst Brazil, the European Union and the USA. The executive summary concludes with recommendations to further disseminate the White Paper to the standardisation bodies, to the International Biofuels Forum as well as the governments of Brazil and USA, and the European Commission.

[Factsheet: Internationally Compatible Biofuel Standards](#)

Council of Europe Congress pledges to boost cooperation with the Committee of the Regions

The Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities welcomed the election of Luc van den Brande as President of the EU Committee of the Regions and pledged to strengthen co-operation between the two bodies. In a letter to Mr Van den Brande, Congress President Halvdan Skard said that the new CoR leader would help European towns, cities and regions to make their opinions heard more clearly in the EU's decision-making processes. He urged the Committee to become involved in human rights campaigns which the Congress has initiated at local and regional levels, such as the programme against trafficking in human beings and domestic and family violence. Mr Van den Brande highlighted the CoR's new right under the Lisbon Treaty to challenge EU decisions at the European Court of Justice if they breach the subsidiarity principle. "I consider that our whole action to promote and defend subsidiarity could also very usefully fuel the Congress's work and discussions," said the CoR President, who is also a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

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