



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.

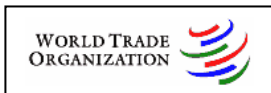


4 – 10 March 2005

Headline News

The Doha Round – State of Play March 2005 (10/03/2005)

2005 will be a defining year for the Doha Round of international trade talks and the multilateral trading system. The mini-Ministerial Meeting in Mombasa on 03-04/03/2005 gave important impetus to the negotiations by re-balancing them across the board and identifying precise steps to accelerate the negotiations. That ministerial was one of a series of way-marking meetings aimed at providing political guidance to the negotiations as we move to the 6th WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong in December 2005. With a successful Doha Round dependent on broad agreement in all sectors, including the Round's vital development goals, the next ten months will be crucial.



See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/88&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Zimbabwe: Commission allocates €15 million in humanitarian aid to vulnerable groups (10/03/2005)

The European Commission approved €15 million in humanitarian aid for population groups at particular risk in Zimbabwe, including displaced people, people living with HIV/AIDS, orphans and other vulnerable children. This will be achieved by supporting emergency food and agricultural interventions and providing integrated assistance, with a particular focus on water and sanitation. The funds are managed by the Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), under the responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel. The Commissioner said: "The European Commission is committed to providing humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable Zimbabweans, regardless of the political situation there. European aid is provided strictly on the basis of genuine needs."



See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/277&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Other News

Reform of the EU Sugar Regime – Speech by Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel (10/03/2005)

During an address to a European Parliament Plenary, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mariann Fischer Boel, noted: "Let me be very clear on the Everything But Arms (EBA). This initiative is one of the cornerstones in our trade relations with the LDC's. It was the result of an unprecedented unilateral concession made by the EU. A logical step given our commitment to the development of these countries. It would be a wrong signal to roll back our privileges to the LDC's – particularly in a year where we are trying hard to convince the rest of the developed world to follow our example and increase market access to developing countries. ... I am therefore against renegotiating the EBA initiative. Furthermore a system with regulated imports at remunerative prices would lead to a price reduction which is too small and thus inefficient. We shouldn't give incentives for unsustainable investments within the EU or in third countries.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/162&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Fighting terrorism together in the EU – Speech by José Manuel Barroso (10/03/2005)



Addressing the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security, EC President José Manuel Barroso said: "11 March 2005 is the first anniversary of the deadliest terrorist attack in Europe in recent history. As of now, it also marks the first European day for the victims of terrorism. I trust that the tremendous loss of lives in Madrid on 11 March 2004 will remain etched forever in the memory of all Europeans. This day is an occasion for us to express once again our sympathy and extend our solidarity to those who lost their lives or still bear the mental and physical scars of that tragic day. ... I want to reaffirm the commitment of the European Commission to a robust security policy. Security is one of the three pillars of the strategic objectives for this Commission's mandate. The EC will submit an action plan for the implementation of the so-called Hague Programme put forward by the European Council in the field of justice, liberty and security in June."

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/168&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **Combating terrorism: what has been done after Madrid (09/03/2005)**

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/85&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

International Women's Day – 8 March: Gender Mainstreaming in EU policies

In this year's annual report on equality between women and men for the Spring European Council, the Commission shows that while gender employment and education gaps are closing in the EU, the gender pay gap has remained almost unchanged. It has remained stable in the EU-15 at approximately 16 per cent, while the estimated figure for the EU-25 is slightly lower, at 15 per cent, taking into account the pay gap in the new Member States. Two EQUAL themes are particularly relevant for women: reconciliation of family and working life and tackling gender gaps and desegregation on the labour market. Globally around 500 DP's out of a total of 3400 work on the ground on equal opportunities, of which 192 DP's focus on "Reconciling family and professional life" and 300 on "reducing gender gaps".



See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/78&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See also: **Women's rights in the EU – progress achieved but too slow! Speech by Margot Wallström (08/03/2005)**

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/144&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Daphne Programme achievements in the fight against violence against women and girls (08/03/2005)

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/80&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Commission proposes Institute for Gender Equality (08/03/2005)

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/266&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EESC commemorates Anna Lindh and calls for a stronger role for women in decision-making (08/03/2005)

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=CES/05/32&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Common future of the EU and Turkey – Speech by Olli Rehn (08/03/2005)

During a meeting with business leaders in Istanbul, Commissioner Olli Rehn (responsible for Enlargement) said: "The decision by the European Council to open negotiations with Turkey opens a new chapter in the historic process of peacefully unifying the European continent. As a combined result of its population, size, strategic location and economic potential, Turkey has the capacity to make a major contribution to regional and international stability. In a world threatened by the infamous clash of civilisations, it is worth recalling that Turkey is endowed with unique characteristics: the combination of a secular, democratic state with a prevalently Moslem population. I know that there are great expectations in Turkey about the accession negotiations process and also many questions. The same happened when the European Union started the enlargement process with the 10 countries which acceded in May last year. The experience gained in the previous enlargement round shows that the process of accession is a powerful engine for political and economic transformation."



See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/142&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

The Non Proliferation Treaty must be preserved by all means – Speech by Louis Michel (08/03/2005)

In an address to a European Parliament Plenary Session, Development Commissioner Louis Michel (on behalf of the Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy) said the following: "For the Commission it is particularly important to honour its commitment in the Global Partnership against the proliferation of WMD, made in July 2002 at the G8 Summit in Kananaskis. Implementing real projects supporting third countries to collect, secure and/or eliminate nuclear or radioactive materials, to effectively control exports or to fight illicit trafficking of materials or equipment which might be used for making a nuclear device, to ensure the reconversion of experts and scientists formerly employed in weapons activities, and finally to contribute to the safe development of nuclear applications, would all contribute to the ultimate goal of the Non Proliferation Treaty.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/147&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

"Your Europe" Portal: First step to EU wide E-government (07/03/2005)

Where should I register my company in Germany? What do I need to know about taxes in Slovakia? And how do I find out more about EU's funding schemes? The European Commission in a close co-operation with national administrations decided to work together to facilitate the increasing mobility of enterprises and to launch a new portal 'Your Europe' in order to answer similar questions from businesses all over Europe. Administrations, whether national or European, operate differently. For those unaccustomed to the administrative procedures of different countries, this can prove a real obstacle. The Your Europe Portal will contribute to breaking down this barrier by pooling all this information into one single entry-point online, targeting explicitly the cross-border dimension. This supports a continuously increasing mobility for citizens and enterprises, ultimately contributing to better integration across Europe.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/77&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Ahead:

- 15/03/2005 – Launch of the EU-funded Conflict and Governance Fund, Pretoria
- 17/03/2005 – Launch of the EU-funded Local Competitiveness Fund (LCF) under the KwaZulu-Natal Local Economic Development Fund Support Programme, Pietermaritzburg
- 17/03/2005 – Launch of the EU-funded Support Programme for Social Housing: Institutional Development and Capacity Building (Gauteng Province), Johannesburg

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