



European Union

Delegation to South Africa  
Head of Delegation

# EU Perspectives

*Regular publication that seeks to provide information  
on EU-related activities of interest to SA readers*



**5 - 18 April 2010**

## **Headline News**

### **[Statement by the HR/VP Catherine Ashton on the Polish plane crash](#)**

Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/European Commission Vice-President, expressed her condolences over the tragic plane crash which claimed the lives of many Polish officials and their families, including President Lech Kaczyński, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrzej Kremer, Military Chief of Staff Franciszek Gągor and Central bank governor Sławomir Skrzypek. Catherine Ashton told the Polish Foreign Minister: "I would like to send my heartfelt condolences to the people of Poland and express our solidarity with you at this very difficult and sad time. In particular, I want to express my sympathies to the family and friends of those who died."

### **[HR/VP Catherine Ashton presents vision for European External Action Service](#)**

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and European Commission Vice-President Catherine Ashton presented her draft proposals on the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The proposals come following extensive consultations with the European Commission, EU Member States and the European Parliament. Presenting her proposals, Catherine Ashton said: "The Lisbon Treaty offers the opportunity to build a modern policy for the modern world – moving beyond traditional diplomacy. The EEAS I want is a comprehensive service to craft a distinctive European response to the 21st century agenda. A service that represents the best that Europe has to offer. We can only punch our weight if we pull together all the different strands of our external action."

### **[Renewed impetus for food security: the EU tackles hunger in developing countries](#)**

The Commission released a proposed policy framework, addressing food security challenges in developing countries in a comprehensive manner. It sets out policy lines and proposes priority actions across the four internationally recognised pillars of food security: increasing availability of food; improving access to food; improving nutritional adequacy of food intake; and enhancing crisis prevention and management. The Communication acknowledges that while there are food security challenges across the world, most progress on fighting hunger remains to be made in Africa and in countries in fragile situations. This is particularly the case in Africa, but also in South Asia and elsewhere (some parts of Asia, Pacific, Caribbean and Latin America). The Development segment of the Foreign Affairs Council of 10-11 May should discuss and endorse the proposal. The paper should guide the EU position on food security at the UN Summit in New York from 22-24 September 2010.

### **[EU pledges over €1.2bn at International Donors' Conference 'Towards a New Future for Haiti' in New York](#)**

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Commission Vice-President, Catherine Ashton, along with Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs and Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, attended the ministerial-level International Donors' Conference "Towards a New Future for Haiti" at the UN Headquarters in New York. HR/VP Ashton said: "This earthquake has been a terrible tragedy, but it has galvanized a tremendous global response. The EU's Member States and the European Commission have come together and as a result, I can announce that the EU will contribute over €1.2bn to Haiti's reconstruction and development process. But the EU recognizes that re-building Haiti also implies long-term commitment on the part of its development partners. Therefore, I and my fellow Commissioners will stress the need for a 10-year economic plan to be put in place to allow the Haitian people recover from this tragedy and emerge stronger to face a better future that they clearly deserve."

## **Other News**

### **[Commission adopts strategic priorities for 2010](#)**

The European Commission adopted its work programme for 2010. The programme reflects the Commission's determination to lead Europe out of the economic crisis and deliver policy that bring direct benefits to citizens. The Commission has agreed a list of 34 strategic priorities that will be implemented before the end of the year. It has also agreed another 280 major proposals under consideration during 2010 and beyond. The Commission work programme sets the scene for the major policy commitments that the Commission will make in the coming years. Commission President, José Manuel Barroso said, "The new Commission has been in office for six weeks. We have now agreed on our priorities and set out an indicative list of initiatives for the years to come. It's time to act. Business as usual is not an option. The work programme adopted today is an ambitious but realistic agenda for results. I hope that the member states and other EU institutions will match this level of ambition".

### **[Commission welcomes civil society involvement in EU trade policy](#)**

European Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht initiated a public dialogue on the future of trade policy in the EU. At a Civil Society Trade Seminar in Prague, the Commissioner called for a broad debate on the role of trade policy in the current economic environment. "Including the public when discussing trade is essential, if we are to respond to people's legitimate concerns about globalisation", said Commissioner De Gucht. "It is important that we tap into the wealth of experience, expertise and opinion in Europe." In the fourth event of its type, the seminar brought together a wide range of voices to examine current issues in EU trade policy. Participants include NGOs, business consumer and industry associations, trade unions, employers' organisations, faith-based groups and research institutes along with representatives from the Spanish Presidency and the European Parliament. The seminar presented an opportunity to discuss EU trade policy making under the Lisbon Treaty, to explore how to harness the benefits of trade liberalisation in the context of the economic crisis and to consider how trade policy can contribute to sustainable development goals.

### **[Commissioner De Gucht meets Eastern and Southern Africa \(ESA\) Trade Ministers](#)**

Trade Commissioner Karel de Gucht met Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) representatives, including Zambia's Trade Minister and ESA Chair, Felix Mutati, and Malawi's Trade Minister, Eunice Kazembe. Talks were marked by a good atmosphere and acknowledged the need to take forward outstanding issues on the basis of mutual trust. "It was a pleasure to have an open conversation with my ESA colleagues", said Commissioner De Gucht. "We discussed the very real challenges faced in the region in relation to trade and agreed that the trade we are seeking is about market creation. In this respect, I was encouraged to hear about ambitions to further integrate African regional markets. I pressed my colleagues to sit together with us round a negotiation table. Both sides agreed to sort out pending issues that are inhibitors for trust – the type of relationship I want to have with all my partners in trade."

### **[Talking about Economic Partnership Agreements – testimonials "from the spot"](#)**

Travel from Ethiopia to Zambia, and stop by in Jamaica, to learn what people dealing with EPAs think. The European Commission has collected interviews of key stakeholders in ACP countries on their opinions about EU trade and development policy, and in particular about Economic Partnership Agreements. These voices bring out a new tone on one of the most important trade policies and demonstrate how the EPAs are seen 'on the ground'.

### **[Public Consultation on next GSP \(Generalised System of Preferences\) scheme](#)**

The present GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) Regulation expires on 31 December 2011. The purpose of this consultation exercise is to seek comments from interested parties as inputs to the Commission's work to prepare a future proposal to the Council and Parliament on a successor Regulation. The consultation is aimed at all parties with an interest in the EU GSP scheme, including stakeholders within the EU and in third countries, including beneficiaries, and will be open until 31 May 2010. The Commission services will prepare a report on the Consultation which will be published on the Trade website.

### **[EU Commission strengthens the fight against trafficking in human beings](#)**

The European Commission has proposed new rules to step up the fight against trafficking in human beings. The new proposal will help to combat modern slavery by ensuring consistency of national rules on crimes and penalties, better assistance for victims and tougher action to prosecute criminals responsible for trafficking. Commissioner Malmström, in charge of Home affairs, said: "In the 21st century, we should not have women and girls reduced to sexual slavery, children beaten and mistreated, forced to beg and to steal and young adults compelled to work in appalling conditions for hunger wages. These crimes are not acceptable under any circumstances. We must do everything possible to stop the people responsible for these acts."

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