



European Union

Delegation of the European Commission
in South Africa

... this week
in review

media briefing



7 - 13 March 2003

"Iraq" - Speech by Chris Patten, Commissioner for External Relations (European Parliament Debate in Plenary Strasbourg (12/03/2003))

In a major speech to the European Parliament Chris Patten, Commissioner for External Relations speaks about the European Union's response to the Iraq crisis over "the last few miserable weeks". He is candid about the failure of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy in the face of certain Member States wish to 'go it alone' in asserting national policy. He addresses the need to enhance, not diminish the role of the UN. He reflects on the need to minimise the potential collateral damage of recent events and of a future war. See:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=SPEECH/03/123|0|RAPID&lg=EN;](http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=SPEECH/03/123|0|RAPID&lg=EN)

"The state of the Union in 2003" Speech by Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission (European Parliament Debate in Plenary Strasbourg (11/03/2003))

"... This year the debate falls at a particularly sensitive moment in both international relations and the life of the Union. The Iraq crisis, enlargement and the Convention weigh so heavily on our minds that there is no need for any reminder from me. I shall only stress that today's debate gives us all the duty to weigh up the opportunities and challenges arising from the unification of our continent and to reflect on the lessons to be drawn from the Iraq crisis at a time when we are drafting the new Constitutional charter of our Union." See:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=SPEECH/03/120|0|RAPID&lg=EN;

Wider Europe Neighbourhood: proposed new framework for relations with the EU's Eastern and Southern Neighbours (11/03/2003)

The European Commission adopted a Communication setting out a new framework for relations over the coming decade with Russia, the Western NIS and the Southern Mediterranean - countries who do not currently have a perspective of membership but who will soon find themselves sharing a border with the Union. The Communication proposes that, over the coming decade, the EU should aim to work in partnership to develop a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighbourhood - a 'ring of friends' - with whom the EU enjoys close, peaceful and co-operative relations. It suggests that, in return for concrete progress demonstrating shared values and effective implementation of political, economic and institutional reforms, all the neighbouring countries should be offered the prospect of a stake in the EU's internal market. This should be accompanied by further integration and liberalisation to promote the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital (four freedoms). President Prodi said "With globalisation and the creation of a trans-national civil society, the Union's external relations can no longer be distinguished from its internal development, particularly when it comes to our neighbourhood. Instead of trying to establish new dividing lines, deeper integration between the EU and the ring of friends will accelerate our mutual political, economic and cultural dynamism." For more information see:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/358|0|RAPID&lg=EN;

Humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa: The European Union's response rises to €412 million (13/03/2003)

In response to the continuing humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa, the European Union's (EU) combined contribution from the Commission and Member States has risen to €412 million for the six most affected countries. This response covers approximately 40 % of the total needs for the region. €186.6 million of this amount is managed directly by the European Commission and is made up of food and humanitarian aid, including emergency distribution of seeds and fertilisers and specific programmes in the health, education and agricultural sectors. More than 6 million people are benefiting from the Commission's response alone. For more information see:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/370|0|RAPID&lg=EN;

EU's first military mission in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. European Parliament (debate 12/03/2003; vote 13/03/2003)

In adopting a resolution on the ESDP operation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Parliament welcomes the Council's decision to take over the NATO operation 'Allied Harmony' in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as the EU's first military mission. For more information see: [/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=10799&LEVEL=3&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=NA5-0036/2003](http://omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=10799&LEVEL=3&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=NA5-0036/2003)

WTO Trade in services: Pascal Lamy welcomes European Parliament Resolution (12/03/2003)

The European Parliament today adopted a resolution on the on-going World Trade Organisation negotiations on trade in services (GATS EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said: "I welcome today's resolution by the European Parliament which recognises the efforts undertaken by the European Commission in terms of transparency and supports the position of the EU in this negotiations. I also wish to support the desire expressed by the European Parliament in this resolution to have a greater role in the definition of European trade policy. Trade agreements have an impact on the daily life of our citizens, on their jobs, on what they eat, on their environment. It is therefore important that the European Parliament has a say on this." For more information see:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/367|0|RAPID&lq=EN

Ebola virus and conflict in Congo Brazzaville: Commission grants €2 million in humanitarian aid (12/03/2003)

The European Commission has approved a €2 million funding decision for the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) to help meet humanitarian needs resulting from conflict and the spread of the Ebola virus. Of this total amount, €500,000 will be targeted at controlling the current Ebola epidemic, and €1.4 million will be used to improve the conditions of people affected by conflict in the region of Pool (with €100,000 in reserve). The aid will be channelled over the next 6 months through the Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), which comes under the responsibility of Commissioner Poul Nielson. For more information see:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/364|0|RAPID&lq=EN

Inauguration of the International Criminal Court (11/03/2003)

The European Commission warmly welcomes the inauguration today of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. On this occasion, the Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten, stated: "The inauguration of the International Criminal Court is a historic achievement, perhaps the most significant development in international law since the creation of the United Nations. ... The Court sends a powerful message to any potential perpetrator of such crimes: impunity has ended." For more information see:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/354|0|RAPID&lq=EN

AHEAD

Commission launches debate on the future of textiles trade (11/03/2003)

On 5-6 May 2003, EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy will host a major conference in Brussels on "The Future of Textiles and Clothing Trade after 2005". In preparation, the European Commission has launched an open consultation on the future of textiles trade policy. Through a dedicated internet forum, interested parties from all over the world can submit their ideas and contributions on trade in textile policies. "In less than two years we shall see the elimination of quota restrictions which have been a feature of world trade in textiles for 40 years. The time is ripe for a fresh, open and thorough analysis of all aspects of textiles trade and we want to hear the views from all interested parties so that we can draw the right conclusions", said Pascal Lamy. For more information see:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/353|0|RAPID&lq=EN

For further information please contact Frank Oberholzer: 012-452-5200.

Note to all print and/or on-line journalists!!

Please be advised that the application procedure for the 2003 *Natali Prize for Journalism: Excellence in Reporting Human Rights, Democracy and Development* is now open. One Natali Prize worth **€10,000** will be awarded to a print and/or on-line journalist working for the local media in Africa. Articles submitted should focus on human rights and democracy as vital aspects of development and have been published in the general news media between 1st January 2002 and 31st December 2002. Articles can be submitted until **31st May**. Entry forms available from the Delegation's offices.