



European Union

Delegation to the Republic of South Africa
Head of Delegation

EU Perspectives

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



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Headline News

[Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the EU on events in Libya](#)

"The European Union is extremely concerned by the events unfolding in Libya and the reported deaths of a very high number of demonstrators. We condemn the repression against peaceful demonstrators and deplore the violence and the death of civilians. We express our sympathy to the families and friends of the victims. The EU urges the authorities to exercise restraint and calm and to immediately refrain from further use of violence against peaceful demonstrators....The EU calls on the authorities to immediately cease the blocking of public access to the internet and mobile phone networks. The EU also calls upon the authorities to allow media to work freely throughout the country. The legitimate aspirations and demands of the people for reform must be addressed through open and meaningful Libyan-led dialogue. The European Union expects full co-operation by the authorities in protecting EU citizens."

[Zimbabwe: Commission supports the Council decision](#)

The Commission noted the EU Council decision to ease the restrictive measures on Zimbabwe and to prolong the implementation of Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, which prevents the payment of aid through government structures and reflects continued concerns about the situation in Zimbabwe. However, direct assistance to Zimbabwe's people continues, as well as humanitarian aid. The Commission recognised the significant efforts made in addressing the economic crisis and improving the delivery of social services in Zimbabwe, while at the same time urging for further reforms, notably on the political front. European Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs said: "I am pleased to note that Zimbabwe is making a step in the right direction towards economic and social recovery, but a lot remains to be done. The Commission has been and will continue to stand by the people of Zimbabwe on the road to democracy and economic, social development."

[Joint EU statement on developments in Egypt](#)

Joint statement by President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton on recent developments in Egypt: "We welcome the decision made by President Mubarak today. By standing down, he has listened to the voices of the Egyptian people and has opened the way to faster and deeper reforms, and an orderly transition to democracy. The EU salutes the courage of the Egyptian people who have pursued their campaign for democratic change peacefully and with dignity.The future of Egypt rightly remains in the hands of the Egyptian people. We call on the Army to continue to act responsibly and to ensure that the democratic change takes place in a peaceful manner. The EU stands ready to help with all its instruments".

[Remarks by the HR/VP Catherine Ashton at the end of her visit to Tunisia, 14 February 2011](#)

"The EU is wholeheartedly behind the Tunisian people's aspirations for freedom and democracy. All Tunisian political actors and civil society must continue to work together towards free democratic elections later this year. I had very constructive meetings with Prime Minister Ghannouchi and several members of the transitional government. I also met representatives of civil society, including human rights activists, womens' groups and youth representatives. Deep democracy can only take root and flourish with the involvement of a wide cross section of NGOs. There is much that the European Union can do to support them. We want to be Tunisia's strongest ally in their move towards democracy. We will work to recast our assistance, and that's €258m between now and 2013. We are also today immediately adding new resources of €17m".

Speech by European Commissioner for Development – 'EU Development policy: Shaping the future together'

Andris Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Development, addressed the German Bundestag's Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development: "As we debate the future of EU development policy, we should remember that we have a solid basis on which to build. The European Consensus on Development has served us well and rightly remains the reference point for common EU principles, values and commitments on development policy. The EU and its Member States provide precious help to millions in their struggle out of poverty. Yet we can and should do more and better. More to make our development assistance fully cost-effective and make every euro we spend count; more to enhance the impact of our development policy; more to speed up progress towards achieving those all-important Millennium Development Goals; and more to align development policy with other policy imperatives, such as climate change or energy."

Other News

EIB delivers record lending for climate action in 2010

In 2010, the European Investment Bank (EIB) increased financing for climate action projects to €19bn, representing an impressive 30% of its lending in the European Union. Significantly up from €16bn the year before, this is a new landmark in supporting sustainable growth and building a low-carbon future in Europe. EIB President Philippe Maystadt said: "We have succeeded in our mission to support recovery in Europe by financing projects that stimulate growth, innovation and jobs, and we are very proud of our record volume on climate action projects. Building a better and more sustainable future is the driving force behind everything we do." The focus of EIB support for climate action projects remains energy (renewable energy and energy efficiency) and sustainable transport.

Hungarian Presidency's priorities on energy policy confirmed

Tamás Fellegi, Hungarian Minister of National Development said the European Council's historic decision on 4 February to create a single European energy market and eliminate external energy dependency confirmed the Hungarian Presidency's priorities. Fellegi, speaking at the conference of the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E), in Brussels on 10 February 2011, highlighted the most formidable challenges of the 21st century as energy management and the demand for secure, sustainable and affordable energy supplies. The Minister also touched upon renewable energy sources and stressed their importance.

Joint EU Statement on the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation

Joint Statement of High Representative Catherine Ashton and European Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding on the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation: "6 February marks the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation. This is an opportunity to remind the world that the EU condemns this abhorrent practice that severely violates the human rights and dignity of hundreds of thousands of women and girls. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to work toward the eradication of this exceptionally brutal crime..... We will continue fighting gender-based violence in the EU and in our external relations."

Commission calls for universal access to pre-school education

The Commission has launched an action plan, aimed at giving children a better start in life and to lay the foundations for successful lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and employability later in life. The Commission's proposals include a call for universal access to quality pre-school education. European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Androulla Vassiliou, said: "Investing in early education and care is one of the best investments we can make for our children – and for Europe's future. Investing in quality pre-school education is much more effective than intervening later. It gives our youngsters a better chance in life and actually saves money in the long run. Breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage also means lower costs for the taxpayer for health and hospital services, remedial schooling, welfare and policing."

MEDIA Mundus: Commission launches new fund at Berlin Film Festival

EU Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou, responsible for Education and Culture, launched the first 34 projects funded under the new MEDIA Mundus funding programme, a worldwide co-operation and exchange initiative for the film industry, at the opening of the 61st Berlin International Film Festival. Commissioner Vassiliou said: "I'm delighted to officially launch the first MEDIA Mundus projects at the Berlinale. Our funding will encourage international co-productions, boost worldwide distribution and make the industry more competitive. This means that cinemas will be able to screen more diverse programmes and offer audiences more choice." MEDIA Mundus has a budget of €15m over 3 years (2011-13) and will fund projects aimed at encouraging mobility and exchanges between European film-makers and their counterparts around the world. The idea is to improve access to international markets and to strengthen the distribution of European films in non-European markets and vice versa.

About the MEDIA Mundus programme: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/mundus/index_en.htm

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