



**European Union**  
Delegation of the European Commission  
to South Africa

# EU Perspectives

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



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## **Headline News**

### **[EU Presidency statement on Zimbabwe](#)**

"Following the situation in Zimbabwe closely, the Presidency of the European Union took note of the decision by Morgan Tsvangirai to withdraw from the second round of the presidential elections. The Presidency deeply deplores the circumstances that led to this decision. For the resolution of the current crisis, as well as for the future of Zimbabwe, it is of crucial importance that Zimbabweans have the possibility to exercise their fundamental democratic right to vote and freely express their political will. The Presidency reiterates deep concern about the systematic campaign of state-sponsored violence and intimidation that has been spiralling throughout the whole electoral process and undermined the credibility of this process. The Presidency underlines its concern about the possible effects of the Zimbabwe crisis on the stability of the region and calls on African countries and organizations, especially the African Union and Southern African Development Community (SADC) to engage with new determination in order to help resolving the current crisis".

### **[Statement By Commissioner Louis Michel on Zimbabwe](#)**

European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, stated that Zimbabwe's electoral process could no longer be considered legitimate, following continued extreme state-sponsored violence and intimidation. Commissioner Michel stated "The decision of Morgan Tsvangirai is fully understandable, considering the unacceptable level of violence which has prevented the MDC to campaign for the run-off. All African observers currently in Zimbabwe that we have talked to, told us that they eye-witnessed acts of intimidation, violence and crimes perpetrated by Zanu-PF supporters against the MDC. We now expect that the African leaders who will meet at the AU Summit later this week in Egypt will condemn in the strongest terms the current situation in Zimbabwe and will do their utmost to resolve this crisis for the sake of Zimbabwean people and of democracy in Africa."

### **[Commissioner Michel welcomes first-ever joint ACP-EU resolutions](#)**

For the first time in its 33-year history, the ACP-EU Council of Ministers released a joint political resolution on top-of-agenda issues such as food prices, Economic Partnership Agreements and regional integration, and the effectiveness of development aid. The resolution came at the annual Council of Ministers between the EU and the Group of States from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Commenting on the joint resolution, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, said "This was an historic step-forward in our relationship and one I fully support. This is a clear sign that the EU and the ACP countries can establish common visions and offer common solutions to help tackle global challenges together for the benefit of all."

### **[International Day of African Youth](#)**

Speakers at the International Day of African Youth (IDAY), which was celebrated on 12 June at the European Parliament, said that access to basic education for African young people is a right and must therefore be guaranteed. The role of African diasporas in this context was the focus of debate between MEPs and their guests. IDAY, which was officially sponsored by EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering, is part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. President Pöttering said: "Investing in education is the key to securing a better future for Africa. We must give African youth hope to escape from the poverty traps that have hampered the development of the continent. Europe must strengthen its partnership with Africa to help it achieve this goal." The purpose of IDAY is to raise awareness among the public and the authorities of the need to guarantee basic education to all African young people by 2015, which is one of the Millennium Development Goals.

## **Other News**

### **European Council debates effects of high food and oil prices**

Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša, EU Heads of State and Government, called for a united front in taking measures to relieve the effects of high food and oil prices at European and world level. The President of the European Council, Janez Janša, underlined that these are major challenges with a significant impact on the life of all EU citizens. He pointed out three statistics illustrating the gravity of the situation, "16% of EU residents live below the poverty line, low-income families being the worst affected. An additional 100 million people have been pushed into poverty due to the increase in food prices, while oil prices have risen by 500% in the past six years." However, the need to find a solution to the problem is not confined to Europe alone. "In the global arena, the European Union will address these problems within the United Nations and G8 Group," remarked Mr Janša, "The EU has re-affirmed its commitment to an open trade policy, a rapid response to urgent short-term humanitarian needs and targeted aid to revive agricultural production in developing countries."

### **Ireland votes no in referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon**

European Commission President Barroso issued a statement, following Ireland's no vote to ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. "As a supporter of the Treaty, the European Commission would have hoped for another result. However, we respect the outcome of the referendum. I have just spoken to Prime Minister Cowen, and he was clear that this vote should not be seen as a vote against the EU. Indeed, both sides in the campaign stressed the benefits of Irish membership: I believe that Ireland remains committed to building a strong Europe and playing a full and active part in the EU. The Irish government and the governments of the other Member States will now need to assess what this result means for the process. The Treaty was signed by all 27 Member States, so there is a joint responsibility to address the situation. The EU institutions and the Member States should continue the work of delivering for the citizens of Europe on issues like growth and jobs, social cohesion, energy security, climate change and fighting inflation. Working together in the EU remains the best way to deal with the challenges affecting Europeans today".

### **Global challenges top the agenda at EU-US summit**

EU leaders met with US President George Bush to discuss the state of trade, the climate, energy and foreign policy issues in Brdo, Slovenia. The impact of climate change, soaring oil prices and insecure energy supplies on the world's leading economies were under discussion, as leaders prioritised low-carbon transport and energy, along with new, green technologies. European Commission President Barroso said the EU was looking forward to a post-Kyoto deal in Copenhagen in 2009, where the two will set an example to the rest of the world. Both Mr Barroso and Mr Bush, attending his last EU-US summit, stressed the importance of a good EU-US relationship. Both leaders agreed that by joining forces, they are stronger in the world and more able to help others, including developing countries.

### **Commission joins the celebrations of the World Day Against Child Labour**

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, EU Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy, said on the occasion of the World Day Against Child Labour "I am pleased that this year the day is dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of education in fighting child labour. I am convinced that improving the access of all children to education is the right response to this evil. The fight against child labour is for me a core commitment in our human rights agenda and I will continue to raise it in my political dialogue with other countries. Peter Mandelson, EU Commissioner for Trade said "The fight against child labour requires a concerted response from governments, industry and the international community. For the EU, sustainable development, including labour standards, are a core objective of our dialogue with trading partners. We are not forcing standards on countries, but believe, as they do, that it is in their interest. We do not want to stop legitimate trade that will help countries trade their way out of poverty, but are looking for the best way to address the issues, whether by agreements, incentives, or co-operation".

### **Commission considers global film cooperation programme**

The Commission is currently exploring the benefits of adding to the EU's MEDIA programme, created in 1991 to promote the development and the distribution of European films across borders, with a new MEDIA MUNDUS programme to strengthen cultural and commercial relations between Europe's film industry and film-makers of third countries. EU Media Commissioner Viviane Reding said "The cultural diversity of Europe's cinema and the attractiveness of our MEDIA programme have led to repeated requests from film-makers from South America, Asia, Russia and other continents to build bridges with Europe's audiovisual markets in order to mutually boost their potentials. In the same way that MEDIA pushes for fully exploiting the opportunity of Europe's single market, a MEDIA MUNDUS programme would facilitate the circulation of our films worldwide".

Further info on the MEDIA programme and Cannes 2008 awards:

<http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media/index/en.html>[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/media/overview/news/cannes\\_2008/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/media/overview/news/cannes_2008/index_en.htm)

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