



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*



20 April – 03 May 2009

Headline News

President Barroso and Commissioner Michel congratulate President-elect Zuma on the outcome of the SA elections

European Commission President Barroso congratulated President-elect Jacob Zuma, on behalf of the Commission, on the ANC's victory in the general elections. President Barroso stressed that the fourth general elections demonstrated once again the political maturity acquired by SA's young democracy and the strong attachment of SA people to democratic values. President Barroso is confident that under President-elect Zuma's leadership, the EU and SA will consolidate and develop their strategic partnership, based on common interests and values. Furthermore, President Barroso expressed his personal engagement and that of the European Commission, to the further deepening of EU-SA relations, and personally looks forward to working closely with President-elect Zuma and his administration. Louis Michel, Commissioner responsible for Development and Humanitarian Aid, also personally congratulated President-elect Zuma. EU Trade Commissioner, Baroness Catherine Ashton, will represent the European Commission at the Presidential Inauguration Ceremony on 9 May.

12th Africa - EU Ministerial Troika meeting

Within the framework of the Africa-EU Dialogue, the 12th Ministerial Meeting of the African and EU Troikas took place in Luxembourg on 28 April 2009. Ministers noted with interest the European Commission's initiative of 8 April 2008 on "Supporting developing countries in coping with the crisis", putting forward timely, targeted and coordinated actions for the European Union as a whole. Ministers underlined that the initiative reflected the strong solidarity between EU and the developing world and the EU's determination to lead in helping developing countries to weather the current crisis.

EU €1bn "Food Facility" for Developing Countries – Commission adopts 2nd implementation decision

The European Commission adopted a €394m package of projects to support agriculture and improve the food security situation in developing countries. This is the second financing decision in the framework of the €1 billion Food Facility which was adopted at the end of last year as a response to the growing food security problems in many developing countries. Louis Michel, Commissioner responsible for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said: "This package shows how serious Europe is in assisting developing countries to get agriculture back on its feet and to help poor people to improve their food security. In these tough global economic times, agriculture can provide good growth potential in developing nations and be one source of their economic recovery. That's why Europe's support to this sector is so vital."

"Investing in Africa: a European Commission's perspective" - speech by Development Commissioner Michel

European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, addressed a conference on "Outlook Africa: Investing in Africa's Growth and Health". Comm Michel stated: "It is true that Africa is hit hard by the impact of the crisis in socio-economic terms. However, the crisis also represents an opportunity for Africa: this crisis is in fact hastening the reshuffling of the cards in the world in terms of wealth, power and world governance. With its rich economic and human potential, Africa is poised to play a greater role in this emerging new world order. It is in the economic and political interests of Europe to help it do so. Investing in Africa is therefore the right strategic choice. I say this on the basis of my own convictions and commitment. This is the reason why, in my capacity as Commissioner responsible for development and for relations with Africa, I have striven in recent years to build a strategic alliance between Africa and Europe".

Commissioner Ashton calls for push on trade facilitation in Africa

EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton called for a continued push on trade facilitation to help developing countries, especially in Africa, reap the benefits of global trade. In remarks delivered to a conference in Rome entitled "The role of

Trade Facilitation: promoting market integration with a focus on Africa", Commissioner Ashton argued that cumbersome, outdated bureaucracies and infrastructure stifle trade and entrepreneurship, discourage investment and encourage corruption. Small and medium-sized enterprises are particularly vulnerable. The solution is to work together to simplify trade procedures, which will reduce delays, cut costs, improve the services offered to consumers, and help many companies get into overseas markets in the first place.

[Read the full remarks](#)

[Louis Michel welcomes the outcome of initial consultations with the Republic of Guinea](#)

On 29 April 2009, the European Union opened negotiations with the Republic of Guinea under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. In this framework, Guinea adopted a consensual roadmap leading to general elections on 11 October and presidential elections on 13 December 2009. The President and members of the ruling military junta and the Prime Minister of the transitional government have undertaken not to stand for these elections. Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, commented: "I am pleased with the results of the opening round of these negotiations. With the commitments Guinea has made, we can envisage in the short term a consensual transition towards restoration of constitutional order and establishment of a democratic regime on the basis of free and transparent elections". The Republic of Guinea has been under military rule since 23 December 2008.

Other News

[Commission adopts communication on Fair Trade](#)

The European Commission adopted a communication on the role of Fair Trade and non-governmental trade-related sustainability assurance schemes. EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton said: "Given the potential contribution of Fair Trade and other trade-related schemes to sustainable development, the Commission will stay engaged and further support such efforts. It is important that consumers, companies and government authorities can make well-informed choices when it comes to Fair Trade products." Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and humanitarian aid, said: "I welcome the rapid development of goods certified "Fair Trade" in Europe, whose turnover has increased 70-fold in the past decade. Especially important are the schemes that guarantee a minimum price to farmers in developing countries. This development will be even more successful when the promoters of such systems better inform consumers on the real impact of their actions on trade and developing countries."

[EIB and EU-Africa Infrastructure trust fund work together to help rebuild Beira Transport corridor in Mozambique](#)

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is lending €65m to the Republic of Mozambique for the rehabilitation of the Beira corridor in Mozambique. The EIB loan will be complemented by a €29m interest rate subsidy from the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund. The funding package will support improvements to the Sena railway line and the restoration of the Beira port access channel. Plutarchos Sakellaris, EIB Vice President responsible for lending operations in Africa, was welcomed to Mozambique by the Finance Minister, Manuel Chang, to the official loan signature ceremony in Maputo. The EIB loan was welcomed as a further step on the country's road to rehabilitation and development.

[International Donor Conference on Somalia Security - European Commission pledges to commit €72m](#)

An International Donor Conference on Security in Somalia, co-chaired by the United Nations and the African Union, was hosted by the European Commission in Brussels. The conference aimed to assist Somalia's new government to establish increased security and stability across the country and to tackle the root causes of piracy in the international waters off its coastline. The European Commission has pledged to commit €72m to assist with security in Somalia, approximately half of the funds requested by the United Nations.

[Commission adopts new programme to fight terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction](#)

The European Commission adopted a new three year programme to fight terrorism, trafficking and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The 2009-2011 Indicative Programme for the Instrument for Stability includes the first global counter-terrorism measures developed by the Commission, together with experts from EU Member States. External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner explained that "Commission development programmes must pay close attention to security issues linked with terrorism, organized crime and trafficking."

[European Commission launches 2009 Lorenzo Natali Prize for committed journalists](#)

The Commission launched the Lorenzo Natali Prize for 2009 on 3rd May, World Press Freedom Day. European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, said: "The European Commission's aim in organising the Lorenzo Natali Prize is to support committed journalists who contribute to the cause of development, democracy and human rights through the quality of their work." www.nataliprize2009.eu

[Export Helpdesk for Developing Countries](#)

The Export Helpdesk is an online service, provided by the European Commission, to facilitate market access to the EU for developing countries. The database gives an overview of the EU's preferential trade regimes established for developing countries, and lists all tariffs, taxes and other requirements for goods destined for import.

[Read the latest Newsletter](#)

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

