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Commission approves € 137 million for education and youth empowerment in South Africa

Today, the European Commission approved € 137 million to be provided to the Government of South Africa to improve education and youth empowerment.

The three programmes that are being financed in 2009 are consistent with the goal of the Joint Country Strategy Paper (2007-2013) on development co-operation between the European Union and South Africa to reduce poverty and inequality through employment creation, better service delivery in key sectors such as education and health, and promoting good governance.

The EU works in South Africa in many areas, including social service delivery, governance, and private sector development. Emphasis is placed on innovative approaches, best practices, risk-taking, pilot programmes, systems development, capacity building and above all skills and knowledge transfers. Improving service delivery by means of innovative delivery mechanisms and capacity building is especially important at local level.

In 2009, three programmes are being financed for a total amount of €137 million. The first programme focuses on improving primary education through a sector policy budget support operation of €122 million. It is expected to increase access to better quality primary education particularly for learners in the poorest schools. The second programme of €5 million provides opportunities for South African students to study in Europe in the context of Action 2 of the current Erasmus Mundus Programme. The last programme, the so called Youth Empowerment Programme of €10 million, completes the Annual Action Programme, and aims to support youth to develop their potential through culture, art and sport.

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