



**EUROPEAN UNION**

Delegation of the European Commission  
To South Africa

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## Press Release

.../for immediate release

### European Commission launches EU-Africa partnership to develop trans-African connections

***The European Commission today approved a proposal for a partnership on infrastructure between the European Union and Africa. The Partnership aims to respond to the objectives set out by the African Union and NEPAD. A total of €5.6 bn from the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF, 2008-2013) will support regional development in four priority areas: transport, energy, water, and information technology and telecommunication networks.***

The Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, said '*This partnership will allow Africa to build the infrastructure that is so crucial for a real economic boost. Connecting Africa is essential for its economic growth, trade, regional integration and fight against poverty.*'

The lack of infrastructure and services on the African continent severely constrains economic growth and hinders human and social development. There are few road networks and they are poorly maintained, the coverage of the train network is very limited and connections between rail networks are weak. Over 300 million people – around 42% of the population of Africa, still don't have access to clean water. A lack of connections between African countries means telecommunications within Africa normally have to be routed via Europe or America.

Improving infrastructure in Africa is a fundamental precondition for increasing economic growth, promoting regional trade, and above all, for reducing poverty. In addition, trans-African networks make a key contribution to regional integration, which both acts as a motor for economic development and brings political stability and good governance. The EU-African Partnership on Infrastructure is at the heart of the EU's Strategy for Africa, which the European Council approved last December. The Strategy was developed with African partners, states, and regional organisations.

A total of €5.6 billion from the 10th EDF (2008 – 2013) has been allocated to the Partnership. This amount combines national, regional and cross-sector ACP resources of the EDF. The bilateral programmes of EU member states may also contribute to this partnership. In this way the Partnership provides the foundations for a concrete application of the 'European Consensus' on development which the Council, Commission and European Parliament signed in December 2005. This agreement facilitates the collaboration, co-ordination and effectiveness of European donors' financial contributions to priority projects. In other words, 'doing it better'.

The Partnership will also be supported by a new financial fund for infrastructure in Africa, implemented jointly with the European Investment Bank (EIB). This Fund is an innovative way for the Commission and interested member states to co-finance projects with the EIB and European and African financial and development institutions. In the short term, the Commission will allocate €60 million from the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF. The EIB will initially allocate €260 million in loan financing.

The maps, fact sheets and additional information can be downloaded from the following site:  
[www.europe-cares.org/africa](http://www.europe-cares.org/africa)

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