



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Commission
to South Africa

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Press Release

... for immediate release

First EU - South Africa summits heralds strengthened partnership

The very first summit between EU and South Africa is being held today in Bordeaux, France. With this summit, EU-South Africa relations are visibly put on a higher level - making South Africa a true strategic partner. EU Council President Nicolas Sarkozy, Commission President José Manuel Barroso and Development Commissioner Louis Michel will meet South African President Thabo Mbeki to discuss current political, security and social issues such as migration, climate change, peace and security.

Commission President José Manuel Barroso said: "This is an historic day for EU-Africa relations and especially our relationship with South Africa. This summit shows that our relationship is no longer about trade and development aid only. This summit shows that we have a true partnership based upon mutual respect and a desire to work together on a whole range of issues – from the food price crisis, climate change, business and migration to peace and security. And there is a specific issue on which we count on South Africa's cooperation, namely Zimbabwe."

Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Louis Michel added, "As both a regional power and an emerging global player, South Africa is entitled to play an increased role and assume more responsibilities in promoting peace, democracy and sustainable development in Africa. Our strategic partnership with South Africa has a huge potential to deliver concrete results for our citizens, in terms of expanded trade relations, investments and exchanges between our societies. But also beyond our borders, we should use it as a tool to contribute to bring peace, stability and prosperity, and to address global challenges such as increasing food and energy prices, or climate change."

The one-day summit agenda includes the following topics:

- Creating a good business environment
- Climate change – the post-2012 climate negotiations
- Migration
- Zimbabwe
- Cooperation in the field of peace and security
- Food security
- Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

Today's summit is an opportunity for the EU and South Africa to explore common positions for a future climate change agreement as well as engage in discussions on various crisis situations in Africa and the world, including Zimbabwe, Sudan and the Middle East. Talks about the private sector will focus on the business environment, on infrastructure and financial services. The EU supports investments in South Africa via the European Investment Bank (EIB). For the period 2007-2013, the bank will be able to grant 900 million Euro of loans for investment projects in South Africa.

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Background:

South Africa and the EU launched a Strategic Partnership in November 2006. To implement this Partnership both sides agreed in May 2007 on an Action Plan, which has two parts:

- Enhance political dialogue and cooperation, including regular summit meetings
- Stronger cooperation in a wide range of economic, social and other areas.

The South Africa-EU Strategic Partnership Joint Action Plan, 14/05/2007:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/07/105&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>