

**EUROPE DAY**  
**Freedom Park - May 8, 2009**

This is a festive occasion – a reception, not a seminar. I will not be long, we will not be long.

But still: why are we here? What do we celebrate? ... I want to briefly touch on the following: Democracy, the Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement between the EU and South Africa, and South Africa.

Europe Day is the day on which we celebrate the declaration made by Robert Schuman in Paris in 1950. He proposed to lash together former enemies, and in so doing forged a blueprint for prosperity.

What we have done for ourselves in Europe – supporting and consolidating democracy for millions of people – today we also help others accomplish. The European Union's transformational power has become a major force for democratic and economic change in a large number of countries.

Just remember that of the 27 EU Member States some 16 were not democracies only a decade or two ago – Democracy takes work by all of us and must not be held hostage by a perverse sense of entitlement. Democracy is about service.

As we go about our daily lives we so easily take democracy for granted - let me put it to you that this should not be ... and we must continue to work for democracy and the upholding of our Constitutions.

This year we commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) between South Africa and the European Union.

The primary objective of the TDCA at its inception was to help consolidate the hard-fought for democracy in South Africa after the fall of the Apartheid regime. Some 15 years into democracy, we believe that it is here to stay, thanks to the People of South Africa.

The TDCA has provided an important platform for the deepening of our relations. And yes, 10 years down the line, South Africa and the European Union have launched a true Strategic Partnership of equals, where we have an exchange, not only on traditional areas of cooperation, but also on new areas such as Climate Change, Space, Migration, and a host of other ones.

The TDCA has led to a multiplication of our bilateral trade and investment flows, consolidating year after year the EU as South Africa's main trade and investment partner and SA as the main trade and investment partner of the EU on the African Continent.

We are very proud of this and it is one reason why you are here today.

But the other reason is surely to celebrate South Africa and its achievements. I for one am convinced that there are too many prophets of doom in South Africa. And most of them have singularly failed to look across South Africa's borders and with that I don't mean just here but also in the EU. Having said that, just north of the Limpopo we continue to witness a country walking the tightrope between hope and

despair. Zimbabwe is in desperate need of support but as long as forces within continue to stand in the path of progress we can not, and will not, go beyond humanitarian aid and our current commitments ...

Even after four years I am still struck by the tremendous dynamism of the people of South and Southern Africa. This was most recently on vivid display on Election Day, but the Honorable Chairperson of the IEC, Dr. Brigalia Bam is surely better positioned than I am to talk to you about this.

But before giving her the floor, let me say that I have also asked the Speaker of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, the Honorable Miroslav Vlček, to say a few words to you. It is only 5 years ago - almost to the day - that "Eastern Europe" became part of the EU and barely 20 years ago that the Iron Curtain fell.

And so I return to my earlier point – We dare not be complacent and must remain vigilant in our fight for democracy ....

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