



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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14868/04 (Presse 330)

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
South Africa – European Union Joint Co-operation
Council Meeting 23 November 2004, Brussels

The first SA-EU Ministerial meeting following full entry into force of the SA-EU Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement (TDCA) and the enlargement of the EU was held on 23 November 2004 in Brussels.

The Co-Chairs of the meeting were Dr. N.C. Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa and Mrs. A. van Ardenne-van der Hoeven, Minister for Development Co-operation of the Netherlands. The EU delegation included the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Luxembourg, Mr. Jean Asselborn, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Mr. Louis Michel and the Council Secretariat. The political discussion at the Council meeting took place in troika format on the EU-side.

P R E S S

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1. South Africa - EU Relations

The Parties acknowledged the historical importance for EU-South Africa relations of the visit made by President Thabo Mbeki and welcomed his address to the European Parliament's plenary in which he set out an encouraging vision on the future of Africa and the role Europe should play in the continent's development.

The Parties welcomed the first Ministerial meeting of the Co-operation Council of the TDCA pursuant to full ratification of the Agreement and the enlargement of the EU. They also recognised that it heralded a new era in the relations between South Africa and the EU and it marks the beginning of full implementation of the EU– South Africa TDCA.

South Africa and the EU expressed their satisfaction that full implementation of the TDCA deepened and broadened existing co-operation in all the areas covered by the agreement viz. political dialogue, trade, trade related issues, economic co-operation and development co-operation. The Parties also underscored that the eradication of poverty through economic growth is a central theme in SA-EU relations. In this regard, the Parties welcomed the positive results emanating from the provisional application of the TDCA. They noted that since provisional application of the TDCA in January 2000 bilateral trade had grown by close to 50%.

The Parties noted the discussions between President Mbeki and President Barroso on regional policies of the EU and challenges facing South Africa in supporting the underdeveloped part of its economy (the "second economy"). In this regard South Africa informed the EU that early next year it would be sending a team of senior officials to the European Commission and to some Member States to study the application of Pre-Accession instruments, and Structural and Cohesion Funds. The EU welcomed this endeavour and pledged its support to ensure that the study was a success. In this context, the Parties noted the readiness of the European Commission to structure an exchange of views on these matters with the competent South African authorities and institutions, which should also involve the expertise of EU Member States.

The EU welcomed South Africa's utilisation of the 10th Anniversary of Freedom and Democracy as not just one of celebration, but also a period of national reflection. It congratulated South Africa on the progress it had made over the past 10 years in growing its economy and providing basic social services to the millions of South Africans who were previously marginalised. The EU also recognised the existence of functioning democratic institutions in South Africa and observance of the rule of law, the development of a culture of good governance and respect for human rights. South Africa in turn acknowledged the important contribution made by the EU in the advancement of South Africa's reconstruction effort. Both parties acknowledged that 10 years was not enough to overcome all development challenges in South Africa. In this regard the EU pledged that it would continue to support South Africa in its struggle to eradicate poverty.

South Africa reiterated its confidence that the enlargement of the EU would strengthen and deepen the already excellent relations between South Africa and the EU. This view was reinforced by the fact that both South Africa and the acceding states would find immediate mutual benefits in terms of increased trade, strengthened political dialogue and increased scientific exchanges within the framework of the TDCA. At the same time, the EU assured the South African side, that public investments in the new Member States would not be to the detriment of the African continent in general or South Africa in particular.

2. Review of recent developments in Africa

South Africa informed the EU that the African Union had established most of its organs including the Commission, the Peace and Security Council, and the Pan African Parliament and that they were functioning. It was stated that the Peace and Security Council was well positioned to facilitate the resolution of conflicts in Africa, albeit it required financial support to effectively carry out its mandate. On this issue, the EU confirmed that it would continue to support peace initiatives, conflict resolution and post conflict management efforts in Africa.

The Parties agreed on the potential for co-operation between the European Parliament and the Pan African Parliament.

The Parties acknowledged that NEPAD is the AU's socio-economic programme for the rejuvenation of the African continent. They welcomed the achievements of NEPAD during its third year of implementation.

South Africa and EU recalled that the African Peer Review Mechanism is a voluntary self monitoring mechanism whose aim is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practises that will lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional and economic integration. In this regard the Parties agreed that the APRM would contribute greatly to improved governance and greater transparency throughout Africa. Thus, the EU congratulated South Africa and all the other African countries that had voluntarily acceded to the APRM.

The Parties exchanged views on conflict areas in the African continent. In this regard the EU congratulated South Africa on its efforts as a mediator for peace in Africa notably in the Great Lakes region and Côte d'Ivoire. The Parties acknowledged that progress had been made towards peace in the Great Lakes region as both the DRC and Burundi were seized with preparations for the holding of elections. The Parties confirmed their support for the process leading to and including elections in these countries. They also agreed and reaffirmed the importance of the EU to work with the African Union and the United Nations to facilitate peace on the African continent.

The issue of Zimbabwe was identified as a matter of mutual concern. The EU reiterated its willingness to maintain contact with the Government of Zimbabwe on the basis of progress in EU benchmarks laid down and communicated to Zimbabwe.

The EU acknowledged South Africa's commitment to work towards a solution in Zimbabwe. It also reaffirmed its commitment to join efforts with South Africa and other SADC countries towards an improvement of the situation in Zimbabwe. In this regard the Parties recalled the decision by the SADC Heads of State and Government held in August 2004 in Mauritius to adopt the Principles and Guidelines governing democratic elections within its member states. The Parties also expressed their support to SADC as it works with the Government and the people of Zimbabwe in preparations for the coming Parliamentary elections to be held in March 2005. Further to this the Parties also recognised and agreed that meaningful internal dialogue in Zimbabwe was the most feasible way forward.

3. Peace and Security

The parties noted the significant progress made by the AU in establishing a peace and security architecture on the continent. They recognised the important contribution made to this by the EU through the African Peace Facility and in this context noted the adoption by the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council on 22 November 2004 of the Draft Action Plan for European Security and Defense Policy Support in Africa. South Africa expressed its willingness to study the substance of the Plan and communicate its comments to the EU.

Both Parties reiterated their determination to implement the Peace Facility in the spirit of the Maputo Declaration, which emphasises the pivotal role of the African Union in the joint management of the Fund. In this regard the EU welcomed South Africa's contribution to the Peace Facility. The Parties recognised the important contribution the African Peace Facility is making to peace and security on the Africa continent. They agreed that discussion on its future should continue.

Both sides stressed that poverty, underdevelopment and conflict in Africa should be looked upon as areas of mutual concern and that ongoing dialogue between the EU and South Africa would be used as a forum in which these concerns could be addressed.

4. Multilateralism

The Parties agreed that effective multilateralism was a common foreign policy goal for the EU and South Africa. Both underlined their strong commitment to the enhancement of EU-South Africa relations, which would result in the augmentation of a functioning and consistent cooperation in a multilateral framework.

South Africa and the EU reiterated their firm belief that effective multilateralism was essential to address global challenges including conflict, poverty, underdevelopment and international terrorism. To this end the Parties agreed that the reform of the UN was critical and that it had to be comprehensive so as to address global challenges. The EU took note of the South African position on the reform of the UN Security Council, including permanent representation of Africa in the Council.

Both Parties acknowledged that the Millennium Declaration and the joint efforts to reach the MDG's are essential in addressing global challenges. Recognising the importance of the Millennium Declaration to worldwide peace, poverty alleviation and development, the Parties agreed that it was important to mobilise more financial resources to achieve the Millennium Development Goals

The Parties acknowledged the roles of South Africa and the EU in keeping the Doha Round of the WTO's multilateral trade negotiations on track. They also committed themselves to ensure that the July package that outlines a roadmap for these negotiations would be implemented expeditiously. The Parties reiterated their firm belief that a successful outcome of the Doha Round was essential to the achievement of the MDG's.

The Parties agreed that multilateralism was particularly pertinent in areas of global concern such as the Middle East Peace Process. In this regard they reaffirmed the importance to accelerate implementation of the Road Map.

5. Way forward

The Parties emphasised the necessity for continued and effective dialogue on political issues, economic co-operation, and development. They called for expedient implementation of the Council Conclusions and for a progress report to be tabled at the next JCC to be held in South Africa before the end of 2005.