



Delegation for relations with South Africa

Background Note

Activities during the 7th Parliamentary Term (2009-2014)

9 April 2014, Brussels

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Background/Introduction

Inter-Parliamentary relations with South Africa were frozen during the apartheid years. In September 1993 the South African legislature approved the setting up of a multiparty Transitional Executive Council to oversee the country's move to democracy. An Ad hoc Delegation of the European Parliament (EP) participated as a part of the EU's mission to observe the first non-racial, democratic elections that were held in South Africa on 26/27 April 1994. On 9 May, the newly chosen National Assembly elected Nelson Mandela as President of the Republic of South Africa. Vice-President Nicole Pery represented the EP at the inauguration ceremony on 10 May 1994, where (new) President Nelson Mandela pledged his allegiance to South Africa and his determination to continue his work for reconciliation.

Back in 1988, when Nelson Mandela was still in prison, the EP honoured him with the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Nelson Mandela addressed the EP on 13 June 1990 in Strasbourg, just months after being released from prison on 11 February 1990. He won the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with former President Frederik Willem de Klerk in 1993.

On 17 November 1994, the EP created a delegation for relations with South Africa. The first delegation from South Africa, led by Dr Frene Ginwala, first Speaker of the National Assembly visited the EP in November 1994. The first ever official visit of an EP delegation to South Africa took place in May 1995.

Over the years, South Africa and the EU strengthened their relations through various agreements. The bilateral Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA), signed in 1999 provides for an important legal basis for relations between South Africa and the EU. It includes a specific parliamentary dimension as it envisages both parties to encourage and facilitate regular inter-parliamentary contacts on the various areas of cooperation covered by the Agreement.

The South Africa - EU Strategic Partnership was established in 2007. The Joint Action Plan for implementing the Strategic Partnership establishes the *Mogôbagôba* dialogue, which covers a wide range of areas of cooperation. It includes, amongst others, high-level political and other ad hoc meetings, Summits, annual Joint Cooperation Council meetings at senior officials' and/or ministerial levels and SA-EU Parliamentary relations. The Joint Action Plan includes an explicit reference to parliamentary dimension, as:

'The partners, in line with their strong democratic values, recognize the importance of regular and institutionalised parliamentary interaction. It is essential to enhance understanding of each other's points of view on matters of mutual interest, and also to encourage greater understanding of each other's democratic systems and areas of responsibility. In this regard we will:

- *Encourage the formalisation of SA-EU Parliamentary bilateral relations;*
- *Encourage regular exchanges of visits by parliamentary delegations;*
- *Encourage greater interaction by subject-specific Parliamentary committees on both sides.'*

Both EP and South African parliamentarians have called for formalisation of the EP - South Africa Inter-Parliamentary dialogue, which would ensure an appropriate parliamentary oversight of the EU/South Africa relations.

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Summary of the activities during the 7th Parliamentary term

During the 2009-2014 period, the frequency of the Inter-Parliamentary meetings (twice a year until 2013, when the EP rules concerning missions undertaken by standing inter-parliamentary delegations were changed) reflects the excellent relations between the parliamentarians from both sides and the importance that they attached to the political dialogue on issues of mutual interest and parliamentary oversight of the EU-South Africa relations.

Two highlights deserve a special attention during this parliamentary term:

- Visit of the Delegation from the South African Parliament led by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Max Sisulu and the Chair of the National Council of Provinces, Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu to the EP in April 2012; and
- The President of the EP Martin Schulz visit to the Pan-African Parliament and South African Parliament on 13-14 May 2013. The visit was an occasion to strengthen the ties between the EP and the South African Parliament, particularly to affirm the importance of South Africa as an international and strategic partner for the European Union today.

The South Africa-EU Inter-Parliamentary meetings covered a wide range of issues, including bilateral relations between the EU and South Africa, broader issues on the African continent and a number of topical socio-economic, development and geo-political issues beyond South Africa and the EU. A broad range of topics included, amongst others the following:

- South Africa-EU Summits, oversight of the Strategic Partnership, the EU Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and scrutiny for the implementation of the bilateral TDCA and its revision of 2008;
- Political, social and economic developments in South Africa and in the EU;
- The impact of the Lisbon Treaty and new law-making powers of the European Parliament;
- Climate change, including the outcome of COP 17/CMP 7 held in Durban in 2011;
- Trade issues, including negotiations of the WTO Doha Development Agenda and of the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement;
- Human rights, including establishment of a formal South Africa-EU Structured Dialogue Forum on human rights and the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement;
- Health (HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria); Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda
- The economic and financial crisis and global economic governance, multilateralism and the UN family and other multilateral institutions, the G-20, BRICS, TIMBI, etc.
- Regional integration, Tripartite Free Trade Area - COMESA, EAC and SADC;
- Migration and asylum policies in South Africa and in the EU;
- Peace and security in the African continent (Somalia, Madagascar, Mali, DRC, Zimbabwe, Sudan, etc.), including the Arab Spring in North Africa; and beyond, such as the Middle East peace process and the situation in Syria and Iran;
- Unemployment, education and skills development, science and technology, the EU's 7th Framework Programme for Research; and
- Combating crime and corruption, international terrorism and piracy.

Both Parliaments have considered over the years various ways of formalising the parliamentary dimension of the South Africa-EU relations. The Joint Declaration of the 9th South Africa-EU IPM held on 19–25 February 2007 in Cape Town already called for the establishment of a Joint Parliamentary Committee in order to enhance consultations and coordination on national, regional and international affairs and to allow for the institutionalisation of political dialogue and a stronger democratic oversight role of Parliaments on the Strategic Partnership and proceedings of the ministerial Joint Cooperation Council that operates under the TDCA.

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At the 20th South Africa-EU IPM, Members called for a more substantive role for both parliaments in the institutional architecture of the South Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and agreed a joint support project with a view to establishing such a mechanism. Moreover, at the 21st IPM (the last IPM during this parliamentary term) both sides agreed to consider a parliamentary pre-summit as one of the options for an enhanced role of the parliaments.

In the margins of the Inter-Parliamentary meetings, the Members from the EP held many meetings in South Africa with representatives from the government, civil society, think-tanks, the economic sector and trade unions, journalists/editors, etc., which allowed Members to assess at first-hand the overall socio-economic situation in South Africa.

The EP's Office for the Promotion for Parliamentary Democracy (OPPD) – which provides capacity support to parliaments in new and emerging democracies - has complemented the political relationship between the EP and the South African Parliament, in particular in April 2012 when it organised a well-received programme for the visit of a high level delegation from the South African Parliament.

The EU Delegation in Pretoria as well as various representatives of the European Commission and the European External Action Service provided very valuable support to the Delegation for relations with South Africa.

South Africa and the EU share many common values and beliefs, making them natural partners to promote development, socio-economic and political processes, as well as peace and stability in a globalised world.

Statistical Annex

Delegation for relations with South Africa

Chairs of the Delegation:

Year	Name	Country	Political Group
2009-2014	Michael CASHMAN	United Kingdom	S&D
2008-2009	Vittorio PRODI	Italy	ALDE
2006-2008	Lapo PISTELLI	Italy	ALDE
2004-2006	Antonio DI PIETRO	Italy	ALDE
2002-2004	Gerard COLLINS	Ireland	UEN
1999-2001	Miet SMET	Belgium	PPE
1998-1999	Roberto MEZZAROMA	Italy	EPP
1994-1998	Gerard COLLINS	Ireland	UPE

Inter-Parliamentary meetings during the 7th parliamentary term:

IPM	Date	Place/Country
21st	8-10.10.2013	European Parliament, Strasbourg - France
20th	12-13.11.2012	European Parliament, Brussels - Belgium
19th	27.2-2.3.2012	Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town - South Africa
18th	27-29.9.2011	European Parliament, Strasbourg - France
17th	21-23.2.2011	Cape Town - South Africa
16th	26-27.10.2010	European Parliament, Brussels - Belgium
15th	24-28.5.2010	Cape Town - South Africa
14th	20-21.10.2009	European Parliament, Strasbourg - France

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Other meetings/visits:

Date	Description	Place/Country
2-5.4.2013	EP Delegation: Working group visit	Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town - South Africa
13-14.5.2013	Visit of the President of the EP Martin Schulz to South African Parliament	Cape Town - South Africa
25-27.4.2012	Visit of the Delegation from South African Parliament led by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Max Sisulu and the Chair of the National Council of Provinces, Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu	European Parliament, Brussels
7.11.2011	Visit of Minister of Science and Technology of South Africa, Naledi Pandor, MP	European Parliament, Brussels