



ΕΥΡΩΠΕΪΚΗ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤΟ ΕΥΡΩΠΕΟ ΕΥΡΩΠΕΪΚΟ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ  
EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT EUROOPA PARLAMENT ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
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EUROPOS PARLAMENTAS EURÓPAI PARLAMENT IL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW EUROPEES PARLEMENT  
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**Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union  
Directorate B - Regions  
Unit for relations with Africa, Caribbean and Pacific**

# **Presentation and History of Delegation for relations with South Africa**

**September 2009**



## Delegation for relations with South Africa

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### Presentation and competencies

Interparliamentary relations with South Africa were frozen during the long apartheid years; the European Parliament, instead, supported the anti-apartheid struggle and financed humanitarian aid via NGO's in South Africa. This demonstration of solidarity on the European side became most evident when, in 1989, the EP honoured Nelson Mandela with the Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought, despite him being still in jail.

With the dawn of democracy in 1994, the European Parliament immediately created a Delegation for Relations with South Africa. Since then, Interparliamentary dialogue with the "rainbow country" has been held regularly and alternatively in Europe and South Africa. As the EU is now about to enter into a strategic partnership with South Africa - considering it an "anchor country" for the whole continent - the EP Delegation provides the upgraded EU-South Africa relation with a dedicated and clear parliamentary dimension.

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### **Introduction**

In autumn 1993, when it became clear that apartheid was ending and that the first general democratic elections in South Africa were envisaged for spring 1994, the European Parliament decided to establish an Ad hoc delegation for the observations of these elections, chaired by Ms OOMEN-RUIJTEN (EPP, The Netherlands). When elections took place on 27/28 April 1994, the Ad hoc delegation participated as part of the European Union's Joint Action in the international election observation of the first elections to the new South African Parliament.

Back in 1989, when Nelson MANDELA was still in prison, the European Parliament had honoured him with the EP's Sakharov Peace Prize. After his release from prison in spring 1990, Mr Mandela addressed the European Parliament in June 1990 in Strasbourg. In May 1994, Vice-President Nicole PEREY represented the European Parliament at the inauguration festivities of President MANDELA in Pretoria.

For many years the European Parliament had supported the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and together with the European Commission financed humanitarian aid via NGO's in South Africa.

The first visit of a delegation from the new South African Parliament took place in November 1994 and coincided with parliament's debate and adoption of its opinion on the EU/South Africa interim agreement. The South African delegation was led by Dr Frene GINWALA, Speaker of the National Assembly. In May 1995, the EP delegation visited Cape Town and Johannesburg for the first ever official visit of an EP delegation to South Africa.

### **Summary of the 6th legislature**

The 2004/2009 period saw a net increase of Interparliamentary contacts, with the custom gradually developing of holding two Interparliamentary meetings per year; this renewed frequency of meetings reflects the importance both partners attach to political dialogue in a post-apartheid era, but also the fact that EU/SA relations are much wider in scope than a traditional development strategy: already since the entry into force of the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) into May 2004, which provides the legal basis of EU/SA relations, the mid-term strategy was that it would develop into a strategic partnership between the EU and South Africa in every area.

Thus, especially after the adoption of the Joint Action Plan for the SA/EU strategic partnership (May 2007), issues discussed between parliamentarians have included, amongst others, conflict areas and peace-keeping operations in Africa, the EU Peace Facility, EU enlargement, HIV/Aids, Climate change (climate mitigation and adaptation), energy, Zimbabwe, developments within the United Nations, the importance of meeting the Millennium Development Goals, the Middle east peace process, international terrorism, strengthening of the African Union, successful conclusion of the WTO trade talks, Economic Partnership Agreements and their implications on the current processes of regional integration, and the promotion of a multi-lateral agenda.

Last but not least, a domain where the South African side feels that the EU could do more concerns the formalisation of parliamentary contacts -itself an objective expressly included in the EU/SA Joint Action Plan- with the possible creation of a Parliamentary Cooperation Committee that would formally provide the democratic oversight of the proceedings of the ministerial Cooperation Council which is already operating under the TDCA.

## Delegation for relations with South Africa

### Presidents

<i>Year</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Group</i>
2008-2009	Mr Vittorio PRODI	Italy	ALDE
2006-2008	Mr Lapo PISTELLI	Italy	ALDE
2004-2006	Mr Antonio DI PIETRO	Italy	ALDE
2002-2004	Mr Gerard COLLINS	Ireland	UEN
1999-2001	Ms Miet SMET	Belgium	PPE
1998-1999	Mr Roberto MEZZAROMA	Italy	EPP
1994-1998	Mr Gerard COLLINS	Ireland	UPE

### Interparliamentary meetings

<i>IPM</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place/Country</i>
13th	23-27.2. 2009	Port Elisabeth & Cape Town South Africa
12th	8-10.7. 2008	European Parliament, Strasbourg
11th	2-10.2. 2008	Gauteng & Cape Town South Africa
10th	5-6.9. 2007	European Parliament, Strasbourg
9th	19-27.2. 2007	Cape Town - South Africa
8th	14-15.6. 2006	European Parliament, Strasbourg
7th	22.2-2.3. 2003	Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban - South Africa
6th	19-24.3. 2001	Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Port Elisabeth - South Africa
5th	1-5.3. 1999	Cape Town - South Africa
4th	18-19.11. 1998	Strasbourg - Strasbourg - France
3rd	27-31.10. 1997	Cape Town - South Africa
2nd	1-6.5. 1995	Cape Town, East London, Johannesburg - South Africa
1st	30.11.-1.12. 1994	Brussels - Belgium

### Other meetings

<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Place/Country</i>
10-12.10. 2008	Bureau Visit	Cape Town - South Africa
30.1-2.2. 2005	Bureau visit	Johannesburg, Cape Town
16.11. 2004	Visit of President Thabo MBEKI	European Parliament, Strasbourg
27.10-2.11. 2002	Bureau visit	Cape Town, South Africa