

JOINT STATEMENT
21st SOUTH AFRICA - EU INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETING
8-10 OCTOBER 2013
STRASBOURG, FRANCE

1. The 21st South Africa-European Union Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM) between Members of the South African Parliament and Members of the European Parliament took place at the European Parliament (Strasbourg) on 8-10 October 2013.
2. The discussions focused on the strategic, bilateral relationship between the EU and South Africa, and broader issues in the EU and in the African continent as a whole, providing also an opportunity for an exchange of views on a number of current economic, development and geo-political issues beyond South Africa and the EU.
3. The 6th EU-South Africa Summit, held in Pretoria on 18 July 2013 had provided an opportunity to strengthen strategic relations between both parties. In this context, Members reiterated the need for both parliaments to have a more substantive role in the institutional architecture of the SA-EU Partnership, including their participation in annual summits. In this respect, a Parliamentary pre-summit was one of the options to be considered. Moreover, both Delegations reaffirmed their agreement on the Parliament Oversight Initiative - a joint project to support monitoring and oversight of the Strategic Partnership - the details of which will be agreed jointly by both Parliaments.
4. Members from both Parliaments emphasised that South Africa needs to remain eligible for bilateral EU development cooperation funding in 2014-2020, given the value added of the capacity development, skills and knowledge-sharing programmes in South Africa. To bring such funding entirely to an end would be counter-productive for development in South Africa in terms of poverty eradication, combating inequality and increasing social cohesion. Moreover, full removal of bilateral development cooperation would send a wrong signal about the specific, valuable role of South Africa as a strategic partner of the EU in its own right, and also in the African continent.
5. Members were saddened by the tragic accident off the coast of Lampedusa (Italy), in which hundreds of African migrants perished when their boat sank. EU Member States and South Africa are faced with similar tragedies. Migration-related issues should be characterised by a strategic approach aimed at facilitating the movement of persons, combined with measures to discourage irregular migration and maximising the mutual benefits of migration for development.
6. Both Delegations recognised the importance of the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals, and called for joint efforts to develop and shape a post-2015 development framework with universal goals and concrete commitments, including adequate funding, to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development.

7. Members exchanged views on how to reinforce the parliamentary dimension in the framework of African Union and EU relations and to contribute to the forthcoming EU-Africa Summit to be held in Brussels on 2-3 April 2014.
8. Members exchanged views on the broad perspectives of the commitments taken within the G20 framework on global economic issues in view of ensuring inclusive, balanced and sustainable economic development. It was considered that a parliamentary dimension should formally be incorporated into the G20 process.
9. In terms of raw materials, the South African Delegation explained their policy framework on the beneficiation of raw materials. The EU Delegation emphasised the importance of transparency and accountability, of companies and of governments on the use of revenues from natural resources.
10. On Economic Partnership Agreements, Members took note of the recent developments in the negotiations and stressed the need to urgently conclude a balanced and mutually beneficial comprehensive SADC EPA agreement. A solution for certain trade "irritants" should be sought through the Joint Cooperation Council.
11. Members discussed the political situation in Zimbabwe, Syria, Iran, Madagascar, Mali, DRC-Great Lakes, Egypt and the Central African Republic and acknowledged the extent of the challenges facing these countries. Both delegations expressed the firm belief that democratic values, human rights and the rule of law in these countries must be respected. Members reiterated their continued support for multilateral initiatives within the framework of the United Nations, the African Union, and regional organisations such as SADC and ECOWAS that are necessary for durable solutions for these challenges.
12. Members welcomed the EU-South Africa dialogue on Human Rights that was formally launched in May 2013, and the joint efforts on promoting Human Rights in the EU and South Africa as well as in the African continent at large.
13. The South African side explained the progress made on the regional integration in Southern Africa and on the establishment of the tripartite SADC-COMESA-EAC initiative. On visa issues, the EP Delegation explained the latest development related to the amendment of the EU regulation no. 539/2001, which lists third countries whose nationals require a visa when crossing the EU external borders or those that are exempted from that requirement.
14. Members valued this 21st IPM, as the last one for this parliamentary term, ahead of the forthcoming elections in South Africa and the EP in 2014. Members recognised that the Inter-Parliamentary Meetings have played a vital role in strengthening EU-South Africa relations and the implementation of the strategic partnership between South Africa and the EU.

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