

Brussels, 29 September 2005

European Commission discusses Africa Strategy with Africa's regional organisations

Commissioner Louis Michel meets today Africa's regional organisations to discuss the European Commission's proposal for a new EU Strategy for Africa to be adopted on 12 October. The meeting follows on in-depth written consultation over the past two months on the major ideas of the Strategy. This Strategy should provide a common, comprehensive, and coherent framework for action for all EU Member States and the European Commission to support Africa's efforts to reach the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Today, Thursday 29 September, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Mr Louis Michel, met with representatives from Africa's regional economic communities (RECs) and the African Union (AU). This meeting marks the conclusion of a process of consultation where Africa's organisations have been invited to share their views on the proposed EU Strategy. Commissioner Michel insisted on the importance of this consultation: *'Too many times, policies have been written about or for, rather than with the African partners. It is absolutely crucial that this strategy reflects Africa's vision and priorities.'*

Recent years have seen the emergence of strong regional organisations in all parts of Africa and a continental level of political governance, namely the African Union (AU). Africa's regional organisations are the key actors in the efforts to promote more regional trade and integration, which are key factors for peace and prosperity in Africa. *"It is these organisations that will be the engines of Africa's integration and cooperation and we should offer them our political and economic support and our experience of regional cooperation and integration"*, said Commissioner Michel.

The African Union, formally established in July 2002, seeks to promote progressive political and economic continental integration, democratic societies, and sustainable development on the basis of African-owned strategies. Only three years after its establishment, the AU has already made considerable progress and earned international respect as a credible and legitimate continental political actor and agent of change.

Speaking about the content of the European Commission proposals, Commissioner Michel emphasised the need for a comprehensive approach, covering areas that are prerequisites for sustainable development (peace and security, good governance), areas that create the economic environment for reaching the MDGs (economic growth, trade and infrastructures), as well as areas that have a more direct impact on the progress towards the MDGs (social services, environment). The Communication would also propose to make a qualitative jump in the way the EU works together and make concrete suggestions on how to improve the EU's aid effectiveness, in line with the proposal submitted last 13th of July ([IP/05/902](#) available at:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/902&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguage=en>).