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EU leaders express solidarity with Poland for loss of their President



Following the tragic plane crash on 10 April in which many Polish officials and their families, including President Lech Kaczyński and his wife, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrzej Kremer, Military Chief of Staff Franciszek Gągor and Central Bank governor Sławomir Skrzypek, lost their lives, EU leaders expressed their condolences. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/European Commission Vice-President, spoke by telephone on Saturday with Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, saying *"I would like to send my heartfelt condolences to the people of Poland and express our solidarity with you at this very difficult and sad time. In particular, I want to express my sympathies to the family and friends of those who died."*

Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, said *"I am deeply upset by the news of the death of President Lech Kaczyński, his spouse and several senior Polish officials and representatives in a plane accident this morning. This accident, which occurred while the Polish delegation was on its way to Russia for the commemoration of the Katyn tragedy, is a terrible loss for Poland. I want to express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the president and of the other victims, to Prime Minister Tusk and to the Polish people. I wish to convey to them the support of the European Union in these extremely painful circumstances."*

President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, expressed condolences on behalf of the European Commission. European citizens and all EU institutions held one minute's silence on Monday at midday as a sign of mourning for the death of the Polish President and the other senior officials and members of the delegation that died in the air accident on Saturday. Flags are at half mast in Brussels this week and all meetings held at the European Commission and at the Council have been preceded by one minute's silence in solidarity with the Polish people. The flags at the Delegations of the European Union in Canberra and Wellington are also flying at half-mast this week.

Support to Greece by eurozone Member States

Following the statement by the Heads of State and Government of the eurozone on 25 March, eurozone Member States have agreed upon the terms of the financial support that will be given to Greece, when needed, to safeguard financial stability in the eurozone as a whole. Eurozone Member States are ready to provide financing via bilateral loans centrally pooled by the European Commission as part of a package including International Monetary Fund financing. The eurozone Member States are ready to contribute up to €30 billion in the first year to cover financing needs in a joint programme to be designed with and co-financed by the IMF. Financial support for the following years will be decided upon the agreement of the joint programme.

The Eurogroup is confident that the determined efforts of the Greek authorities and of its European Partners will overcome the fiscal and structural challenges of the Greek economy. In this context, the Eurogroup welcomed the budget execution in the first months of the year, which shows that the measures taken so far are bearing fruit.

President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy said *"I welcome the agreement by the Ministers of Finance of the Eurogroup, under the presidency of Jean-Claude Juncker, on the practical arrangements, notably financial, of the mechanism for financial support on which the principle had been agreed by the Heads of State and Government at their meetings in February and March. The agreement [of 11 April] makes the mechanism fully operational and will contribute decisively to the financial stability of Greece and the euro zone."*

President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, said that he was *"extremely pleased with the agreement reached among the eurozone members on all the remaining details of the coordinated European response to provide financial support to Greece if needed. This is a clear and strong commitment: it shows that the eurozone is serious in doing what is necessary to secure financial stability and about its commitment to give support to Greece along the terms set out in the statements of the European Councils in February and March. [With the agreement on 11 April], Europe has shown that responsibility and solidarity can go together."*

Announcing budget figures for the first quarter of 2010 during a parliamentary debate, Greek Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou stated that *"first quarter deficit in 2010 declined to €4.3 billion from €7.1 billion in the first quarter of 2009. This 40 per cent decline has been achieved even before the latest additional government measures cutting expenditures and increasing tax revenues have fully taken effect. It proves that the government is fully on track to meet the 8.7 per cent of GDP deficit target in 2010 and is successfully implementing the Stability and Growth Programme in order to put the economy on a sustainable path."*

[Statement by Heads of State & Government on the support to Greece by eurozone Member States](#)

Education and Mobility for Research: International Policy Coordinator in Australia



Mr Bodo Richter, International Policy Coordinator (International Organisations and Industrialised Countries), Directorate General Education & Culture, European Commission, will be in Australia for meetings with the Australian Government. He will also give presentations around Australia outlining the diverse relationship between the EU and Australia in terms of education and mobility for research.

The relationship between the EU and Australia in terms of Education and Research collaboration is rich, varied and very successful.

However not many people know the extent of the collaboration or the background to it. Mr Richter will cover all aspects of the relationship including the Bologna Process and the many programs currently open to Australian students and academics such as [Erasmus Mundus](#),

[Marie Curie](#), [Jean Monnet](#) and the joint EU-Australia funded bilateral mobility projects.

The presentations are being held around Australia at the University of Sydney on 13 April, Queensland Education and Training International on 16 April, the National Europe Centre at the Australian National University on 19 April, Monash University, Melbourne, on 20 April, the State Library of South Australia on 21 April, and Curtin University on 22 April. In conjunction with the presentations, EU Delegation staff will be presenting information on [Studying in Europe](#) University Exchange Fairs. To find out more, in **Queensland** visit the Gold Coast University, Griffith University or the Queensland University of Technology; in **NSW** the University of Sydney, Macquarie University, or the Sydney University of Technology; in **South Australia** the University of Adelaide or the University of South Australia; and in **Victoria** the Australian Catholic University, RMIT or Monash University.

For more information on any of these presentations and exchange fairs, please contact Lisa Vassallo, Delegation of the European Union, Canberra, on lisa.vassallo@ec.europa.eu

2010 European Union–Qantas Journalist Award: applications close 30 April

The **European Union Qantas Journalist Award** [EUQJA] is open to an Australian journalist of

not less than three years experience in the print or electronic media. Selection is based primarily on the journalist's proposal outlining an issue or issues on European integration to be pursued during the visit. There is no application form per se, but candidates are urged to read the application guidelines www.delau.ec.europa.eu/EUQJA.htm Applications close by cob 30 April 2010. The EU will assist the journalist in formulating a suitable program of 15 working days that must be undertaken by the end of March 2011. Business class travel to and from Europe is courtesy of Qantas Airways and arranged by Travel Makers of Canberra.

The Lisbon Treaty: a Stronger Europe in the World



H.E. David Daly, Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Australia and New Zealand, will give a speech on Friday 23 April 2010 at 11.00am at Monash University on the Lisbon Treaty. The 2009 Lisbon Treaty is all about making the EU stronger and more efficient both internally and as a global partner. Decisions can be taken more efficiently, even in a Union of 27 or more Member States. The democratic underpinning of the EU is strengthened through increased roles for the European Parliament, Member State national parliaments, and giving Europe's citizens a greater voice through a citizens' initiative. Through this treaty, the EU thus equips itself with new tools for the 21st century.

If you would like to attend this event, please RSVP to patricia.arnold@general.monash.edu.au or [download flyer](#) for more information.

President Herman Van Rompuy in Washington for Nuclear Security Summit



Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, in Washington to participate in the Nuclear Security Summit on 12 and 13 April 12, reaffirmed the European Union's commitment to strengthen nuclear security, called on all countries to sign and ratify the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

"We, as world leaders, are responsible for international peace and security. Nuclear terrorism, with terrorists getting access to nuclear materials or to radioactive sources, represents a most serious threat to international security with potentially devastating consequences to our societies. This is a common threat that requires a common response."

The EU is now the major contributor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund with a level of funding which is expected to exceed €30 million by the end of 2010. So far, more than 50 countries have benefited from EU assistance and the number continues to grow.

"The EU will strive for further co-ordination, consistency and coherence in its nuclear security related work, in close co-operation with international organizations and all interested countries." concluded Van Rompuy. [Read the full statement](#)

New EU President and NZ Prime Minister meet for first time



Mr Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, is attending the Nuclear Summit hosted by US President Barack Obama. On 13 April, President Van Rompuy held a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister of New Zealand John Key. Both leaders are participating in the two day summit, the goal of which is to reduce nuclear weapons and the material used to make these weapons in the world.

Caption: Herman van Rompuy and John Key

Photo credit: Guillaume Delpech, Sipa Press

European Commission adopts strategic priorities for 2010

The European Commission adopted its work programme for 2010, reflecting the Commission's determination to lead Europe out of the economic crisis and deliver policy that brings direct benefits to citizens. The 2010-2014 Commission will take action along four main strands:

- **Tackling the crisis and sustaining Europe's social market economy**
- **Building a citizens' agenda which puts people at the heart of European action**
- **Developing an ambitious and coherent external agenda with global outreach**
- **Modernising EU instruments and ways of working**

The Commission will work closely with the European Parliament and the Council, as well as stakeholders, to ensure a broad ownership on the overall approach and on individual initiatives. For the full programme, see [Commission adopts strategic priorities for 2010](#)

Climate change & economic strategy on the agenda for President Van Rompuy



European Council President Herman Van Rompuy reported on the first formal European Council meeting that he has chaired. Speaking to the European Parliament on 7 April, President Van Rompuy outlined the main agenda points: the **economic strategy for Europe 2020**, and the **EU strategy for global negotiations on climate change**.

On this latter point, Van Rompuy stressed *"A global and comprehensive legal agreement remains the only effective way to reach the agreed objective of staying below 2°C increase in global temperatures. The pledges made (at Copenhagen) on emission reductions are insufficient to meet the crucial target of 2°C. The negotiations need a new dynamic. The EU and its member states will implement their commitment to provide €2.4 billion annually over the 2010-2012 period for fast-start financing, and we remain committed to jointly mobilise US\$100 billion per year by 2020 to help developing countries fight climate change"*.

On the economic crisis, President Van Rompuy affirmed that the Council fully supports the efforts of the Greek government, and has drawn lessons from the crisis, which led to the creation of a Task Force established under the authority of the President. The Task force will be established in close cooperation with the European Commission and include representatives of the member States, the rotating presidency and the European Central Bank. It will present its conclusions before the end of 2010. [Read the full speech](#)

A Shared Vision for Haiti – the next ten years

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Commission Vice-President, Catherine Ashton, together with Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs and Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva attended the ministerial-level International Donors' Conference "Towards a New Future for Haiti" that took place on March 31 at the UN Headquarters in New York. The Conference was co-chaired by Brazil, Canada, the European Union, France, and Spain as leading donors to Haiti.

[HR/VP Catherine Ashton's speech: "A Shared Vision for Haiti – the Next Ten Years"](#)

High Representative Catherine Ashton expresses concern at the political situation in Thailand

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, said: *"I am deeply concerned by the outburst of violence between demonstrators and security forces in Bangkok on Saturday 10 April. I regret the violence and the heavy casualties, particularly the high number of deaths. On behalf of the EU, I present my condolences to the Thai people and all families who have suffered the loss of loved ones. I have taken note of the decision of the Thai Government to establish an independent committee to investigate the incidents. I renew the EU's call on all sides to show the utmost restraint. Once again, I urge all parties to engage immediately in a constructive dialogue in order to solve the current crisis through peaceful and democratic means, and aiming at the swift restoration of*

stability and the rule of law." [HR/VP Ashton comments on political situation in Thailand](#)

The EU tackles hunger in developing countries

The European Commission adopted two new EU policy frameworks to help developing countries address the issue of food security, both in emergency and long-term situations. The objectives are to ensure progress toward achieving Millennium Development Goals related to the elimination of poverty and hunger, and to maximise the effectiveness of humanitarian support in crises where food insecurity threatens lives. Food security implies food availability, access to food and quality of food. The Commission promotes the vision of an environmentally friendly and sustainable agricultural model, adapted to the reality of developing countries and markets, and able to make food available, accessible and of adequate nutritional quality. It therefore concentrates on enhancing the productivity of smallholder farmers and the resilience of rural communities, supporting governance improvements for food security, and strengthening assistance mechanisms for extremely vulnerable population groups. [Renewed impetus for food security](#)

The European Union at ACTA Talks in Wellington



The European Union came to town 12th-16th April for the eighth round of international negotiations aiming at reaching an Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement. Mr Luc Deigne from the European Commission is leading the negotiations on the EU's side. EU Member States present at the meeting include Spain, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and United Kingdom. Discussions are covering border measures, enforcement in the digital environment as well as both criminal and civil enforcement. The EU will seek from negotiating partners that transparency is achieved by releasing the negotiating documents. A meeting with civil society was held on Tuesday. New Zealand, as host, is chairing this round of talks.

European Parliamentarians visit New Zealand



Last week saw the visit of a European Parliamentary Delegation to Christchurch and Wellington, hosted by NZ House of Representatives Speaker Hon Dr Lockwood Smith. The seven-person European Parliamentary Delegation represented a wide political spectrum of political parties from Finland, Germany, Romania, Spain and the UK. Highlights included meetings with Foreign Minister Hon Murray McCully and Labour Party Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs Hon Chris Carter, the caucuses of NZ parties, appearances before the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee as well as the Primary Production Select Committee, and an official dinner hosted by the Speaker.

Summing up their views, the Head of the EP Delegation Mr Richard Ashworth MEP said: "One is struck by the ease with which shared values and aspirations, so long a feature of UK-NZ relations, have been so readily adopted by all 27 EU countries. The prospects... look extremely positive: the EU-NZ working together, succeeding together".

[For more on the visit, please go to our website](#)

Speaker Hon Dr Lockwood Smith greets Richard Ashworth MEP

Australia-Germany Solar & Wind Energy Industry Conference 2010

The German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce will host the "Australia-Germany Solar & Wind Energy Industry Conference 2010" on Monday, 10 May 2010 at Sydney's MLC Centre. Over a dozen expert speakers from Germany and Australia will cover support policies, technological progress, legal aspects and flagship projects. Over 150 representatives from the solar and wind energy industry are expected to attend. Admission will be free for anyone operating in the field of renewable energies. For more information please refer to the [news release](#).

European Economic Update

Eurozone **annual inflation** is expected to be 1.5% in March 2010. It was 0.9% in February. Euro area (EA16) **GDP was stable** and EU27 GDP increased by 0.1% during the fourth quarter of 2009, compared with the previous quarter, according to second estimates from Eurostat. In the third quarter of 2009, growth rates were +0.4% in the eurozone and +0.3% in the EU27.

The eurozone (EA16) seasonally-adjusted **unemployment rate** was 10.0% in February 2010, compared with 9.9% in January. It was 8.8% in February 2009. The EU27 unemployment rate was 9.6% in February 2010, compared with 9.5% in January. It was 8.3% in February 2009. For the euro area this is the highest rate since August 1998 and for the EU27 since the start of the series in January 2000. Eurostat estimates that 23.019 million men and women in the EU27, of whom 15.749 million were in the eurozone, were unemployed in February 2010. Compared with January 2010, the number of persons unemployed increased by 131 000 in the EU27 and by 61 000 in the euro area.

Academic news and events

ANU Centre for European Studies Visiting Fellowships May 2010 – April 2011: The ANU Centre for European Studies has announced a [Call for Applications](#) under this year's Visiting Fellowship program. The Program is part of the Centre's mission to promote research, education and dialogue between Europe and Australia, and is specifically aimed at supporting and hosting local and international scholars wishing to undertake research at the Australian National University. The broad theme for 2010 is 'Europe and the Law'. For the 2010 research themes of the Research School of Humanities, click [here](#). The closing date for applications is 1 May 2010, for visits to take place from May 2010 – April 2011. For more information, see <http://ces.anu.edu.au/>

Call for Proposals under all three Actions of the **Erasmus Mundus** programme: Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes; Erasmus Mundus Partnerships; and Promotion of European higher education. The deadline for submission of applications under all three Actions is **30 April 2010**. More information:

<http://www.delaus.ec.europa.eu/education/Erasmus/ErasmusMundus2010.htm>

EU tube: One Day at EU Communications



EUTube: One Day at EU Communications. Informing Europeans about the Commission's activities and keeping abreast of public opinion in Europe. This is the twofold mission of DG Communication. In this clip you'll get a short glimpse of what it's really like in the EU's main nerve centre for communication and information.

[see EUTube](#)

European Union Delegation: publications available online



The following publications are available from our website. If, however, you would like to receive hard copies of any of these publications, please send an email to delegation-australia@ec.europa.eu specifying the name of the publication(s) and the number you would like to receive.

NEW: [Study in Europe 2010](#)
[Key Facts 2010](#)

[EU Insight: Education](#)
[EU Insight: Lisbon Treaty](#)
[European Union Australia Partnership Framework](#)
[EU Insight: Climate change](#)
[EU Insight: Economic relationship](#)

Upcoming events: Australia

Applications are now open for the Spanish Cultural Cooperation Program between the Ministry of Culture of Spain and the Australian National University (ANU). Information and conditions of entry can be found on the program's webpage, www.spainculturalprogram.com.au. Applications close 1st May, 2010.

4 to 8 May 2010: **The Importance of Being Earnest**. The Melbourne French Theatre Company presents the original play, as written by Oscar Wilde in French. Play in French with English subtitles.

More information <http://www.mftinc.org/index2en.htm>

[More events](#)

Upcoming events in New Zealand

Gateway to the EU in New Zealand <http://www.eu.org.nz/>

For more information on the items covered in news@eu, contact Roger Camilleri +61 2 6271 2744 roger.camilleri@ec.europa.eu or Jan Skorich +61 2 62712747 jan.skorich@ec.europa.eu .

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