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PRESS RELEASE

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European and African Union Commissions meet to pave the way for next Africa-EU Summit

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso and six European Commissioners will meet their African Union (AU) counterparts on 25 and 26 April, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The high-level event, which takes place in year of the 50th anniversary of the Organisation of the African Union (OAU), will launch the preparations of the 4th Africa-EU Summit, due to take place in Brussels in April 2014.

The meeting will further strengthen bilateral cooperation and political dialogue between the two continents, promote shared interests and tackle common regional and global challenges within the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

President Barroso said: "Africa and Europe are each other's closest neighbours. The partnership between the European Commission and the African Union is becoming ever more relevant by the day. I look forward to our next College-to-College (C2C) meeting, an event which symbolises the cooperation, convergence and complicity between the two sister organisations that have been driving regional integration in both Europe and Africa. I am proud of what we have achieved together so far. And I am convinced that we can do much more in the future by jointly tackling our shared challenges, from climate action to regional security, eradicating poverty and sharing the benefits of trade and growth."

The EU is the biggest trading partner for Africa and remains its most important donor. African countries received close to €24 billion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the EU in the period 2007–2012.

Most recently, the EU granted €50 million to support the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) through the African Peace Facility, which supports the African Union and regional African organisations in carrying out peace-keeping operations such as AMISOM in Somalia and MICOPAX in the Central African Republic. Through the African Peace Facility, the European Union covers mainly the non-military costs of the force, such as the daily allowances, and transport and medical costs. Since 2004, the EU has provided more than €1.1 billion through the African Peace Facility to prevent conflict and promote peace, for example in Darfur, Somalia, and the Central African Republic.

The meeting between the two Commissions will start with keynote speeches from AUC Chairperson Zuma and President Barroso, followed by a plenary discussion and thematic meetings of Commissioners. The discussions will cover regional integration, trade and infrastructure, economic governance and raw materials, as well as customs and taxation. Other key topics will be the environment and climate action, sustainable energy and agriculture, food safety and security, resilience, education, employment, health and migration.

A common challenge for both Africa and Europe remains to consolidate sustainable economic growth and ensure that it is inclusive in creating jobs, especially for women and young people. This requires coordinated action at continental, regional and national levels. In this context, the issues of trade, regional integration, agriculture and raw materials will be high on the agenda. In addressing education, health, women- and youth empowerment and development of human capital, the Commissioners will look at ways to cooperate more closely on the structural challenges in helping economies to prosper.

Background

For this 6th annual College-to-College session, President Barroso will be accompanied by Commissioners Piebalgs (Development), De Gucht (Trade), Georgieva (International cooperation, humanitarian aid and crisis response), Hedegaard (Climate action), Ciolos (Agricultural and rural development) and Šemeta (Taxation and customs Union, audit and anti-fraud).

The Strategic Partnership between Africa and the EU pursues common objectives and aims to expand the political dialogue and concrete operation into new areas of shared interest, in a dialogue of equal partners.

80 Heads of State and Government from Africa and Europe adopted the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) at the Summit in Lisbon in December 2007. Both sides agreed to pursue common interests and strategic objectives together, beyond traditional development issues, beyond the exclusive geographic scope of Africa and beyond institutions with enhanced involvement of parliaments and donors, including the private sector, civil society and young people. The JAES outlines a long-term shared vision of the future of Africa-EU relations in a globalised world.

The next Africa-EU Summit is scheduled to take place in Brussels, April 2014.

The African Union and the African Union Commission

The AU, the successor of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), was created in 2002 and currently has 54 Member States. It is Africa's leading continental institution and principal organisation in the area of Peace and Security. Its main objectives are to achieve unity and solidarity on the continent, achieve political and economic integration, promote peace and security, democratic principles and institutions, as well as sustainable development.

The AU Commission is the key institution in the day-to-day management of the African Union and main interlocutor for the European Commission in the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. The AU Commission is composed of the Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson and eight Commissioners. It has its headquarters in Addis Ababa and currently has some 1.500 staff members. A new College was elected in 2012, with Dr Dlamini-Zuma as Chairperson. Most of the new AU Commissioners have already taken office.

For more information:

[MEMO/13/367](#): Key facts on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy

Background information on the Africa-EU Partnership:

<http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/>

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