



Kristalina Georgieva gives confident EP hearing

World Bank vice-president Kristalina Georgieva, Bulgaria's new Commissioner-designate gave a confident performance at her parliamentary hearing on Wednesday 3 February. Georgieva was nominated to become Commissioner for International Co-operation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response following the withdrawal of the controversial candidate Rumania Jeleva. Georgieva faced questions on how she would respond to humanitarian crises in Haiti, Sudan, Burma, the Congo, Afghanistan and Gaza among others. Her responses were largely well received by MEPs.

Questioned about the Europe's lack of visibility over the crisis in Haiti, she said that the EU's actions so far had been "very impressive" but admitted that its communication of those actions was "slightly underwhelming." She said that the two priorities for Haiti were "immediate relief" and "long-term development."

Georgieva said she would speak out against the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, emphasise the need for better disaster prevention strategies and create a European voluntary humanitarian corps in 2011. However, she avoided taking a stance on the role of the military in humanitarian interventions and said that the establishment of an EU reaction force would be a matter to discuss with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton.

Parliament will take its delayed vote on Barroso's second Commission team on Tuesday 9 February. The result is expected to confirm the proposed Commission, which will take up office the day after the vote.

Sources:

- [EUobserver](#)
- [European Parliament](#)
- [Financial Times](#)

Campaigners call on IMF to cancel Haiti debt

Despite the head of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) comments last week that he wished to see the cancellation of all Haiti's debts, including its new \$102 million loan to the country, no official move towards transforming the loan into a grant has been made. The devastated country now owes the IMF over \$250 million, a burden that campaigners are denouncing as scandalous.

Civil society group PAPDA, the Haitian Advocacy Platform for Development, released a statement saying: "The debts imposed by the IFIs and the major world powers have contributed to destroying our country. It's the equivalent of an earthquake which has lasted from late in 1983 when we signed the first standby agreement with the IMF. These loans have caused earthquakes, aftershocks and tremors which have undermined our institutions and our capacity to respond to a crisis of this magnitude."

A briefing paper from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) stated: "We call on the IMF to immediately and unconditionally cancel all of Haiti's debt, including its new loan, and for rich countries to make large grant aid available to Haiti as restitution for centuries of damage inflicted on that country."

At a meeting of the Council of Ministers of Agriculture of the EU last week, Spain made a proposal to distribute surplus European agricultural commodities to the earthquake victims. Meanwhile, Venezuela, one of Haiti's biggest creditors, announced that it would cancel all Haiti's debts.

Sources:

- [Jubilee Debt Campaign](#)
- [UNCTAD](#)

Obama will not attend EU-US summit in Madrid

White House officials have allegedly confirmed that US President Barack Obama is not planning to attend the EU-US summit in Madrid this May, which is being hosted by the Spanish presidency. Obama travelled to Europe six times in 2009, but reportedly intends to concentrate more on the domestic agenda this year.

Philip J. Crowley, a spokesperson for the US State Department, told reporters last week that confusion arising from the Lisbon Treaty had affected the White House's position. They cite the lack of clarity of leadership roles for the EU following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

"Up until recently, they [summits] would occur on six-month intervals, as I recall, with one meeting in Europe and one meeting here. The foundation of that was the rotating presidency within the EU. Now you have a new structure regarding not only the rotating EU presidency, you've got an EU Council president, you've got a European Commission president," said Crowley.

"We are working through this just as Europeans themselves are working through this: When you have a future EU-US summit meeting, who will host it and where will it be held? ... All of this is kind of being reassessed in light of architectural changes in Europe."

"Obviously, there's been some disappointment expressed by the government of Spain, and we understand that and we'll be working with them on that," he added.

Sources:

- [EUobserver](#) (1)
- [EUobserver](#) (2)

New report on the way forward for European development cooperation

A new report has been published entitled *New Challenges, New Beginnings: Next steps in European development cooperation*, the result of a collaboration by 25 researchers from four major European think-tanks on international development: The Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), the Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), and The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM).

The report examines the EU's progress in furthering the Millennium Development Goals, and how the goals must be rethought beyond 2015, and stresses the importance of Policy Coherence for Development. The authors examine the specific policy areas of trade, state/peace-building, climate change, migration, finance, and the private sector, and sets out how EU policy could function more effectively in these areas.

The report argues the case for five priorities in European development cooperation:

- New EU leadership in thinking about how development cooperation can help deal with shared global problems.
- EU states to meet their aid promises and improve the targeting and effectiveness of aid spending.
- New efforts to ensure coherence between development and other policies.
- Providing new life to development partnerships.
- Improved cooperation between Member States, so that the EU really does work as one.

Read the full report at: www.pagegangster.com/p/yrrY0/

Source:

- [Overseas Development Institute \(ODI\)](http://www.odi.org.uk)

Spanish President calls for action on Somalia during African Union summit

The 14th summit of the African Union (AU) was held last week in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, attended by Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero representing the EU. Zapatero stressed the necessity of achieving a "united and democratic Africa, sure of itself and working for prosperity".

"May this union become stronger each day and may the desire for peace be rewarded, may the story that is written about the African continent over the coming years be about development and cooperation", he said.

A key topic in the Spanish President's address to the AU was Somalia, where he argued the world was not doing enough to address the worsening security situation.

"Somalia is a risk if we do not provide much more support to the Transitional Federal Government; otherwise, Somalia will become a breeding ground for the worst behaviours that destroy coexistence and close doors for generations", he said. "...terrorism, trade in human beings, kidnapping, drug trafficking and piracy demand a convincing and preventive response, and the commitment of the international community headed by the United Nations".

Meanwhile Pedro Serrano, Acting Head of Delegation of the European Union, told the UN Security Council that it is enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty that the United Nations is central to the EU's international engagement.

"A genuine trilateral UN-AU-EU relationship is already in the making," Serrano said, noting that the EU has deployed two military operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in support of the UN mission there (MONUC).

"The challenges facing the international community — poverty, conflict, terrorism, non-proliferation, climate change, are closely interlinked and of a magnitude that requires collective action," he said.

Sources:

- [Angola Press](#)
- [The Spanish Presidency](#)
- [ReliefWeb](#)
- [Xinhua News](#)