

Agenda of the European Commission

20 – 26 April 2015

**Background notes from the Spokespersons' service for journalists.
The European Commission reserves the right to make changes.**

Monday 20 – Friday 24 April:

9th round of negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Tuesday 21 April:

EU to take significant actions on Illegal Fishing

Wednesday 22 April:

Meeting of the African Union and European Commission Colleges

Thursday 23 – Saturday 25 April:

Commissioner Stylianides visits Ethiopia and South Sudan

Monday 20 – Friday 24 April:

9th round of negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

The news:

On 20-24 April 2015, the ninth round of negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and the US will take place in New York City.

The background:

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a comprehensive free trade and investment treaty currently being negotiated between the European Union and the US. The main goal of TTIP is to remove regulatory tariff and non-tariff barriers leading to more growth and jobs on both sides of the Atlantic and global standards.

The event:

- Friday 17 January, 16:00-17:00: Technical briefing off-the-record by the EU chief negotiator Ignacio Garcia Bercero before the round, Berlaymont Press Room.
- You find more details on the media arrangements in New York City here: <https://ustr.gov/ttip/ttip-round-information>

The sources:

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/>

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Tuesday 21 April:

EU to take significant actions on Illegal Fishing

The news:

Next Tuesday European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella, will announce the next steps in its fight against global illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU). These will include 'significant action' in relation to three important fishing nations. The fight against illegal fishing is part of the EU's forceful drive to ensure sustainable ocean governance as a global standard.

The background:

Illegal fishing worldwide represents 15% of world catches, amounts to 10 billion euros yearly, and its main victims are coastal communities in developing countries. The EU, as the world's biggest fish importer, no longer tolerates any fish caught illegally or unsustainably and warns thirds countries with possible trade measures if they are unable to certify their products.

When flag States are unable to certify their products, the Commission starts a process of cooperation and assistance with them to help improve their legal frameworks. The milestones of this process are the warnings (yellow cards), the green cards if issues are solved and the red cards if they aren't – the latter leading to a trade ban.

The event:

EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella will announce EU action against illegal fishing at a press conference on 21st April (details to follow).

The sources:

- http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/illegal_fishing/index_en.htm
- <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1414576491083&uri=URISERV:pe0005>

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Wednesday 22 April:

Meeting of the African Union and European Commission Colleges

The news:

The Colleges of the African Union Commission and the European Commission will come together for their seventh annual meeting, which will take place in Brussels. This will be the first annual meeting since the new European Commission took office on 1 November 2014 and will provide an opportunity to maintain the positive momentum of the 4th EU-Africa Summit of April 2014.

The background:

The College-to-College meetings are held to provide regular political guidance to the Africa-EU Partnership by bringing together the colleges of the European Commission and the African Union (AU) Commission for political and policy dialogue. The meetings are held on an alternating basis in Brussels and Addis Ababa.

The event:

- The meeting will be taking place on 22 April. A press conference with President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini-Zuma will take place in the press room of the Berlaymont at 13:15.
- A technical briefing for the accredited press will take place on 21 April at 09:00 at the Berlaymont press room.
- A press release and memo will be available on 21 April.

The sources:

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

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Thursday 23 – Saturday 25 April:

Commissioner Stylianides visits Ethiopia and South Sudan

The news:

EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides will visit Ethiopia and South Sudan from 23 to 25 April, to draw attention to one of the world's biggest humanitarian crises which continues to affect millions of people in the region and causes tremendous suffering in South Sudan.

The Commissioner will review with the leading actors the latest assessment of the humanitarian and political situation on the ground. He will pay particular attention to the difficult circumstances under which humanitarian organisations in the region operate due to deteriorated access to the people in need.

The background:

South Sudan continues to suffer from the dire humanitarian consequences of the civil war since its outbreak in December 2013, with displacement, severe hunger and instability. Over two million people have fled their homes, including over half a million refugees in neighbouring Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda. At the same time, South Sudan hosts around a quarter of a million refugees from the war in Sudan's South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

The EU (the European Commission and Member States) has provided humanitarian funding of over €377 million since 2014 – more than one third of all donors' contributions. This goes toward food aid, treatment of severely malnourished children, emergency health series, safe water and shelter. Refugees from South Sudan in other countries also receive EU support.

The event:

- In Ethiopia on Thursday 23 April, Commissioner Stylianides will meet representatives of UN agencies and humanitarian organisations to discuss how the international aid community is responding to the needs of refugees from South Sudan. During his meetings with the Ethiopian authorities, the Commissioner would listen to and discuss their views and concerns on the regional crisis and will convey Europe's solidarity with both the refugees and the communities that host them. The peace process will also be on the Commissioner's agenda during meetings with diplomats from EU Member States in Addis Ababa.
- In South Sudan, the Commissioner will meet representatives of the government, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG) and head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Ellen Margrethe Loej, humanitarian organisations and the diplomatic community. Alongside his official programme in Juba, Commissioner Stylianides will visit humanitarian projects funded by the EU. A press conference is foreseen for Saturday afternoon (25 April).
- EbS will cover the visit.

The sources:

- Factsheet on Ethiopia: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/ethiopia_en.pdf
- Factsheet on South Sudan: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/south-sudan_en.pdf
- Factsheet on the Horn of Africa:
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/hoa_en.pdf

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