

Delegation of the European Union to South Africa
Europe Day: Speech by Ambassador Sandra Kramer
9 May 2025

1. Honourable Deputy Minister Nel, our guest of honour,
Excellencies,
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,
Representatives of the private sector, civil society and other
partners,
Colleagues and Friends,
2. On behalf of the European Union and its Member States accredited
to South Africa, it is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to our
Europe Day celebration.
3. Seventy-five years ago, Robert Schuman, the father of what is now
called the European Union, said: *“Europe will not be made all at
once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete
achievements which first create a de facto solidarity”*.
4. And this is how a small community of just 6 countries dealing with
coal and steel created in 1952 has evolved into what is today a
thriving Union of 27 European Member States. With different
languages. Different landscapes. Different humour. Different tastes
– by the way, you can get a taste of all of this today, with Member
States proudly displaying their countries’ culinary specialties.
5. **But all European Union Member States stand united – in their
diversity. And together, we make the European Union more than
the sum of its parts.**
6. Robert Schuman himself was born a German citizen in another
country, Luxembourg, and later nationalised French. Today, millions

of Europeans travel across Europe without the need for a passport or the need to change currency. Italians study in The Netherlands; Dutch marry Spanish; and they open their businesses and build their families in Belgium. This is the power of the European Union. A single open space where 450 million people share a European citizenship in addition to their own national identity; and can travel, study and work freely across its many countries.

7. **On Europe Day, we celebrate the values that unite us:** We are committed to peace, partnership, and cooperation. Within our borders and worldwide. We are a reliable and predictable partner. We seek to promote dialogue, stability, prosperity, democracy and human rights. And we invest in mutually beneficial relations – based on trust and respect.

It is this unity that we wish to celebrate today, together with our South African hosts and friends. We believe that our partnership matters more than ever. In this ever more interconnected world, a world where our fates are linked, we need to concentrate on doing more together.

8. Besides our values, **South Africa and Europe are united by common passions.** By our great literature. By our love of sports. By our beautiful nature, and our excellent wines. Both our unions are built on overcoming conflict and suffering. **We are both united in diversity.**
9. South Africa and the EU **share many objectives,** above all to make our societies more resilient, more competitive, more prosperous and more sustainable.

In this context I would like to highlight the role of our European private sector in South Africa. A community of over 1,200 European

companies providing local employment to 500,000 South Africans and adding huge local value to the South African economy.

Because the EU is not just South Africa's largest trade and investment partner. What makes our relationship so special is that South Africa's majority of exports to the EU take the form of finished or semi-finished products, from cars, to heavy equipment to chemicals.

It is a sustainable win-win model benefiting our societies.

10. It is also in this context that South Africa can count on the EU's **full support for its important G20 presidency**. And our continents are intent on working closer together, with the seventh **European Union and the African Union** Summit scheduled hopefully later this year.

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Dear friends,

11. The world is **changing rapidly**. Some of the changes bring the promise of a better future; while other changes pose a challenge to us and next generations.
12. But we have no doubt that the best answer to these changes is more cooperation and friendship. The relationship between South Africa and the European Union is testament to that. Our partnership is based on the same values that we celebrate today: Democracy, human rights and equality.
13. And in recent months, we have strengthened the already close ties between our nations and our citizens. In other words: **We are not just partners, we are strategic allies** – as confirmed 2 months back,

when our leaders, President of the European Council, António Costa, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, came to Cape Town to meet with President Cyril Ramaphosa.

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14. Despite many complex challenges, **this is a time for opportunity**. An opportunity to strengthen our cooperation and friendship. **An opportunity to shape a world that is more fair, sustainable, prosperous, and secure**. Building on the values that we celebrate today and that unite us.
15. **Thank you to each one of you for coming today. We hope that you will enjoy our event**. Make sure to check out all the wonderful stalls of our EU Member States. You can get your photo taken on a Dutch bike and try Slovakian wine, among many other things. Just don't ride the bike after you've tried the wine.
16. Before handing over to Deputy Minister Nel, I would like to wholeheartedly thank my team in the EU Delegation for their outstanding work and for organising this event so brilliantly. And of course to thank my colleagues EU Ambassadors for their continued strong cooperation and friendship. We are a great team!

Happy Europe Day!