

## Visit to Pretoria and Johannesburg 25-29 February 2008

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It was my first ever trip to South Africa and I had been forewarned not to expect too much by way of European Union Studies in their university system. However, the EU is South Africa's largest trading partner and its largest aid donor, so there is every reason for them to have some academic interest. Indeed, I found a great interest and a very warm response in the universities I visited to the kind of work we are doing in Leiden and in our interdisciplinary approach. I also had the opportunity to give a couple of seminars and to lecture a class of 4<sup>th</sup> year Law students



I did not really have many expectations before the visit. However, Pretoria doesn't really *feel* like Africa. There are areas that look like the black districts of American cities (with fewer whites) and areas that would not look out of place in the wealthier areas of the British shires (but with more blacks, mostly manning petrol pumps). The universities were mixed, but the individual groups of students were not – blacks stayed with blacks, but even the whites could be grouped as Africans- and English-speaking. As if to emphasize this incomplete integration, a scandal erupted while I was there – in Bloomfontein University white students had produced a video to demonstrate their resistance to integrating university residences by showing initiation rituals degrading the black cleaning staff. The anger, I was pleased to note crossed all the racial divides.



I left with a good impression over the vibrancy of university life, the priority given by the government to higher education and to the dedication (and hope and vision) of the students I met. And on my last day, I did get to see some of the famed wild-life.

