

REGIONS:

ASIA

◆ China

- ▶ EU and China clash on arms and human rights By Honor Mahony (12.05.05)

◆ Nepal

- ▶ Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the announcement by the political parties in Nepal of the achievement of a joint position (13.05.05)

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

◆ Russia

- ▶ 15th EU-Russia, Moscow, 10 May 2005, Press Release (10.05.05)

◆ Central Asia

- ▶ Nicolas Schmit: "The European Union believes that our relationship with Central Asia is of tremendous importance" (11.05.05)

◆ Turkey

- ▶ European Court to rule on Kurdish rebel leader case – By Elitsa Vucheva (11.05.05)

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

◆ Lebanon

- ▶ European Union deploys Election Observation Mission to Lebanon for the upcoming Parliamentary Elections (10.05.05)

THEMATIC :

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

◆ Terrorism

- ▶ EU launches five-year security plan - By Elitsa Vucheva (11.05.05)

IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

ASSOCIATION / COOPERATION COUNCIL MEETINGS

26 may 2005

- ◆ EU- Chile Association Council
- ◆ EU- Mexico Joint Council

THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

18 May 2005

- ◆ EU- ECOWAS (Troika)

26 may 2005

- ◆ EU- Central America (Troika)

31 may 2005

- ◆ EU- Arab Group (Troika)
- ◆ EU- Israel (Troika)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

◆ Plenary Session

- 25-26 May 2005 (Brussels)
- 6-9 June 2005

◆ Committee on Foreign Affairs

- 23 May 2005
- 14 June 2005

◆ Subcommittee on Human Rights

- 16 June 2005
- 23 June 2005

◆ Subcommittee on Security and Defence

- 26 May 2005
- 16 June 2005

◆ **Committee on Development**

- 23 May 2005
- 16 June 2005
- 20 June 2005

◆ **Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality**

- 26 May 2005
- 20 June 2005

◆ **Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs**

- 24 May 2005
- 26 May 2005
- 13 June 2005
- 20 June 2005

OMCT-Europe Weekly Newsletter 2005 No. 19, 09 -15.05.2005

SUMMARY

REGIONS:

ASIA

◆ China

- ▶ EU and China clash on arms and human rights By Honor Mahony (12.05.05)

Brussels and Beijing have crossed swords over the issue of human rights in China, as both sides try to find a compromise on lifting the EU's arms embargo on the country.

According to agency reports, **the EU delegation visiting Beijing handed over a list of four human rights demands, including the release of demonstrators imprisoned after the 1989 massacre in Tiananmen Square.**

The list also included signing the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

"One of the questions that would improve the climate would certainly be if China came up with the ratification of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights", said external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, according to AFP.

"Of course, for instance, the release of detainees from Tiananmen Square would certainly also be very well looked at", she added.

However, **any linkage between human rights and the lifting of the arms embargo was rejected by the Chinese.**

"Linking this problem with the issue of human rights does not have any reason and is not helpful", Li Zhaoxing, China's foreign minister said, according to the UK's Telegraph.

"As to the question of lifting the arms embargo, which is outdated and helpful to no one, this is something that will benefit everyone and not harm anyone", he said.

The EU imposed the arms embargo after the Tiananmen Square massacre but has recently considered lifting it - a move pushed by France and Germany.

However, **the US strongly opposes lifting the embargo, fearing that EU weapons technology will get into Chinese hands, and has made its objections public on several occasions.**

US opposition plus a recent Chinese "anti-secession law" providing the legal basis for an attack on Taiwan if the island declares itself independent has slowed momentum for lifting the embargo considerably.

"Certainly the anti-secession law has not been helpful with regard to the question of lifting the arms embargo. Again, it's about the right climate", said Mrs Ferrero-Waldner.

EU leaders originally expected to decide on lifting the embargo in June.

But the move has slipped off next month's agenda, and is unlikely to resurface under the presidency of the UK - a close US ally - which starts on 1 July.

<http://www.euobserver.com/?aid=19047> (EN)

◆ Nepal

- ▶ Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the announcement by the political parties in Nepal of the achievement of a joint position (13.05.05)

The EU welcomes the announcement by the political parties in Nepal that they had achieved a **joint position**, which they published on 8 May. The EU hopes that these efforts will be the **foundation of a dialogue between the political parties and the King**. The EU urges both the King and the political parties to show flexibility in initiating this dialogue and in reviving the democratic process.

The EU strongly believes that **the development of multi-party democracy in Nepal must be an essential part of any acceptable and sustainable resolution of the current conflict**. The EU takes this opportunity to recall the need to respect civil and political rights. **It urges both the government and the Maoists to respect human rights, and condemns violations from any quarter**. The EU will continue to watch developments in Nepal with close interest.

http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/84853.pdf (EN)

◆ **Russia**

- ▶ 15th EU-Russia, Moscow, 10 May 2005, Press Release (10.05.05)

The fifteenth EU-Russia Summit took place in Moscow on 10 May 2005. (...)

Further to a decision at the EU/Russia Summit in St. Petersburg on 31 May 2003 to create in the long term a **Common Economic Space**, a **Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice**, a **Space of Co-operation in the field External Security**, as well as a **Space of Research and Education**, including Cultural Aspects, in the framework of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA), the leaders of the EU and Russia today adopted a single package of road maps for the creation of the four Common Spaces. These Road Maps set out shared objectives for EU/Russia relations as well as the actions necessary to make these objectives a reality, and determine the agenda for co-operation between the EU and Russia for the medium-term (...)

Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice

The underlying principles of the common space of freedom, security and justice are **democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including free and independent media and the effective application of common values by independent judicial systems**. Work on this space will see adoption in the near future of **agreements on readmission and visa facilitation**, which together will promote greater contact between the citizens of the EU and Russia via travel and tourism as well as facilitate business and official travel. The EU will continue to examine with Russia the conditions for visa-free travel as a long-term perspective. The regular **EU/Russia consultations on human rights**, which were successfully launched in March, fall within this space, as does **co-operation on combating terrorism, organised crime and corruption**.

Common Space of External Security

The road map for the Common Space of External Security underlines the **shared responsibility of the EU and Russia for an international order based on effective multilateralism**, their determination to co-operate to **strengthen the central role of the United Nations**, and promote the role and effectiveness of relevant international and regional organisations, in particular **the OSCE and the Council of Europe**. Building further on their already on-going co-operation, the EU and Russia will strengthen their co-operation and dialogue on **security and crisis management** in order to address the global and regional challenges and key threats of today, notably **terrorism, the proliferation of WMD, existing and potential regional and local conflicts**. They will give particular attention to **securing international stability**, including in the regions adjacent to Russian and EU borders, where they will co-operate to promote **resolution of frozen conflicts in Europe** (e.g. in Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh), in line with UN and OSCE commitments. The EU will continue to provide support through **humanitarian assistance, economic rehabilitation, confidence building and efforts to tackle poverty and human rights abuses** (...)

<http://www.eu2005.lu/en/actualites/communiqués/2005/05/10eu-ru/index.html> (EN)

Full text of the document: http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/84815.pdf

◆ **Central Asia**

- ▶ Nicolas Schmit: "The European Union believes that our relationship with Central Asia is of tremendous importance" (11.05.05)

The Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Nicolas Schmit, spoke about the situation in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia during the plenary session of the European Parliament held in Strasbourg on Wednesday, 11 May 2005.

The Kyrgyzstani presidential elections are to be held on 10 July 2005. In this regard, Minister Schmit stated: "The main message coming from the international community during this presidential

campaign should emphasise **the importance of holding free and impartial elections**. The simple fact that elections are being held does not automatically guarantee a fully matured democratic process. A number of question marks remain over the political agenda, particularly with regard to constitutional reform (...) As an international entity, the European Union would like to encourage stability and security in Kyrgyzstan and the wider region, and is pleased to note that the new administration in the country has successfully maintained good relations with neighbouring countries." With this in mind, the Minister recalled **that the European Commission recently announced its intention to set aside 25 million euro for Kyrgyzstan in 2005**.

As for the situation in Central Asia, Nicolas Schmit stated that **"the European Union believes that the relationships between countries in the region are of paramount importance, and the European Union is prepared to support the transition of these countries**. A number of different factors create an atmosphere of uncertainty around the countries in the region. **The biggest threats to regional stability in Central Asia are the lack of economic reforms and, in some cases, the widespread presence of corruption, organised crime and drug trafficking. Increased poverty and a lack of growth in Central Asian countries have increased socio-economic tension."**
<http://www.eu2005.lu/en/actualites/communiqués/2005/05/11pe-schmit1/index.html> (EN)

◆ Turkey

- ▶ European Court to rule on Kurdish rebel leader case – By Elitsa Vucheva (11.05.05)

The European Court of Human rights is on Thursday (12 May) to deliver a judgement on the politically sensitive case of Abdullah Öcalan, the Kurdish rebel leader arrested by Turkish police in 1999.

Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the outlawed Turkish Kurd paramilitary group, the PKK, was arrested by Turkish police in Kenya, in February 1999 and sentenced to death by hanging in June of the same year.

However, **his death sentence was reversed to life imprisonment in 2002, after Turkey decided to abolish the death penalty in peacetime**.

The Kurdish leader's lawyers are calling for the Court to order a **retrial**, primarily based on arguments that **Mr Öcalan's detention has been illegal and inhumane, and that the trial he faced in Turkey was unfair**.

Mr Öcalan's case is politically very sensitive as **Turkey views him as a terrorist** responsible for the killings of thousands of people during the years-long war between the PKK and the Turkish security forces.

For many Kurds, however, Abdullah Öcalan remains a hero.

Freedom or status quo?

On Wednesday (11 May), Kurds from different countries, but mostly from Turkey, came to Brussels to demonstrate against Mr Öcalan's detention and to call for their leader to be freed. (...)

On the other hand, the Turkish government said it was "relaxed" about the forthcoming ruling, and predicted the Kurdish leader would get the same sentence, even if the Court demanded another trial, according to Turkish press on Wednesday (11 May). (...)

Mr Öcalan's lawyers have expressed fears that the Turkish government will not permit a retrial, even if the Human Rights Court rules in that direction, according to the Turkish paper. (...)

Turkey has been under continuous pressure from the EU to push forward democratic reforms, and progress regarding respect of human rights - particularly if the country wants to open **EU accession negotiations on 3 October** as planned.

In June 2004, it allowed the first -although limited - Kurdish-language broadcasts on state radio and television.

<http://www.euobserver.com/?aid=19040> (EN)

◆ Lebanon

- ▶ European Union deploys Election Observation Mission to Lebanon for the upcoming Parliamentary Elections (10.05.05)

Following an agreement with the Government of the Republic of Lebanon, **the European Commission will deploy this week an EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the Parliamentary elections in Lebanon**, currently scheduled to be held on four days: 29 May, 5, 12, 19 June. The Commission welcomes the prospect of holding genuinely democratic Parliamentary elections, which are a means to reaffirm full sovereignty in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1559. The EU EOM will be led by José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Member of the European Parliament, Member of the EP Committee on Foreign Affairs. The EOM is a further contribution by the European Commission to supporting democracy in the Middle East and Mediterranean region (...)

Through the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as the newly announced Democracy Facility for the Mediterranean region, **the EU seeks to promote democracy, human rights and respect for the rule of law. Election Observation Missions are an important instrument for building confidence in the democratic processes of a country.**

Through their presence and reporting, the observers of an EOM increase the transparency of the electoral process. The European Union has gained a reputation as a major, professional actor in this field, with Missions that are rigorously impartial, and follow a standard methodology, based on non-interference and respect for the law of the land, maintaining a presence throughout the campaign and beyond election day (...)

The mission will assess the whole election process, including the legal framework, the political environment and campaign, electoral preparations, voting and counting as well as the post-election period. The mission will issue a preliminary statement shortly after the elections, and later a final report detailing the findings of the mission and offering recommendations for possible improvement. The funding decision represents a commitment of €1.9 Million from the European Commission's European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights.

The European Commission also supports Lebanese Non-Governmental organisations involved in domestic election observation, voter education and media training on elections.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/550&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (EN)

THEMATIC :

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

◆ Terrorism

- ▶ EU launches five-year security plan - By Elitsa Vucheva (11.05.05)

The EU on Tuesday (10 May) unveiled a **five-year programme to develop closer co-operation between member states in the field of migration policy, but also in the fight against terrorism.** The Action Plan "allows the concrete implementation" of the overall priorities for **Freedom, Justice and Security**, also known as **The Hague Programme**, explained Franco Frattini, the EU justice commissioner.

One of the main priorities is a **common immigration policy by 2010** - in order to achieve this, a policy plan will be presented by the end of this year.

Also, in the next five years, the ten new member states will be "fully integrated" into the Schengen area, lifting all internal border controls.

Another part of the ambitious document calls for **improving the common fight against terrorism**, and making the EU more secure.

According to Commissioner Frattini, **two new aspects will strengthen Europe's security.**

On the one hand closer attention will be paid to **co-operation between member states, with the aim of creating "a sort of European network".**

The **fight against "financial sourcing to terrorism" and "a strategy of protection of critical infrastructure" is also to be developed through international co-operation.**

In order to achieve its goals, the EU will have to considerably increase its spending in this area - it is expected to go from spending 0.5% of the budget to 1.3% by 2013.

Mr Frattini also pointed out that the plan has specific deadlines which the EU intends to reach.

"We say when we will do the things and we set outlines", the Commissioner specified.

He also said that **member states will be monitored adding that the Commission will draw up a report every year listing the initiative member states did or did not undertake.**

"If our initiatives limit themselves to the Commission and the Parliament", but do not take member states into account, "we will be missing a crucial part", Mr Frattini explained.

However, he specified that "this is a political strategy document", meaning that it gives strategies rather than explanations on technical issues.

The document will be examined by EU leaders during their next meeting in June.

<http://www.euobserver.com/?aid=19032> (EN)