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AMERICAS

♦ **Colombia**

- ▶ Parliamentary question: Allocation of funds under the aid programme for uprooted people in Colombia – oral question by María Valenciano Martínez-Orozco to the Commission (18.07.05)

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- 13 September 2005
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REGIONS:

AFRICA

♦ **Somalia**

- ▶ **Council of the European Union: Statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the killing of a peace activist in Somalia** (18.07.05)

The European Union joins others in condemning unequivocally the **brutal murder**, on the morning of 10 July, **of the respected Somali peace and reconciliation activist, Abdulkadir Yahya Ali**. This action deprived Somalia of a person who had worked ceaselessly to help bring stability and good government. The European Union sends its condolences to Yahya's family and friends.

The European Union expresses its deep concern **that this and other concurrent acts of violence could create further tensions within the peace process**. The European Union reiterates its unequivocal support to the Transitional Federal Institutions as the only framework for peace, stability and governance to Somalia. **The European Union appeals to all Somalis to refrain from violent acts and to recognise that inclusive dialogue is the only way to resolve their differences.**

http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/85732.pdf (EN)

AMERICAS

♦ **Colombia**

- ▶ **Parliamentary question: Allocation of funds under the aid programme for uprooted people in Colombia – oral question by María Valenciano Martínez-Orozco to the Commission** (18.07.05)

What guarantees can the Commission provide that **European Union aid for Colombia is not being used to fund the reintegration of members of armed groups** into society when **there is no legal framework that complies with international rules guaranteeing victims' rights to truth, justice and compensation**? Such a framework would enable the EU to provide funding for disarmament and reintegration programmes.

European Union funding granted to Colombia for use in the aid programme for uprooted people **can thus be used**, via the pilot project run by the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, **for the reintegration of demobilised members of paramilitary groups, instead of helping indigenous populations** who were uprooted as a result of the armed conflict return to their homes. Does the Commission have information on this? **Is the Commission checking what happens to funding provided under the aid programme for uprooted people in Colombia?**

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/OM-Europarl?PROG=QT&L=EN&PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+QT+H-2005-0630+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN> (EN)

◆ **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

- ▶ **Council of the European Union: Second meeting of the EU-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia stabilisation and association council** (18.07.05)

The Stabilisation and Association Council (SA Council) between the European Union (EU) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia held its second meeting on Monday 18 July 2005. (...)

The SA Council recalled the conclusions of the European Council of June 2005. It reaffirmed its commitment to **full implementation of the Thessaloniki Agenda**, which emphasises that future of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is within the European Union. Referring to the application for EU membership, the SA Council noted that the Commission is preparing its Opinion and is having an intensive dialogue with the country's authorities for that purpose. (...)

It underlined, however, the need for **continued efforts in terms of implementation of adopted legislation**. Welcoming the start of the decentralisation process on 1 July 2005, the EU invited the Government to ensure smooth and sustainable transfer of power to the local authorities. The SA Council noted the state of play in the **reform of the police and judiciary, the fight against corruption**, the reforms in the administration, and the EU underlined the need for determined action to meet European standards.

The SA Council noted that **ensuring free and democratic elections**, in accordance with international standards, is an **essential requirement for closer relations with the EU**. In this context, the EU urged the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to implement in a timely manner the recommendations made in the final report of the OSCE-ODIHR on the spring local elections, so that the electoral process is strengthened and in the next elections in 2006 irregularities are not repeated. The EU welcomed **action taken to bring all those responsible for irregularities to justice and the intention of the Government to implement electoral reforms**. (...)

http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/85784.pdf (EN)

◆ **Uzbekistan**

- ▶ **Council of the European Union: Council conclusions on Uzbekistan** (18.07.05)

1. The Council remains profoundly concerned about the situation in Uzbekistan **and condemns the Uzbek authorities' refusal to allow an independent international enquiry into the recent events in Andijan**.

2. The Council **recalls its Conclusions of May 23 and June 13 and regrets the fact that Uzbek authorities did not reconsider their position** by the given deadline of the end of June.

3. The Council is particularly concerned with the conclusions of the ODIHR and OHCHR reports on the events in Andijan. The Council recalls the need for a credible, comprehensive and transparent independent international enquiry and will coordinate the necessary steps in that direction with the UN, OSCE and other relevant international organizations. In this context, the possible use of the Moscow mechanism of the OSCE is being considered.

4. **EU-Uzbekistan relations are based on mutual respect for the principles of democracy, rule of law and human rights**, which are enshrined in the EU-Uzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement as well as other international agreements. **The Council condemns the Uzbek leadership for breaching these principles** in the light of the reported excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Uzbek security forces during the Andijan events. (...)

The Council has decided that **all bilateral ministerial contacts** of the EU and its Member States with President Karimov and his government **should include strong messages on the importance of respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Uzbekistan.**

7. The Council requests relevant Council bodies to follow closely the situation in Uzbekistan and to recommend subsequent measures as appropriate. In particular, they should keep under review the case for suspension of further elements of the EU-Uzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, **the introduction of an embargo on exports to Uzbekistan of arms, military equipment and equipment which might be used for internal repression as well as other targeted measures.**

8. The Council is ready to re-examine these measures as soon as the Uzbek authorities have proven their readiness to allow an independent international enquiry into the events in Andijan of 13 May last, thus demonstrating their willingness to adhere to the principles of respect for human rights, rule of law and fundamental freedoms. (...)

10. The Council **remains concerned about the situation of the Uzbek refugees** in the Kyrgyz Republic and calls on the Kyrgyz and Uzbek authorities to respect their international commitments and abide by international norms concerning the protection of refugees and asylum seekers."

http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/GAERC_Conclusions_Uzbekistan_18July0.pdf (EN)

◆ **Kazakhstan**

- ▶ **Council of the European Union: Seventh meeting of the Cooperation Council between the European Union and Kazakhstan** (19.07.05)

The Cooperation Council between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Kazakhstan held its seventh meeting on Tuesday 19 July 2005. (...)

The Cooperation Council reaffirmed the desire to see **EU - Kazakhstan relations continue to strengthen** politically, economically and commercially, especially in the context of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Kazakhstan and the EU.

The Cooperation Council **emphasised the need for increased efforts by the Kazakhstan's authorities to comply fully with international norms and standards, including those of OSCE, in the fields of rule of law, democracy and human rights, in particular as regards elections, freedom of media, the ability of political parties to operate freely and the registration of NGOs with the public authorities.**

The Cooperation Council expressed its expectation that the **forthcoming Presidential elections in Kazakhstan should be fair and in line with international standards.** The Cooperation Council noted that any country applying for the chairmanship of the OSCE must exemplify the principles of the Organisation.

The Cooperation Council called on Kazakhstan to improve border and migration management and reiterated the need to **tackle terrorism in accordance with the fundamental principles of human rights and international standards,** especially by strengthening legislation on money laundering and optimizing all existing instruments. (...)

http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/85788.pdf (EN)

◆ **Georgia**

- ▶ **EU statement on Georgia and the Batumi Conference** (21.07.05)

The EU welcomes the initiative of the Georgian government in hosting the international conference in Batumi on 10 July 2005 to continue active cooperation in the interest of a political settlement of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict. The EU hopes that this initiative will provide **new impetus to the peace process** and, in this context, reiterates its view **that the conflict must be solved exclusively by peaceful means.** In the process of political settlement, active cooperation among all parties remains

indispensable. The EU therefore regrets that representatives from the South Ossetian region of Georgia did not participate in the conference. We suggest that the results of the conference should be brought to the attention of the authorities in South Ossetia and encourage them to participate in any further initiatives.

The EU welcomes all efforts aimed at the **prevention of any further escalation of the conflict**, including full implementation of the demilitarisation agreements which were reached between the sides previously. The EU underlines the importance of demilitarisation of the region as a basis for the peace process and calls upon both sides to proceed with full demilitarisation without delay. (...)

The EU believes that **respect for democratic values, the rule of law and human rights constitutes a significant prerequisite for a viable, peaceful and durable settlement of Georgia's internal conflicts**. Therefore the EU expresses readiness to support further political, economic and administrative reforms in Georgia. (...)

<http://www.eu2005.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1107293561746&a=KArticle&aid=1119527650215&date=2005-07-21> (EN)

◆ **Ukraine**

- ▶ **PACE rapporteur investigates disappearances on newborn children** (21.07.05)

A PACE rapporteur is to visit Ukraine to investigate claims **that newborn babies are disappearing in mysterious circumstances**. German media reported that two babies born in a clinic in Kharkov at the end of 2002 were taken away from their mothers a few hours after being born. Medical staff later declared that they had died of complications, but their **parents were never given access to their bodies** despite repeated requests. Several fetuses and bodies of newborn babies whose organs had been removed were subsequently discovered at the clinic's biological waste site, according to the reports. **One Ukrainian NGO believes up to 300 similar disappearances may have occurred between 2001 and 2003**. Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold (Switzerland, SOC), who is in Ukraine from 31 August to 1 September, will visit the clinic and speak with staff as well as the NGO concerned and Ukraine's health minister and ombudsman.

<http://assembly.coe.int/default.asp> (EN)

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

◆ **Iran**

- ▶ **Parliamentary question: The new President of the Republic of Iran implicated in terrorist acts – oral question by Paulo Casaca to the Council** (18.07.05)

The press has reported a number of allegations that the newly appointed **President of the Islamic Republic of Iran was involved in terrorist acts**, in particular the attack on the **US Embassy in 1979** when diplomats were taken hostage, **the murder of political prisoners in Iranian prisons in the early 1990s** and **planning the assassination of political dissidents in Europe throughout the 1990s**.

Can the **Council** say **what steps it has already taken to investigate these allegations?**

Can it say whether it **considers its statements regarding the fight against terrorism compatible with the support that it has repeatedly given to the authorities in Teheran**, especially its assurance that it is ready to work with the new President of Iran?

◆ Israel- Palestine

▶ Council of the European Union: Council Conclusions on Middle East process – Disengagement (18.07.05)

"1. The Council recalled the **declaration of the European Council of 16-17 June 2005** which stressed the global strategic importance of peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean and the European commitment to the resolution of the Middle East conflict.

It recalled its **support for the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza** and parts of the northern West Bank, in line with the framework outlined in the conclusions of the European Council of March 2004 and as an initial stage towards achieving a fair, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. (...)

2. The Council expressed its grave **concern** at the **recent escalation in violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories**. The Council **condemned unreservedly the recent terrorist attacks on Israel** that have resulted in a number of Israeli fatalities and injuries. The Council also **condemned violence by Palestinian militants against Palestinian security personnel**. (...)

3. The Council **commended the political courage shown by the leaders of the two sides** with regard to the withdrawal from Gaza and certain parts of the northern West Bank. The Council stressed the **importance of a successful disengagement** and noted that only one month remains until it is scheduled to start. The Council reaffirmed the need for both parties to the conflict to make every effort to take advantage of the opportunity presented by disengagement. The Council **urged Israel to ensure withdrawal was complete and co-ordinated with the Palestinians and the international community**. The Council called for intensified co-ordination between Israel and the Palestinians, which is central to achieving tangible results, especially with regard to the crucial issues of access to and from the Gaza Strip. (...)

6. The Council **urged the Palestinian Authority to step up its efforts to ensure a secure environment** in which its citizens' own needs for law and order are met. The Council reiterated its commitment to contributing to **the development of Palestinian security capacity through the Palestinian Civil Police**, in co-ordination with US Security Co-ordinator General Ward. The Council also agreed in principle that EU support to the Palestinian Civil Police should take the form of an ESDP mission building on the work of the EU Co-ordination Office for Palestinian Policing Support in cooperation with all the parties concerned. (...)"

http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/GAERC_Conclusions_MiddleEast_18July.pdf (EN)

◆ Afghanistan

▶ Council of the European Union: Conclusions Afghanistan (18.07.0)

"The Council welcomes the planned deployment of an EU Election Observer Mission to Afghanistan in late July. The Parliamentary and **Provincial elections on 18 September 2005** mark a further milestone in **Afghanistan's democratic development and the EU will do its utmost to monitor and assist the successful holding of the elections** in a secure environment. In this regard, some EU Member States will deploy troops with UN authorisation and under NATO command. (...)"

<http://www.eu2005.gov.uk/servlet/ServletFront?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1107293561746&a=KArticle&aid=1119525417649&date=2005-07-18> (EN)

THEMATIC :

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

◆ Children's rights

- ▶ Parliamentary question: Measures to protect children and young people from social exclusion – oral question by Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou to the Commission (18.07.05)

The percentage of young people in Europe is expected to fall considerably in the coming decades. It is a general realisation that **large numbers of children are living in European countries in conditions of poverty and social exclusion.**

Will the Commission propose **measures to safeguard in law the right of disadvantaged social groups** of young people to take part in the Community acquis and will it take particular **measures to improve their living conditions, education and vocational development so that they do not become victims of exploitation?**

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/OM-Europarl?PROG=QT&L=EN&PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+QT+H-2005-0653+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN> EN)

◆ Discrimination

- ▶ Gender discrimination and health systems (19.07.05)

Gender has an enormous impact on health, as much as age or socio-economic differences. The need for a better understanding of this issue was the subject of an own-initiative **report on gender discrimination and the health system adopted on 14 July by Parliament's Women's Rights Committee.** (...)

A key step is to make health sector workers aware of the role of gender in determining the individual's health. This means including education on gender disparities in the training of healthcare staff. Knowledge of support techniques is essential to help female victims of violence. The committee also wants EU policies and programmes to give priority to preventing female genital mutilation and prosecuting the perpetrators.

All publicly funded health services should provide good healthcare and social security services on equal terms, say MEPs. However, the rapporteur points out that this is not always the case, (...)

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+NR-20050714-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N#SECTION5> (EU)

◆ Terrorism

- ▶ OSCE supplementary Human Dimension on Human Rights and the Fight Against Terrorism – EU Closing Statement (19.07.05)

(...) The European Union has listened carefully to the statements and recommendations delivered by experts, keynote speakers, NGOs and delegations, and will study them in detail.

In the meantime, the EU would like to table some initial recommendations, flowing from this meeting.

(...) The EU recommends that the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana endorse the Council of Europe Guidelines on Protecting Human Rights in the Fight Against Terrorism. To that end we encourage the Informal Group of friends of the CiO on combating terrorism to initiate discussions on that

endorsement.

We call on participating **States to ensure that their national measures to combat terrorism comply fully with their international human rights obligations**, and co-operate fully with OSCE, CoE and UN bodies and to make all efforts to join and implement relevant international conventions.

Fair trial standards should be upheld in all circumstances, including in cases of alleged terrorism, and the role of defence lawyers should be respected. (...)

The EU also recommends that participating States sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture at the earliest opportunity, and invites all states' parties that have not yet done so to make the declaration provided for in Articles 21 and 22 of the Convention.

The EU urges participating States **not to expel, return (*refouler*), extradite or in any other way transfer a person to another state where there are substantial grounds for believing that the person would be in danger of being subjected to torture.**

The EU also urges participating States to ensure that any statement, that is established to have been made as a result of torture shall not be invoked as evidence in any criminal proceedings, except against a person accused of torture as evidence that the statement was made.

The EU encourages all participating States to publicly express, at a high level, **their abhorrence for the crime of torture, and to ensure that it is never countenanced in any circumstances, including in the fight against terrorism.**

In **rejecting the identification of terrorism with any particular religion** or belief, all participating States should protect the right to freedom of religion or belief, and promote inter and intra-faith dialogue. In this regard, I would like to recall the Berlin, Brussels and Cordoba declarations.

OSCE institutions and field operations should continue **to promote freedom of the media**, as well as acting as early warning mechanisms when the media itself is an aggravating factor in promoting tension.

Participating States should strengthen their **dialogue and cooperation with NGOs and other human rights defenders** in fostering a vibrant civil society able to stand up for human rights and to oppose terrorism. At the same time, participating states should cooperate with civil society in the implementation of OSCE Permanent Council decision number 618 on solidarity with victims of terrorism. (...)

<http://www.eu2005.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1107293561746&a=KArticle&aid=1119525450477&date=2005-07-18> (EN)

◆ Austria

▶ Council of Europe Anti-Torture Committee publishes new report on Austria (21.07.05)

Allegations of **physical ill-treatment of criminal suspects by the police**, shortcomings in the **right of access to a lawyer** as well as **overcrowding** as a significant challenge for the **Austrian prison system** are the **main findings of a new report issued today by the CPT** (European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment). The Committee also severely **criticised** the regime under which **foreign nationals are usually held in detention centres for foreigners** ("**Schubhaft**"). The report was drawn up after a visit of 11 Austrian police establishments, three prisons and a psychiatric hospital in April 2004.

The forms of physical ill-treatment by the police alleged **concerned slaps, kicks, blows to the head with a telephone book as well as the combined use of hand and ankle cuffs**. Of particular concern to the CPT are allegations made by a number of **juvenile detainees** – sometimes as young as 14 - of **physical ill-treatment and threats in order to obtain confession**. As regards the **right of access to a lawyer**, the CPT has **welcomed the introduction of new provisions in Austrian law**. However, the 2004 visit revealed that these provisions **still do not fully comply with European standards**. Apart from the general overcrowding in Austrian prisons, the CPT report states the **lack of activities: it was**

commonplace for most of the remand prisoners to spend up to 23 hours a day confined to their cells.

http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Press/News/NoteRedac2005/20050721_cpt.asp (EN)

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

◆ Cooperation

▶ EU should cooperate more with US in Mediterranean region

MEPs are **disappointed** with the results achieved since the **Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was set up ten years ago** in order to strengthen the political dialogue between the EU and Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. At two hearings, (...) there was disappointment in particular with the **lack of political reforms and economic progress**. (...) Sandrine Grenier of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network said: "*We are rather disappointed, all of us. We haven't seen a huge improvement.*" She added that the **declarations and documents have not been followed up in the human rights field**. Ms Grenier held out more hope for action at regional level: "*The bilateral dimension shows more progress, as with the working groups with Morocco and Jordan.*" (...)

The EU's "soft" approach would thus appear not to be working satisfactorily, but neither is the American approach achieving success. **It would therefore be advisable for the EU and the US to work far more closely together**, MEPs said, although with each maintaining its own approach.

Other issues raised during the hearings were **better education, especially for adults and women, better cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean countries on immigration issues and economic cooperation**.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+NR-20050714-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N#SECTION6> (EN)