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REGIONS:

AFRICA

Sudan

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU concerning the Juba Peace Process**
(06/02/2008)

The European Union is encouraged by the progress achieved so far in the peace process and welcomes the resumption of the negotiations in Juba on 30 January. The EU is pleased to note the improved security situation for the population in Northern Uganda and Southern Sudan, which suffered heavily during the conflict. This will facilitate the return of IDPs.

For the first time in many years, there is now a real chance for reconstruction and long-term development in Northern Uganda. We welcome the Ugandan government's commitment to this through the Peace, Development and Recovery Plan. The EU remains a reliable and committed partner to Uganda's development.

The EU commends the work of the Government of Southern Sudan, especially Vice-President Dr. Rieck Machar and of the UN Special Envoy Joaquim Chissano, who both have played a crucial role. They can count on the EU's continued strong support.

The EU notes that the immediate extension of the "cessation of hostilities agreement" is a positive and important development. The EU hopes that this signals a commitment from both sides to reaching an early and peaceful conclusion to the peace process. As a confidence building measure, the EU calls on the LRA to release women and children.

The EU attaches great importance to reaching a peace deal which provides both peace and justice, paves the way for reconciliation and is compatible with the wishes of the local communities, national law and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Credible accountability mechanisms are necessary, in particular for the most serious human rights violations.

Several EU Member States, and the European Commission, Canada and Norway have made important financial contributions in support of the peace talks and redevelopment of northern Uganda.

The EU hopes that a final agreement will be signed shortly so that the conflict comes to a definite end.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0206MZZ_Juba.html

AMERICAS

ASIA

Timor Leste

- ▶ **EU Presidency statement on the assassination attempts in Timor Leste**

The European Union follows the situation in Timor-Leste with deep concern following the attempts to assassinate the President and the Prime Minister.

The EU Presidency firmly condemns these assassination attempts on Timor-Leste's democratically elected leaders. These attempts only strengthen the EU's firm determination to support Timor-Leste's institutions and its development in order to protect its future.

It is the EU's firm belief that Timor-Leste's people want security, peace and reconciliation. The situation underlines the essential task performed by the United Nations Police and the International Stabilisation Force.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0211MZZ_Timor-Leste.html

Timor Leste

- ▶ **Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, condemns the assassination attempts in Timor Leste** (11/02/2008)

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security policy (CFSP), issued the following statement after today's attempts to assassinate Timor Leste's President and Prime Minister:

"I condemn the attempt to assassinate President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao of Timor Leste, the democratically elected leadership of the country, in the strongest possible terms. The EU will continue to fully support all Timor Leste people's efforts to further strengthen democratic institutions and national reconciliation."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/declarations/98705.pdf

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Russia

- ▶ **EU Presidency statement on the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission to the Russian Presidential elections** (07/02/2008)

The Presidency regrets that, due to the restrictions contained in the invitation to the 2 March Russian Presidential elections issued by the authorities of RF and subsequent unsuccessful talks between ODIHR and RF authorities, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was put in a situation where it found it impossible to execute its mandate and cancelled the election observation mission. The Presidency expresses its full support to the election observation activities of the ODIHR and to the existing standards and commitments under the Copenhagen document.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0207MZZ_OSCE_ODIHR_Election.html

Serbia

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the signing of an interim political agreement with Serbia** (06/02/2008)

Serbia today informed the Presidency that the planned signing of the interim political agreement between the EU and Serbia would not take place on 7 February 2008, as was first envisaged. After the talks with the Serbian side, it was established that Serbia required additional time to implement all the necessary internal procedures that would allow for the signing of the agreement.

The Presidency underlines that the European Union is prepared to sign the interim political agreement with Serbia. The Presidency hopes that Serbia will soon positively respond to the European offer, which would enable the signing of the agreement in the following days.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/98599.pdf

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Iran

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU concerning death sentences in Iran (07/02/2008)**

The EU condemns the increasing recourse to death sentences and executions in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The EU also reiterates its longstanding opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances. The EU is in favor of the universal abolition of the death penalty and urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to abolish the death penalty, if necessary by initially establishing a moratorium on executions, in line with the UN General Assembly resolution adopted in December 2007 on a Moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

The EU is particularly concerned at the threat of imminent execution facing Ms. Zohreh Kabiri, Ms. Azar Kabiri and Mr. Abdollah Farivar, who have been sentenced to death by stoning. Despite the moratorium on stoning, which the EU was informed of by the Iranian side during the second round of the EU-Iran human rights dialogue in 2003, these punishments remain on the statute books in the Islamic Republic of Iran and sentences are still handed down by judges and carried out in practice. The EU urges the Iranian Government to abolish the use of cruel and degrading punishments and to abolish immediately, in law and in practice, the use of stoning as a method of execution - as called for in the most recent UN General Assembly resolution on the Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, adopted by the General Assembly in December 2007.

The EU is also deeply concerned about three cases of juvenile offenders who have been sentenced to death. The EU notes that this is a direct contravention of the Islamic Republic of Iran's international commitments, specifically the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both clearly prohibiting the execution of minors or people who have been convicted of crimes committed when they were minors. The EU urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with International Law and to immediately halt the executions of Mr Mahyar, Mr Mohammad Latif, Mr. Behnam Zare and of all other juvenile offenders, taking in consideration alternative sentences for juvenile offenders.

The EU is also dismayed at the handing down of death sentences to four Iranians working for the customs authorities at Mehrabad Airport. The crimes of the persons concerned were related to corruption. The EU reminds the Islamic Republic of Iran that under international minimum standards for use of the death penalty, it should only be applied in the case of the most serious crimes. Such crimes do not include those related to corruption. The EU calls for the immediate commutation of all the death sentences handed down in these instances.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0207MZZ_Iran.html

Iran

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the deteriorating situation of the religious minority Baha'i in Iran (07/02/2008)**

The EU expresses its serious concern at the worsening situation of ethnic and religious minorities in Iran, in particular to the plight of the Baha'i. According to reliable reports, the Iranian Judiciary confirmed that 54

Baha'is were sentenced by a court in Shiraz for 'propaganda against the regime'. Three of the convicted Baha'is were sentenced to four years in prison, while 51 were given one year suspended prison terms.

The EU is concerned about the ongoing systematic discrimination and harassment of Baha'is in Iran, including the expulsion of university and high school students, restrictions on employment and anti-Baha'i propaganda campaigns in the Iranian media.

The EU wishes to express its firm opposition to all forms of discrimination, in particular regarding freedom of religion. In this context, the EU urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to release the Baha'i prisoners and stop prosecuting members of the Baha'i minority due to their belief and practice of the Baha'i Faith.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0207MZZ_Baha.html

Israel

► **EU Presidency Statement on the suicide attack in Dimona in Israel** (04/02/2008)

The Presidency of the European Union condemns in the strongest terms the suicide attack perpetrated on 4 February in Dimona. It offers heartfelt condolences to the family of the victim and its sympathy to the injured. This act of terror for which there can be no justification was aimed at innocent civilians with the goal of undermining the peace process. The Presidency therefore encourages Israel and the Palestinian Authority to pursue with determination the political process agreed in Annapolis.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0204MZZ_Israel.html

THEMATIC :

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EU / UN REFORM

MISCELLANEOUS

Judicial forum between EU member states

► Judicial forum to ease 'mistrust' between EU member states (05/02/2008)

The European Commission on Tuesday (5 February) announced its intention to set up a forum of national experts to help clear up the problems with implementing EU justice law.

To be launched formally in mid-April, the forum will bring senior judges, lawyers, NGOs and victim support organisations under one roof to work out how to deal with EU justice and criminal law already in place and anticipate problem areas for the future.

EU justice commissioner Franco Frattini says the forum will create "a platform for those practitioners that are involved, day-to-day, with the implementation of EU laws in our field [and] allow a mutually productive exchange of ideas."

The main idea behind the new body is to boost "mutual recognition" of the different legal systems across the bloc, something essential if EU judicial and criminal law is to be effective.

A justice spokesperson said it will "clarify the true needs of practitioners and the problems they face possibly in using and in implementing EU justice instruments."

The problem at the moment is that every member state has its own legal system. On top of this, rules vary across the bloc with regard to a number of issues, such as how investigations are started, how evidence is gathered, access to justice for citizens, the treatment of victims and the right to translation and interpretation services.

Progress in harmonising the areas is slow. Extradition rules were shaken up in 2001 with the European Arrest Warrant introduced following the 11 September terrorist attacks, but these took years to be adopted by member states. Meanwhile, it took until last year for national governments to agree to new rules for sharing evidence.

But even once they are agreed, EU laws have not always operated smoothly. Germany and Italy have in the past clashed over attempts by Italian prosecutors, using the arrest warrant, to try and sentence former Nazi agents for crimes committed in Italy during the second world war.

Mistrust and lack of knowledge

Dr Wolfgang Heusel, a German former judge who now works for the Trier-based European Law Academy, says the basic principle of mutual recognition "requires mutual trust, and mutual trust is based on whether you know each other.

"The huge diversity of the judicial systems with the EU which just means that people just do not understand how the common law system [in Britain and Ireland] works, do not know who is competent, and which courts exist and how the whole process goes and vice versa of course."

He adds: "An element that is never really officially admitted, but that we can see in practice is that in the northern countries, there is certainly a higher level of lack of trust regarding the judicial practices in the southern and eastern countries."

This mistrust could come into play when it comes to the arrest warrant, when judges are often in a position of extraditing fellow nationals to member states where they fear human rights guarantees are less stringent.

Another problem, says Dr Heusel, is that because the EU policies in this area have multiplied rapidly from almost nothing prior to 2000 due to the increase in cross-border crime and terrorist threats, many judges and prosecutors are "not really aware of EU law and their competences in general."

For its part, the forum is to meet several times a year - with sub-groups to focus on certain specific issues such as access to legal aid - with the overall intention of creating a "common judicial culture."

<http://euobserver.com/9/25605>

Fundamental Rights Agency

- ▶ **Civil Liberties Committee backs Morten Kjaerum for director of the Fundamental Rights Agency** (12/02/2008)

MEPs in Civil Liberties Committee selected Morten Kjaerum from Denmark as their first choice for director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency on Monday, after a public hearing with the two candidates shortlisted by the European Commission. The other candidate was Dario Carminati. The final choice will be made by the Agency's Management Board.

The first applicant interviewed was Dario Carminati (born in Italy, 1952), a senior UNCHR member with 27 years of experience, currently representative of the Angola delegation. "The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) can become an important step forward to reinforce a global EU vision towards Human Rights", he said. Mr Carminati felt that the agency's priorities should be to provide suggestions and advice on EU legislation and the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, to address emerging national human rights issues and to reduce the gap between citizens, EU institutions and national parliaments by engaging all parties in a fruitful dialogue.

Morten Kjaerum (born in Denmark, 1957), has 23 years of human rights experience and currently directs the Danish Institute for Human Rights. He felt that "the FRA is a good possibility to strengthen human rights" and should be "highly interactive" with the institutional and civil society networks. "I would like to create a

focal point for innovative work, a place you turn to for an inspiring debate", he said. Mr Kjaerum also stressed that, if appointed as director, he would seek new ways to step up dialogue with MEPs, including holding informal workshops on sensitive topics.

National minorities

Asked by Henri Lax (ALDE, FI), and Viktoria Mohacsi (ALDE, HU), about what role the agency should play in improving protection and understanding of national minorities, both candidates agreed that this issue should become one of the FRA's priorities. "Linguistic, cultural, ethnic discrimination... they are all different angles of the same problem. The agency should address all forms of discrimination with a global strategy", said Mr Carminati. Mr Kjaerum added: "we should team up with the related European committees, develop a joint programme and create new mechanisms to promote the rights of minority communities".

Do you dare to name and shame?

Asked by Kathalijne Buitenweg (Greens/EFA, NL), about what to do when a national government breaches human rights and how to deal with criticism of individual EU Member States, Mr Carminati believed that "it is more important to promote the Agency's positive role, developing a constructive dialogue, than to point fingers". Mr Kjaerum observed that "naming and shaming is important but it would never be my first approach. I would only use it if dialogue fails and there are no other means to address the problem".

Counter-terrorism and privacy rights

Magda Kósáná Kovács (PES, HU) asked the Danish candidate about the Agency's justice and security priorities. Mr Kjaerum replied that he was very happy to see that privacy rights are part of the FRA's mandate, noting that "privacy rights are being squeezed by the fight against terrorism" and "we need a profound discussion on this".

For Kinga Gal (EPP-ED, HU) and Ewa Klamt (EPP-ED, DE), key concerns were how to ensure the agency's independence vis-à-vis the Council and other EU institutions and how to improve co-operation with NGOs and civil society. Other issues discussed by various members include how to best to address children's rights, the case of Roma discrimination and the fight for equal opportunities.

The EU Council was to hold similar hearings with both candidates on Monday afternoon. The FRA's management board make the final appointment, taking Council's and Parliament's opinions into account. The FRA was founded in March 2007.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/017-20964-042-02-07-902-20080211IPR20868-11-02-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm

Council of Europe

- ▶ **An international or European treaty is needed for the protection of women against violence** (07/01/2008)

Domestic violence still plagues European societies. In spite of all the international conferences and declarations, women continue to be battered in their own homes. It is apparent that it will take a long time before such ill-treatment is put to an end, but that is why it is even more necessary that further efforts are made now - by both central and local governments. That requires something more than mere political lip-service.

During my country visits I often discuss this issue with leading politicians, most of them men. Some have grasped its importance but others display an unfortunate complacency. They have argued that "there is no

need to discuss this in our country". Not only have they been dismissive about the problem as such; some of them have even volunteered chauvinistic jokes which should belong to the past.

Domestic violence is a problem in every country. Where there are shelters for women who must seek refuge, they have proven to be necessary to prevent worse tragedies. In recent months I have visited such homes in, for instance, Cork (Ireland), Vlorë (Albania) and Graz (Austria) and have been convinced of their value. Residents, both past and present, have explained that the protection and care in these homes became a turning point in their lives.

Though such shelters are often run by engaged non-governmental groups, the authorities have a responsibility to assist and co-operate. Their activities must also be complemented with other protective and social measures – they should be seen as an emergency, temporary solution. Of course, they do not justify that the victim is the one who has to move from the home.

It is in many cases a very difficult step for a woman, sometimes accompanied by her children, to turn to a shelter. Hotlines and telephone help services do provide help and good advice. Health clinics are often the first among services to come into contact with the victims of violence. It is important that personnel there are well trained, gender sensitive and have clear referral systems in place to link to other support sectors. Health care providers should be able to refer the victim to temporary safe housing or counselling, and if need be, to the police.

After-care following the worst crisis period is essential to avoid the risk of repetition. There have been cases of women leaving the protected shelter only to be assaulted again. Decisions on whether or not to restrain the perpetrator are necessary. There should be legal measures in place to exclude offenders from the family home and prevent further harassment where necessary.

Another weak link in the protection chain has been the judicial proceedings in cases where a trial has become unavoidable. Women have been forced to confront their aggressor or rapist in the court room and pushed through cross examinations of the most traumatising nature. Too little has been done to avoid such abusive procedures.

Special attention has to be given to those women most at risk. Staff at the shelters have stressed the particular vulnerability of migrants. A migrant woman who is subjected to domestic violence is unlikely to report the incident to the police for fear of losing her residence status, if it is dependant on her husband's status. Some countries have addressed this concern by allowing victims of domestic violence to apply for permanent residence status irrespective of their spouses support for the application. This is a responsible approach.

Sensitivity to the needs of the victims also calls for comprehensive and accessible services. The victim must be able to overcome all the various difficulties and consequences that violence has caused. Support services must take into account and respond to both the immediate and long term needs of the victim.

Intervention centres which combine comprehensive police, judicial, social and health support should be developed in order for victims to avoid having the burden of going from one institution to the next. This is being tried in Austria with positive results.

Services must be provided without prejudice. We know that some women in need avoid seeking assistance because they fear being stigmatised or blamed. Others have suffered years of abuse and lack the confidence to start a new life on their own.

There is a need for a broad policy framework for the reforms. What ought to be done is already known. Some governments have indeed already started to develop programmes which ought to inspire others:

- There should be a precise and strict legal framework providing a broad definition of violence against women;
- there should be legal provisions or guidelines to enforce the law;
- there should be a well thought-out strategy and an action plan covering both national and local levels which would include preventive and educational measures;
- there should be a programme for education of police, social workers, health workers, teachers and the judiciary which would include training on how to recognise and deal with violence against women;
- Support services should also provide facilities which contribute to rehabilitation and rebuilding of lives.

Such a framework could be enhanced by a comprehensive, international treaty on violence against women. A convention or a protocol with binding standards should of course include measures against domestic violence. The purpose would be to encourage national reforms and thereby also to contribute to the necessary changes in attitude.

The time has come to develop legally binding norms for the prevention, protection and prosecution of violence against women, including measures for the care of victims. A discussion should start on the most effective format of such a treaty, European or international. The aim is clear: zero tolerance.

Thomas Hammarberg

http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Viewpoints/080107_en.asp

Council of Europe

- ▶ **The Commissioner and the Ombudsman of the French Republic jointly organise an international colloquy on the prevention of torture in Europe** (18/01/2008)

Commissioner Hammarberg and the Ombudsman of the French Republic, Jean-Paul Delevoye, organised on January 18th a colloquy on the prevention of torture, with the participation of ombudspersons, heads of national human rights institutions as well as NGO and IGO representatives.

Jointly organized with the French National consultative Commission for Human Rights and the National Council of French Bars, the colloquy focused on the European and UN requirements concerning the implementation of national prevention mechanisms, as envisaged by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against torture, as well as on the possible national responses and their interaction with the existing national institutions.

As of today, only 17 of the 47 Council of Europe Member States have ratified the Optional Protocol, and 7 out of these countries set up a national mechanism.

http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/news2008/080118OPCAT_en.asp

Council of Europe

- ▶ **Europe is moving towards a total ban of domestic violence against children** (21/02/2008)

A majority of the 47 Council of Europe member states have now committed themselves to put an end to all corporal punishment of children. Full prohibition in law has so far been adopted by 18 member states and at

least seven others have publicly pledged to do the same within the near future. If these governments fulfil their commitment, Europe will be more than halfway to universal prohibition. This is welcome progress.

Some positive steps have also been taken in other parts of the world. Last year, New Zealand became the first English-speaking country to prohibit all corporal punishment, including in the family. And so did three Latin American countries: Uruguay, Venezuela and Chile.

They had responded to recommendations in the report of the UN Secretary General's Study on violence against children, submitted to the General Assembly in October 2006. Its main message was that "*no violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable*". It recommended all states to move quickly to prohibit all forms of violence against children, including all corporal punishment, before the end of 2009.

This was another strong challenge to the still fairly widespread opinion that relations inside the family are no matter for outsiders. Already, the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted and ratified by almost every member state of the United Nations, had made clear that there are situations in which authorities have to protect a child from all forms of violence behind the family door.

This is not a zero-sum-game between children and parents. The Convention is very family-friendly, it stresses the absolute importance of a good family environment and the need, in some cases, for community support to parents in crisis. Violence against children is a reflection of family breakdown and calls for the protection of the life, well-being and dignity of the child. This is a major reason why the prevention of domestic violence against children is nowadays recognised as a human rights concern.

The purpose of prohibiting corporal punishment of children is precisely *prevention*. The idea is to encourage a change of attitudes and practice and to promote non-violent methods of child-rearing. An unambiguous message of what is unacceptable is very important. Adults responsible for children are sometimes confused about how to handle difficult situations. The line should simply be drawn between physical or psychological violence on the one hand and non-violence on the other.

The problem is deep and serious. As part of their daily lives, children across Europe and the world continue to be spanked, slapped, hit, smacked, shaken, kicked, pinched, punched, caned, flogged, belted, beaten and battered in the name of "discipline", mainly by adults whom they depend upon.

This violence may be a deliberate act of punishment or just the impulsive reaction of an irritated parent or teacher. Both cases constitute a breach of human rights. Respect for human dignity and the right to physical integrity are universal principles. But despite this, social and legal acceptance of adults hitting children and inflicting other humiliating treatment on them persists.

Corporal punishment of children is often inhuman or degrading, and it invariably violates their physical integrity, demonstrates disrespect for their human dignity and undermines their self-esteem. This sense of deeper damage was described by the Polish doctor, writer and educationalist Janusz Korczak who once said: "There are many terrible things in the world, but the worst is when a child is afraid of his father, mother or teacher".

Special exceptions allowing for some level of violence against children in otherwise universally applicable laws against assault are therefore particularly unfortunate. They also breach the basic human rights principle of equal protection under the law.

The invention of concepts such as "reasonable punishment" and "lawful correction" arises from the perception of children as the property of their parents. Such "rights" are based on the power of the stronger over the weaker and are upheld by means of violence and humiliation.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called in 2004 for a Europe-wide ban of corporal punishment. It stated that “any corporal punishment of children is in breach of their fundamental right to human dignity and physical integrity. The fact that such corporal punishment is still lawful in certain member states violates their equally fundamental right to the same legal protection as adults. Striking a human being is prohibited in European society and children are human beings. The social and legal acceptance of corporal punishment of children must be ended.”

Progress has been made since then, but some member states have not acted upon this suggestion or those from the UN study. In order to encourage further discussion, I have been in correspondence with the government heads of those member states which have yet to reform their laws adequately.

Their responses give a hint that further progress is possible. In fact, no one defended the use of corporal punishment. Seven indicated that reforms to prohibit all corporal punishment were in progress. Some of the others replied that their existing law was sufficient, but demonstrated an open attitude towards further progress and considering explicit reform.

Of course, eliminating corporal punishment requires more than legal reform. Sustained public education and awareness-raising of the law and of children’s right to protection is required, together with promotion of positive, non-violent relationships with children. The Council of Europe programme “Building a Europe for and with children” is promoting the abolition of corporal punishment through law reform, the promotion of positive parenting and awareness-raising efforts likely to change public attitudes and behaviours.

Children have had to wait the longest to be given equal legal protection from deliberate assaults – a protection the rest of us take for granted. It is extraordinary that children, whose developmental state and small size is acknowledged to make them particularly vulnerable to physical and psychological harm, have been singled out for less protection from assaults on their fragile bodies, minds and dignity.

Challenging legal and social acceptance of violence has been a fundamental part of women’s struggle for equal status. The same applies to children: there could not be a more symbolic reflection of children’s persisting low status as property than adults’ assumption of their “right” and even “duty”, to hit children.

Thomas Hammarberg

http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Viewpoints/080121_en.asp

Council of Europe

- ▶ **Serious human rights violations during anti-terror campaign must be corrected - and never repeated** (04/02/2008)

Thomas Hammarberg condemns the illegal methods used during the US-led "war on terror" and call for a reparation of serious human rights violations occurred during anti-terror campaigns. “The full truth about European cooperation with the secret detention and unlawful rendition programmes must be exposed” says the Commissioner. “Victims must be granted reparation and decisions must be taken to ensure that these violations will not be repeated”.

<http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Newsletter/latest.asp>

Council of Europe

- ▶ **Rights indivisibility: exchange of views with the European Committee of Social Rights** (04/02/2008)

Commissioner Hammarberg today had an exchange of views with the European Committee of Social Rights. In this occasion, he underlined that the indivisibility of civil, political and social rights should be reaffirmed, in particular during this year, which marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“Recognition of indivisibility of rights should be translated into the ratification of the revised European Social Charter and the acceptance of the collective complaints procedure” he said. A number of issues of common interest were also discussed, namely the justiciability of social rights and the need to harmonise European Union norms with the Council of Europe standards in this field.

http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/news2008/080204ECSR_en.asp

Council of Europe

- ▶ **The Commissioner becomes the main European mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders** (08/02/2008)

Further to a Declaration adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on February 6, the Commissioner has been designated as the main regional mechanism to strengthen the protection of human rights defenders and to promote their activities.

The Declaration foresees, inter alia, a more active role of the Commissioner in this field, recognising the efforts already made in protecting human rights defenders across Europe.

The text was adopted as a result of the work of the Group of Specialists on Human Rights Defenders and the Colloquy “Protecting and Supporting Human Rights Defenders in Europe” co-organised by the Commissioner in November 2006 in Strasbourg.

http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/news2008/080208hrd_en.asp