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Subcommittee on Human Rights

- April, 23, 2007

Subcommittee on security and defence

- May, 2,3, 2007

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

- April , 10,11, 2007

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- April , 11,12, 2007

Committee on budgetary control

- May , 2, 3, 2007

CONFERENCES / EVENTS

REGIONS:

AFRICA

Guinea

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the situation in the Republic of Guinea (2/04/2007)**

The European Union welcomes the formation of a new government of broad consensus in Guinea by Prime Minister Lansana Kouyaté on 28 March, following intense consultations with all the political players, the trade unions and civil society. The mediation efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), represented by the former Head of State of Nigeria, Mr Babangida, and Dr Ibn Chambas, President of the ECOWAS Commission, have once again played their part in bringing about progress towards overcoming the crisis.

The European Union encourages the new government to set about tackling the country's economic and social recovery and improving the human rights situation and the rule of law, and calls upon the dynamic forces in the country to join in the efforts to that end. It also asks the new government to bring fully to light the truth about the violence which has claimed many lives, so as to ensure that the guilty parties do not go unpunished.

The European Union would like to resume dialogue with the new government and is planning to dispatch to Guinea a follow-up mission to the consultations pursuant to Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/April/0402Guinea.html

Somalia

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the situation in Somalia (2/04/2007)**

The Presidency of the European Union reaffirms its grave concern at the renewed and serious outbreaks of fighting in the Somali capital of Mogadishu since 29 March. The Presidency deeply deplores the massive loss of human life, including the death of a Ugandan soldier serving on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), as well as the large number of injuries sustained.

The Presidency calls on all parties to the conflict to respect the ceasefire that has been in place since Sunday, to permanently end hostilities and to conclude an unconditional ceasefire. A ceasefire is the prerequisite for bringing the required humanitarian assistance to the affected population, which is now so urgently needed.

The Presidency again reiterates its conviction that the parties to the conflict can resolve their differences only through dialogue, not with the use of force. The European Union remains ready to support talks to this end.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/April/0402Somalia.html

Somalia

- ▶ **EU High Representative Javier Solana and Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel appeal to all Somali parties to cease hostilities immediately (3/04/2007)**

"We appeal to all the parties to end the fighting immediately and agree on a sustained cease fire. We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian impact of the conflict in Mogadishu and the indiscriminate shelling of heavily populated areas. We urge all parties to respect unequivocally their obligations under international humanitarian law and to allow for humanitarian access to alleviate the suffering of civilians caught in the crossfire.

"Stabilisation of the country can only be achieved through political means. We hence call on all Somali and regional actors to show statesmanship and to speedily return to the path of dialogue and work together for a genuine political process and establish inclusive national and local governance structures particularly in Mogadishu and deliver on the expectations of the Somali people for peace and stability.

"A genuine reconciliation process which accommodates all Somali political forces and clans remains the single most important factor for continued support by the European Union."

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/462&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Egypt

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the constitutional reform process in Egypt (3/04/2007)**

The EU has been actively following the constitutional reform process in Egypt that was finalised by referendum on March 26.

The EU notes that the referendum took place only a few days after parliamentary approval, thus leaving little time for public debate.

The EU encourages reform efforts leading to wider participation of the population in the political process.

The EU will follow very closely developments concerning the foreseen new anti-terrorism law, and expects any new legislation to abide by international standards.

The joint EU-Egypt Priorities for Action set out in the recently adopted EU-Egypt Action Plan are key elements for the relations between both parties. The EU is determined to work with Egypt for their full implementation. The EU reiterates its readiness to contribute to Egypt's reform process by providing support and technical assistance as detailed in the EU-Egypt Action Plan.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/April/0403Egypt.html

Sudan

► **EU Presidency Statement on the attacks in Darfur on members of the AU mission in Sudan** (4/04/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union most strongly condemns the underhand and unprovoked attack on a group of AMIS soldiers on 1 April at a water point in Umbaro, Darfur, in which five Senegalese soldiers lost their lives. The Presidency offers its sincere condolences to the families of the soldiers.

The incident is the latest in a worrying series of attacks on AMIS forces, following the murder of two Nigerian AMIS soldiers on 5 March and the shooting of an AMIS helicopter on 31 March. Some of these attacks were launched from areas under rebel control. The Presidency of the EU calls on the Cease Fire Commission to fully investigate all attacks on AMIS forces and to hold those responsible to account. In this context the Presidency reiterates its recommendation that the Cease Fire Commission's reports should be transmitted to the Sanctions Committee established under UN Resolution 1591.

The Presidency calls on all parties to the conflict to immediately cease all hostilities, end attacks on the AMIS peace-keeping force and humanitarian organizations, and to open political negotiations.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/April/0404Sudan.html

AMERICAS

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Ukraine

► **EU Presidency statement on the situation in Ukraine** (3/04/2007)

The European Union is concerned about the current political crisis in Ukraine.

The Presidency of the European Union calls on those with political responsibility in Ukraine to settle their current differences on domestic policy in a manner which complies with the constitution and democratic rules. This requires moderation and a willingness to reach compromise from all those involved.

The Presidency of the European Union hopes that Ukraine's ability to act will not be undermined and that relations between the European Union and Ukraine will not be adversely affected.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/April/0403Ukraine.html

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Iran

- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the release of the British naval personnel by Iran (5/04/2007).

The Presidency of the European Union welcomes the release of the 15 British naval personnel captured on 23 March and their return today to Britain.

From the very beginning of this crisis, the European Union lent its support in calling for a rapid solution, and repeatedly contacted the Iranian authorities to intercede strongly on behalf of the 15 British sailors and marines.

The Presidency hopes that Iran will now avail itself of the opportunity to work with the international community and the European Union to find solutions in other areas. It refers in particular to the offer made by the Foreign Ministers of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America to seek a solution to the controversy over the Iranian nuclear programme through dialogue and negotiation.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/April/0405Iran.html

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EP

► EP and Human Rights (3/04/2007)

Reports, resolutions, debates, questions, the Sakharov prize for Freedom of Thought, human rights clauses, guidelines, dialogues - there are a multitude of policy instruments to promote human rights. But does it add up to more than just words? Is the European Parliament, long-time champion of human rights, really making a difference? Yes, a seminar last week concluded, but it could do more.

Two former Sakharov Prize winners - Robert Ménard, Secretary General of Reporters sans Frontières (2005), and Ales Antsipenka of the Belarus Association of Journalists (2004) - joined experts from the EU institutions, the German Bundestag and NGOs in a seminar on 27 March in the EP Human Rights subcommittee to consider the issue. The winners said the prize had made them safer and better able to pursue their work, but Parliament could still follow up more effectively on its Human Rights initiatives.

EP must coordinate, prepare and focus better – Pöttering

Opening the seminar, EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering, said: "We shouldn't necessarily do more, but better with the tools we have", He underlined the need to co-ordinate, prepare and focus better. "We cannot give an example if we don't ourselves live up to expectations."

Sakharov Prize Laureate Robert Ménard said the Parliament is doing a great job in general, but he questioned the consistency of action. "If you agree to sign an association agreement, why don't you make its human rights clauses respected?"

Positive impact, but lacks visibility

The seminar considered a study on the impact of EP activities in the field of human rights by the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation (EIUC), which found some of the positive effects were raising visibility, protecting individuals, putting pressure on third countries and being a source of reference for other institutions and organisations. For example, after the draft 2004 Annual Report on human rights identified the stoning of women, execution of minors and amputation as punishment of particular concern, the rapporteur got written assurances from Iran that a moratorium would be placed on the practices. When the Damas de Blanco won the Sakharov prize, they said: "Although the authorities say they do not recognize the prize, in fact they are more cautious in their repression against us."

However, the study says better visibility and media coverage is needed as well as better coordination within EP and with other institutions. "The effect is lost when there's no follow-up and the EP falls back to its

everyday business." EIUC President Professor Horst Fischer said, suggesting better interweaving and coordination of human rights activities inside the Parliament and with other institutions and EU countries.

A number of participants came up with suggestions to overcome the lack of visibility of EP efforts in the human rights field. "Why not use common positions, declarations, joint missions between Sakharov Prize winners and MEPs?" Ménard said. Other suggestions included: the use of delegation visits, more use of specialised EU media, broadcasting EP debates and even YouTubing. The chair of the committee, Hélène Flautre, said the responsibility belongs jointly to the EP and the media.

Coveney Report

Fine Gael's Simon Coveney, who drafted the 2006 EP annual report on Human Rights in the World, noted that a lot of the recommendations are already included in the report. The report was adopted 27 March by the Foreign Affairs Committee and will be put to the plenary in April. Coveney also said the Parliament should continue to report independently in part because it can play a stronger advocacy role and push EU policy further than the Commission and Council of Ministers. In addition, it isn't bound by the same diplomatic constraints as the other two bodies. External Affairs Commissioner Benita Ferrero Waldner has supported a concerted EU human rights report.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/015-4537-086-03-13-902-20070323STO04522-2007-27-03-2007/default_en.htm

International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of the International day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on 4 April 2007 (3/04/2007)**

On the occasion of the "International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action" proclaimed by the United Nations, the European Union welcomes the important progress made in the fight against the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

Over the last ten years, the European Union and its Member States have consistently provided major political, financial and scientific support to mine action worldwide, amounting to a total of around 1.5 billion Euros.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. More than 150 countries have already acceded to this major international instrument, which embodies humanitarian as well as disarmament objectives.

The European Union welcomes the progress made so far in destroying stockpiles of anti-personnel mines, clearing mined areas and assisting mine victims. We realise that in the future particular emphasis will need to be placed on victim assistance in the longer term, including from a socio-economic perspective, as well as on mine clearance. We will also pursue our efforts in order to encourage the ratification of the Convention by all States which are not yet party to the Convention.

The overall goal of the European Union is that there should be no more anti-personnel mine victims. This target is ambitious, but can be achieved if all states demonstrate the necessary determination and combine their efforts towards this end.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/April/0403Minentag.html

