

SUMMARY

REGIONS

AFRICA

I **Africa**

- ▶ Javier SOLANA, Haut Représentant de l'Union européenne pour la PESC, reçoit M. Jean Ping, président désigné de la Commission de l'Union Africaine (8/04/2008)

T **Kenya**

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Kenya (14/04/2008)

AMERICAS

I **Bolivia**

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation in Bolivia (11/04/2008)

ASIA

I **ASEAN Countries**

- ▶ Free-trade agreement with ASEAN: conditional backing from Trade Committee (8/04/2008)

T **Indonesia**

- ▶ HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: Written declaration on the murder of the human rights activist Munir Said Thalib adopted (9/04/2008)

T **Nepal**

- ▶ Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner on the elections in Nepal (12/04/2008)

T **Tibet**

- ▶ MEPS urge joint EU stance on Olympic Games opening ceremony (10/04/2008)

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

I **Montenegro**

- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the Presidential elections in Montenegro (8/04/2008)

Turkey

- ▶ Barroso calls on Turkey to carry out more reforms (11/04/2008)

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

I Lebanon

- ▶ Statement by State Secretary Janez Lenarčič on behalf of the EU Council on the Situation in Lebanon (9/04/2008)

THEMATIC

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

EU / UN REFORM

I **Lisbon Treaty**

- ▶ Pöttering praises "role model" Ireland ahead of Treaty poll (8/04/2008)

T **Lisbon Treaty**

- ▶ Slovenian Presidency welcomes the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by the Slovak parliament (10/04/2008)

MISCELLANEOUS

I **Denmark**

- ▶ Civil Liberties MEPs visit Danish detention centres (11/04/2008)

T **Javier Solana to EP**

- ▶ Address By Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament (8/04/2008)

T **EP: Anti-terrorism legislation and Fundamental Rights**

- ▶ Updating anti-terror laws: how can we protect fundamental rights? (9/04/2008)

T **European Commission and Children rights**

- ▶ Follow-up to the EU strategy on the rights of the child (10/04/2008)

T **Council of Europe: International Roma Day**

- ▶ Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis congratulates Roma on the International Roma Day (8/04/2008)

T **Council of Europe: CPT**

- ▶ Council of Europe anti-torture committee returns to the North Caucasian region of the Russian Federation (8/04/2008)

T **Council of Europe: Serbia**

- ▶ Accreditation of international observers for the Serbian parliamentary elections 'should not be conditional on extraneous issues' (10/04/2008)

T **Council of Europe: Ukraine**

- ▶ Commissioner Hammarberg to address human rights conference in Ukraine (11/04/2008)

IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

EU - THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

I **EU-Croatia Stabilisation and Association Council**

- April, 28, 2008 (Luxembourg)

T **EU-Egypt Association Council**

- April, 28, 2008 (Luxembourg)

T **EU Troika-OSCE**

- April, 28, 2008 (Luxembourg)

T **EU Troika- Russian Federation**

- April, 29, 2008 (Luxembourg)

T **EU Troika- Turkey**

- May, 6, 2008 (Turkey)

T **EU Troika- Ukraine**

- May, 22, 2008 (Brdo)

T **EU Troika- European Economic Area**

- May, 27, 2008 (Brussels)

T **EU Troika- Republic of South Africa**

- June, 3, 2008 (Brdo)

T **Summit EU-Japan**

- April, 23, 2008 (Japan)

T **Summit EU-Latin America and the Caribbean**

- May, 16, 2008 (Peru)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

I **Committee on Development**

- April, 21, 2008
- May, 5-6, 27-28, 2008

Committee on Foreign Affairs

- April,21, 2008
- May, 6, 27-28-29, 2008

Subcommittee on Human Rights

- May, 26-27, 2008

Subcommittee on security and defence

- May, 5, 26-27, 2008

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

- May, 5-6, 28-29, 2008

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- May, 26-27, 2008

Committee on budgetary control

- May, 5-6, 2008

CONFERENCES / EVENTS

Public hearing on the situation of Muslim Women

- April, 17, 2008, 9.30-12.30, European Parliament, Room PHS 1A002

Partners in Peacebuilding: NGO and EU collaboration in the thematic area of children affected by armed conflict

- April, 17, 18, 2008 (Jable)

REGIONS

AFRICA

I Africa

- ▶ **Javier SOLANA, Haut Représentant de l'Union européenne pour la PESC, reçoit M. Jean Ping, président désigné de la Commission de l'Union Africaine** (8/04/2008)

Javier SOLANA, Haut Représentant de l'Union européenne pour la politique étrangère et de sécurité commune (PESC) **s'est entretenu avec M. Jean Ping, qui, le 28 avril 2008, prendra la présidence de la Commission de l'Union Africaine.**

L'entretien, dense, a permis de réaffirmer l'importance que l'Union Européenne attache à sa relation de fond avec l'Union Africaine, dans le cadre d'un partenariat concret, substantiel et durable.

Le Haut Représentant et M. Jean Ping ont par ailleurs évoqué la situation en République démocratique du Congo, en Somalie, aux Comores ainsi qu'au Soudan et au Tchad. Le dossier du Zimbabwe, discuté en détail, est un sujet majeur d'inquiétude, à la fois pour l'Union Européenne et l'Union Africaine.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/fr/declarations/99830.pdf

T Kenya

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Kenya** (14/04/2008)

The European Union welcomes the agreement between Kenyan President Kibaki and opposition leader Odinga on the formation of a Coalition Government. As partners in a Coalition Government, the leaders of Kenya show their commitment to work together in good faith to promote the greater interests of their nation as a whole.

The Coalition Government provides the means for the leaders of Kenya to proceed with the national reconciliation and dialogue agreed upon on 28 February. The EU looks forward to working with the new Government of Kenya, and states its readiness to support it in the implementation of a coherent and far-reaching reform agenda, to address the fundamental root causes of recurrent conflict and to create a better, more secure and more prosperous Kenya.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/April/0414Kenija.html

AMERICAS

I Bolivia

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation in Bolivia** (11/04/2008)

The European Union is concerned at the tense situation in Bolivia and the continued absence of any dialogue to resolve the situation, and worried that there might be outbreaks of violence which could threaten peaceful coexistence in the country.

The European Union calls on the parties concerned respectively to take steps to defuse the current tension and enable a genuine national dialogue to be held, without preconditions, to address concrete issues in a constructive manner. In particular, it is necessary that each of the parties respect the institutions and the rule of law.

The European Union welcomes the efforts of the Catholic Church, the Organisation of American States and the countries of the Group of Friends of Bolivia to restore political dialogue in Bolivia. The European Union is at the disposal of Bolivia's constitutional government and the opposition forces to help effect rapprochement that will enable the parties to return to the table and confidence to be restored, with a view to reaching consensual agreement on constitutional reform and departmental autonomy.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/April/0411MZZ_Bolivija.html

ASIA

I ASEAN Countries

- ▶ Free-trade agreement with ASEAN: conditional backing from Trade Committee (8/04/2008)

The EP International Trade Committee voted on Tuesday in favour of concluding a free-trade accord between the EU and the 10 countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, say MEPs, the agreement must meet certain conditions regarding sustainable development, the fight against fraud and respect for human rights.

The report, drafted by Glyn Ford (PES, UK) and adopted by an overwhelming majority, supports plans for a free-trade agreement with ASEAN subject to WTO rules and the outcome of the Doha development round. MEPs voice concern at the slowness of the negotiations launched in April 2007, believe that it should be possible to suspend preferential custom tariffs granted under the agreement if key points of the partnership and cooperation agreement are violated, in particular the human rights clauses.

Sustainable development

The planned agreement should ask the ASEAN countries to ratify and apply the basic conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), according to the EP report. MEPs particularly emphasise the need to ban child labour and forced labour.

Measures to combat the destruction of tropical forests should also be included in the agreement, says the report. The ASEAN countries who try to stem the illegal exploitation of forests should be supported, say MEPs, who also want to give preference to environmentally-friendly biofuels and cut customs tariffs on environmental and/or fair-trade products.

Burma

"The current situation in Burma makes it impossible for that country to be included in the agreement", argues the Trade Committee's report. At joint hearing held in early April by the EP Development Committee and Human Rights Subcommittee, the EU was urged to target better its sanctions on the Burmese junta.

Least developed countries

The report also stresses the situation of the least developed countries (LDCs) in the region: Cambodia, Laos and Burma. At present the Commission's negotiating mandate does not provide for negotiations with the LDCs. If these countries wished to join the free-trade agreement with the EU, the Council would have to revise the mandate it has given the Commission.

For the other poorer countries who are members of ASEAN but do not belong to the LDC group, the report urges flexible arrangements - more or less equivalent to those envisaged in economic partnership agreements (EPAs) - to enable these countries to cope with the loss of customs revenue.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/026-25904-099-04-15-903-20080407IPR25903-08-04-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm

T **Indonesia**

- ▶ **HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: Written declaration on the murder of the human rights activist Munir Said Thalib adopted** (9/04/2008)

The written declaration was put forward by Raúl ROMEVA I RUEDA (Greens/EFA, ES), Eija-Riitta KORHOLA (EPP-ED, FI), Jules MAATEN (ALDE, NL) and Glyn FORD (PES, UK) and so far 412 out of 785 MEPs have signed it.

EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering announced the adoption of a written declaration on the murder of the human rights activist Munir Said Thalib given over half of all MEPs have signed it. **The declaration calls on the Indonesian authorities to take all necessary action to ensure that those responsible for the murder at all levels are brought to trial and justice is delivered as quickly as possible.**

In September 2004 leading Indonesian human rights activist Munir Said Thalib, founder of human rights organisations, died from arsenic poisoning on Garuda flight GA974 from Singapore to Amsterdam. The report by an independent fact-finding team into the Munir case, ordered by the Indonesian President, has never been made public. The only person to have been prosecuted in connection with the case, former Garuda co-pilot Pollycarpus Budihari Priyanto, had his conviction overturned by the Indonesian Supreme Court in October 2006.

The written declaration calls on the Commission and the Council to monitor the investigation into the murder of Munir, including the ongoing trials of former Garuda executives Indra Setiawan and Rohainil Aini, as well as the case review of the Supreme Court's decision in the Pollycarpus case.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/008-26190-100-04-15-901-20080408IPR26039-09-04-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm

T **Nepal**

- ▶ **Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner on the elections in Tibet** (12/04/2008)

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, congratulated the Nepalese people, political parties and candidates for their commitment to these historic elections in Nepal, which outlines the basis for creating new structures for a democratic Nepalese state: "I congratulate the Nepalese people for their strong commitment to the democratic process in their country. I encourage everybody to remain calm and patiently await the election results. These landmark

elections will hopefully close a very painful chapter in the country's history and will constitute the first step in Nepal's process to restoring a representative and vibrant democracy in the country. The EU will accompany these efforts. I also want to thank the Chief Observer, Mr. Mulder, MEP, and the whole observation mission for their hard work."

Background

The elections for the constituent assembly in Nepal took place on the 10th of April. Election day was generally calm, orderly and well-organised. The European Commission notes with satisfaction that, despite a rather tense pre-electoral climate, the elections registered a high turnout of voters. The counting has started in some parts of the country and will commence in other parts later.

The EU has deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to Nepal, led by a Member of the European Parliament, Jan Mulder, as a contribution to democracy and stability in Nepal. The preliminary statement, presented by the Chief Observer Mr. Mulder together with the Head of the European Parliament delegation, Mr. Borrell Fontelles, on the 12th of April, concluded that election day was largely successful despite a tense campaign period. The EU EOM deployed 120 observers from 22 EU Member States and Norway and Switzerland throughout Nepal to observe and assess the electoral process, in accordance with international standards for elections as well as the laws of Nepal. The EOM will stay on the ground until mid May to observe the post-election developments and the tabulation of results. A final report covering the elections and containing recommendations on the electoral process will be published by the EU EOM in the next few months.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/567&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

T **Tibet**

▶ **MEPS urge joint EU stance on Olympic Games opening ceremony** (10/04/2008)

In a resolution on Tibet following on from its debate of 26 March, **Parliament condemned the repression by the Chinese security forces, demanded an independent inquiry under UN auspices and called for a common European stance regarding attendance by EU leaders at the Olympic Games opening ceremony in August.** The resolution was adopted by 580 votes to 24 with 45 abstentions.

Violence condemned, inquiry demanded

The resolution "firmly condemns the brutal repression by the Chinese security forces against Tibetan demonstrators and all acts of violence from whichever source". It calls on the Chinese Government "to guarantee adequate medical care for injured Tibetans and legal assistance for arrested Tibetans". It calls for "the immediate release of all those who protested peacefully, exercising their legitimate right to freedom of expression". And it demands "an open and independent inquiry into the recent riots and repression in Tibet under the auspices of the UN".

EU action? Parliament calls for united front

The key question is what action the EU should take. Here Parliament "calls on the EU Presidency-in-Office to strive to find a common EU position with regard to the attendance of the Heads of Government and of State and the EU High Representative at the Olympic Games opening ceremony, with the option of non-attendance in the event that there is no resumption of dialogue between the Chinese authorities and HH the Dalai Lama". In addition, the EP reiterates its call for the Council to appoint a special envoy for Tibetan issues to facilitate dialogue between the two sides.

China's promises on human rights

More broadly, the EP "criticises the often discriminatory treatment of non-Han Chinese ethnic minorities". It "calls on China to honour its commitments to human and minority rights and the rule of law" and, in particular, urges China "to respect its own public commitments to human rights and minority rights, democracy and the rule of law announced during the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decision to allow China to organise the Games".

Dissidents, media

China is urged "not to misuse the 2008 Olympic Games by arresting dissidents, journalists and human rights activists in order to prevent demonstrations and reports which the authorities view as embarrassing to them". Indeed, MEPs call on China "to open up Tibet to the foreign media and diplomats, in particular EU representatives" and "to immediately stop censoring and blocking news and information websites based abroad" as well as to release "all journalists, internet users and cyber-dissidents detained in China for exercising their right to information". Parliament also calls for the release of Hu Jia, a prominent human rights activist sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison on subversion charges.

Support for Dalai Lama's position: autonomy, not independence, for Tibet

Parliament welcomes the fact that "the Dalai Lama has called on the Tibetan people to protest non-violently and has rejected calls for Tibetan independence and instead proposed the middle way of genuine cultural and political autonomy, and religious freedom". The EP stresses its own support for "China's territorial integrity". It also endorses "the Dalai Lama's statement that the Olympic Games are a great opportunity for freedom for all the Chinese people". It regrets that talks between the Chinese authorities and the Dalai Lama have failed to achieve results and calls for "a constructive dialogue to be opened without preconditions with a view to reaching a comprehensive political agreement".

Plenary debate

In Parliament's debate on Tibet on 26 March, which paved the way for today's resolution, EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering said: "Every responsible politician must ask the question, whether he can take part in the opening ceremony if the Chinese leadership does not seek dialogue and compromise".

He also said: "We express our solidarity with the Dalai Lama" and "we cannot allow him to be linked to terrorism or demonised" and he called on the Beijing authorities "to negotiate with the Dalai Lama and, while respecting the territorial integrity of China, to reach an understanding that respects and guarantees the cultural and religious identity of the Tibetan people".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-26208-100-04-15-903-20080408IPR26107-09-04-2008-2008-true/default_en.htm

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Montenegro

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the Presidential elections in Montenegro** (8/04/2008)

The Presidency applauds the high turnout in the, according to the preliminary assessment, free and fair elections. It congratulates Filip Vujanović for his reelection for the second term in the office.

The Presidency also welcomes the fact that European integration has played an important role in the pre-election campaign. In that context, the Presidency reiterates its commitment to the European perspective of Montenegro, as most recently expressed at the informal Gymnich meeting on 29 March 2008 in Brdo.

It calls on all Montenegrin political forces to continue with the implementation of the key reform priorities and to further consolidate the internal consensus on the state-building process, which is essential for the further development of Montenegro's relations with the EU.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Press_Releases/April/0408MZZ_crna_gora.html

T **Turkey**

- ▶ **Barroso calls on Turkey to carry out more reforms** (11/04/2008)

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso on Thursday (10 April) called on Turkey to speed up reforms, notably in the area of human rights, noting that the country is still far from fulfilling all EU accession criteria.

"More progress is needed on a number of key issues, such as freedom of expression, democratic primacy in civil-military relations, cultural rights, trade union rights, women's and children's rights," Mr Barroso said.

"They are part of our common values, they are central to progress and modernity and, indeed, they are also the keys to accession," he added.

On a three-day visit to Turkey together with EU enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn, the commission president also said he had been "surprised" by the opening of a case by the country's Constitutional Court that could eventually result in banning the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

"It is not common to see this in normal, stable democratic countries," he told Turkish parliamentarians.

In addition, Mr Barroso urged Ankara to open its ports to Cypriot ships, underlining: "This is today the main obstacle for significant progress in Turkey's accession process." Turkey does not recognise the Greek government in the southern part of the divided island, while at the same time is the only country to recognise its northern Turkish section.

Cyprus has been divided since a Turkish invasion of the island's northern part in 1974, triggered by a Greek-inspired coup.

"As you are aware, several negotiating chapters are blocked and no chapter can be closed until Turkey ensures full implementation of the additional protocol," Mr Barroso said, referring to a protocol signed in 2005 by Ankara and extending its customs union with the EU to the 10 states that joined the bloc in 2004.

However, the commission president also praised Turkey for the reforms it has conducted in the last years and said two new chapters of its EU negotiations package would be opened by July.

Turkey started accession talks in 2005 and has so far opened six out of the 35 chapters where negotiations need to be finalised before it becomes an EU member.

<http://euobserver.com/9/25964>

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

I **Lebanon**

- ▶ **Statement by State Secretary Janez Lenarčič on behalf of the EU Council on the Situation in Lebanon** (9/04/2008)

"Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

Efforts to secure peace, stability, economic prosperity and respect for human rights remain the priorities at the heart of the diplomatic action of the European Union and its Member States in relation to the situation in Lebanon. We are striving to maintain Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, unity and stability.

The EU supports Lebanon's democratic institutions and the legitimate government led by the Prime Minister Fouad Siniora. However, we are concerned about the long paralysis of Lebanese institutions since at least November 2006 and aggravated since November 2007 by the vacant presidential position. As you know, the presidential elections, last scheduled for 25 March 2008, have already been postponed 17 times and are now scheduled for 22 April 2008.

In addition to being a major financial donor to Lebanon, the EU also deployed intense diplomatic activity aimed at helping to overcome the political deadlock in the country. In this respect, we support efforts by the UN, Saudi Arabia and the Arab League. The EU has thus supported the Three Points Plan unanimously adopted by Arab foreign Ministers. As you are aware, the plan foresees the immediate election of a president, the formation of a national unity government and the subsequent drafting of a new electoral law. Despite their stated support to this plan, the Lebanese political parties have diverging interpretations concerning its implementation. There appear to be two main stumbling blocks to putting the proposal into practice. One is internal; the two sides cannot agree on representation in the Government, the allocation of ministerial portfolios and the issue of a new electoral law. The other stumbling block concerns Syria, which seems reluctant to renounce its influence on Lebanon.

However, the Arab League Plan currently appears to be the only initiative that could help to put an end to the political deadlock in the country. We expect that the Arab League's Secretary-General (Mr Moussa) will continue with mediation efforts to resolve the current situation, and the EU will continue to provide him with its full support.

Unfortunately, the recent Arab League Summit held in Damascus at the end of March did not bring the desired outcome as regards resolving the situation. Lebanon demonstrated its protest at Syrian interference with the procedure of electing the Lebanese President by not attending the Summit.

Please allow me to underline the EU commitment to positions contained in different UNSC resolutions on the situation in Lebanon. Its support for UN efforts is manifested by European participation in the UN mission in Lebanon. EU Member States are the main contributors to the UN Interim Force. Despite a number of attacks, in which 6 peacekeepers of the Spanish contingent lost their lives and 3 Irish ones were injured, the mission is successfully implementing its mandate. In August 2007 the mandate was prolonged for another year.

Moreover, EU Member States support the setting up of a UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon, to be located in the Netherlands. We have been making endeavours so that the Special Tribunal will be able to start its operations as soon as possible.

Furthermore, I would like to recall the entry into force of the EU-Lebanon Action Plan in 2007. This instrument is a further upgrade to existing cooperation in the framework of the Barcelona Process. The activities included in this framework are already underway.

Thank you. "

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Speeches_Interviews/April/0409SVEZlibanon.html

THEMATIC

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner to visit Gulf countries

EU / UN REFORM

I **Lisbon Treaty**

- ▶ Pöttering praises "role model" Ireland ahead of Treaty poll (8/04/2008)

In a two day visit to Dublin, Parliament's President Hans-Gert Pöttering has made the case for a "Yes" vote in the forthcoming Irish referendum on the reform treaty. However, in a speech to the Irish Senate - the Seanad - he stressed that "it is a decision only the Irish voters can make". He also thanked Ireland for its contribution to European unity. During the visit he met with Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, President Mary McAleese and leaders of the Republic's main political parties.

The visit - his first to Ireland since taking up his position last year - marked an opportunity for Mr Pöttering to spell out what he believes to be the main advantages of the new treaty: namely increasing the democratic legitimacy of the EU and an extension of powers of national parliaments. He also told Irish Senators that he wanted to "dispel the myth that the EU is all powerful". It "does not set tax or run our health education and social services", he told them. Irish voters are likely to give their verdict on the Treaty in mid-June in a referendum.

He also used the opportunity to cite Ireland as a "role model" for many countries in Central and Eastern Europe who joined the Union in 2004 and 2007. He praised the efforts of the Irish peacekeepers in Chad as part of an EU force for "defending European values".

Earlier, in an interview with the "Irish Times" he had told the paper that he wanted to assure voters that the Lisbon Treaty would not force Ireland to join NATO or lead to the introduction of abortion. Both are key issues for the traditionally neutral and predominantly Catholic country. He also paid tribute to outgoing Prime Minister Bertie Ahern who he said had "not wanted his personal difficulties to become a factor in the referendum campaign".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/008-25882-098-04-15-901-20080407STO25842-2008-07-04-2008/default_en.htm

T **Lisbon Treaty**

- ▶ Slovenian Presidency welcomes the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by the Slovak parliament (10/04/2008)

The Slovenian Presidency welcomes the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in the Slovak parliament. The Slovak Republic is the eighth Member State to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon. Thus it joined the group of countries that have ratified it so far: Hungary, Slovenia, Malta, Romania, France, Bulgaria and Poland.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Press_Releases/April/0410SVEZslovaska.html

MISCELLANEOUS

I **Denmark**

- ▶ **Civil Liberties MEPs visit Danish detention centres** (11/04/2008)

Asylum seekers and detention of immigrants is under the spotlight as MEPs from the Civil Liberties Committee visit detention centres in Denmark this week. They will visit the Kongelund and Ellebæk camps Friday to assess conditions. Last year saw the largest influx into Denmark of foreigners with over 37,000 residence permits being granted - the most notable increase being from states that joined the Union after 2004. In terms of asylum seekers by far the largest group is from Iraq.

The April 10-11 visit forms part of a series of visits by the Committee to see for themselves how people are being treated across the continent.

As well as meeting inmates of the camps MEPs will also meet the Danish authorities and NGOs, who have first-hand experience of dealing with asylum and immigration issues.

The European Parliament's role in immigration policy is to give its opinion on the criteria necessary for individuals to be given the status of asylum seekers. EU countries are responsible for organisation of detention centres, but MEPs believe it is useful to compare the differences.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/018-25887-168-06-25-902-20080407STO25858-2008-16-06-2008/default_en.htm

T **Javier Solana to European Parliament**

- ▶ **Address By Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament** (8/04/2008)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/discours/99851.pdf

T **EP: Anti-terrorism legislation and Fundamental Rights**

- ▶ **Updating anti-terror laws: how can we protect fundamental rights?** (9/04/2008)

How do you define a "public provocation to commit terrorist offences"? That was one of the key questions under the spotlight Monday when MEPs and MPs discussed proposals to update anti-terrorism laws across the EU. Some MEPs were concerned about civil liberties aspects, while others called for a strong and robust defence of democracy and the right to freedom of speech.

The Commission wants to revise the existing counter-terrorist policy of the EU to provide a common legal framework and a common definition of terrorist offences. The Commission says the change is needed due to the "multiple and changing faces of terrorism".

The round table brought together MEPs, MPs from national parliaments and the Council of Europe. Also present was the Director of Europol, Max-Peter Ratzel, the Slovenian Vice President Bogdan Barovič (for the Slovenian Presidency of the EU) and EU's anti-terrorist coordinator Gilles de Kerchove.

Public provocation - how can we define it?

The most contentious issue was the definition of "public provocation". The Commission proposes adding three new crimes aimed at covering "traditional" and modern terrorist methods - recruiting terrorists, training for acts of terrorism and "public provocation" to commit terrorist offences.

French Socialist Roselyne Lefrançois is Parliament's rapporteur for the issue. She told the hearing that the term public provocation "needs definition" and underlined the civil liberties implications by asking "where does freedom of expression stop?" She added "we need a clear formulation, a safeguard clause and provisions guaranteeing respect for fundamental rights."

Spanish MEP Luis de Grandes Pascual (EPP-ED), who is drafting a report for the legal affairs committee on this dossier, said "I am worried that the debate is oriented towards an artificial dichotomy between fighting terrorism and freedom of expression". He went on to say that "democracy is a "public opinion regime", but the defence of democracy calls for a particular strength - in order not for us to fall into weakness.

For British Liberal Sarah Ludford the civil liberties aspects raise worrying questions about whether anti-terror legislation can be used against legitimate protesters. She cited news reports in the UK, which said that London police had threatened protestors with arrest under anti-terror laws during the protests over Tibet which greeted the Olympic flame in London. She was worried that the criminalising acts of so-called provocation could easily criminalise free speech.

How great is the threat to Europe from terrorists?

Mr Ratzel said that in 2007 there were 583 failed, foiled or executed terrorist attacks. A majority were carried out by separatist terrorist groups in Spain and France. Last year there were 4 failed "Islamist" attacks, he said. Last year in Europe, 1,044 people were arrested in connection with terrorism, he reported.

Anti-terrorist coordinator Gilles de Kerchove said there is "a real threat on our borders" and "EU nationals are at risk" both inside the Union and when travelling outside it. He cited attacks on Europeans who were travelling in Yemen. In global terms he said that "Al-Qaeda will remain an international threat for years to come".

He also raised civil liberties issues, asking rhetorically "how far do we want to go" regarding the sharing of passenger name recognition, European police cooperation and the extent to which national databases are shared. He said that parliaments and societies have to make such choices. "We need an intense democratic debate to strike the balance between security and liberty." He also called for greater use of existing EU cooperation mechanisms like Europol and Eurojust.

Turning to the internet - which the Commission has called a "virtual training camp" Mr de Kerchove said that at present "around 5000 websites are helping to radicalise our young people in Europe". Ms Lefrançois said "the internet offers (terrorism) a global stage".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/019-25884-098-04-15-902-20080407STO25855-2008-07-04-2008/default_en.htm

European Commission and Children rights

► Follow-up to the EU strategy on the rights of the child (10/04/2008)

The European Commission is engaged in the implementation of its strategy on the Rights of the Child, which was announced in its 2006 communication "Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child". A number of actions envisaged in the communication have already been launched. The EU has developed various concrete policies and programmes on children's rights, spanning both internal and external policies and covering a broad range of issues, such as child trafficking and sexual abuse, violence against children, discrimination, child poverty, social exclusion, child labour, health and education.

A Commission Decision has reserved the number 116000 for a single telephone number for urgent calls about missing children. Work has also been launched with Member States to promote the introduction of a Child Alert mechanism in every Member State, and to use such Child Alert mechanism at cross-border level when necessary.

The Commission is currently setting up a mechanism to stop payments made with a credit card or an electronic payment when purchasing images of sexual abuse of children on the Internet. In addition, a study on the design of indicators concerning children's rights and on relevant data sources was launched recently and is monitored with the help of the European Agency on Fundamental Rights.

Other actions concern violence against children, civil justice aspects such as maintenance obligations, parental responsibility and family mediation, and criminal justice aspects, such as fight against trafficking, sexual exploitation and pedopornography and prevention of the use of drugs.

In 2007, work has also been undertaken on poverty and social exclusion of children within the context of the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion which has led to an in-depth examination of policies to fight child poverty feeding into the 2008 Joint report on social protection and social inclusion.

The Commission has recently adopted a communication on Children in External Action, which places children at the centre of the EU's external relations, development and humanitarian aid policies. The Communication, with the attached Staff Working Papers on '*Children's Rights in External Action*' and on '*Children in Situations of Emergency and Crisis*' is intended to contribute to the development of a long-term strategy in connection with the EU *Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child*, adopted by the Council in December 2007.

Recent initiatives supported by the Commission include the Safer Internet Day on 12 February 2008. The Safer Internet Day is aimed to create awareness messages on the safe and ethical use of information and communication technologies, namely of the internet and mobile phones. On 11 February 2008 the GSM Association, the global trade association for mobile operators, has launched the Mobile Alliance against Child Sexual Abuse Content to obstruct the use of the mobile environment by individuals or organisations wishing to consume or profit from child sexual abuse content.

The European Forum for the rights of the child

The European Forum for the rights of the child was created with the aim to strengthen the mainstreaming of children's rights in EU legislation, policies and programmes. The Forum gathers representatives from the Member States, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, UNICEF, the Ombudspersons and the representatives of civil society. The first Forum meeting on 4 June 2007 in Berlin discussed possible mechanisms for future participation of children to the Forum and how to protect children against sexual

exploitation. At its second meeting on 4 March 2008, the Forum discussed child poverty, with special attention to the situation of Roma children, as well as the possible introduction of Child Alert mechanisms in every Member State.

A third meeting of the Forum is planned for November 2008.

Daphne III

For its tenth year of existence, the Daphne programme starts a new period of activity 2007-2013 with a global budget of € 116 million. The Daphne programme supports projects aimed at fighting against violence towards children, young people and women.

Prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women and to protect victims and groups at risk (Daphne III)						
Total amount over the 2007-2013 period:						114,40M€
2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
13,90	14,40	15,80	17,20	17,60	17,50	18,00

EU-wide Child Alert mechanism

Child Alert systems already exist at national level in France and Greece.

The added value of such a mechanism is the possibility to involve the public in the search for information about a missing child. In a number of cases, kidnapped children have been rescued thanks to information given by the public following an alert launched through the media.

An EU-wide Child Alert system could effectively be established through national systems, with clear contact points and easily transmissible data when trans-border cases occur: a given national alert system could be activated in the relevant areas of a neighbouring Member State upon request of the Member State where the abduction has been perpetrated, when there are reasons to believe that the child has been transferred abroad. Acting fast is crucial when it comes to rescuing a missing child. The Commission has submitted draft guidelines to the authorities of the Member States describing possible ways of cooperation among Member States.

Stopping the sale of child sexual abuse images

Framework Decision 2004/68 lays down the obligation for Member States to criminalize and impose penalties of a certain level for sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, as well as to establish their own jurisdiction and to grant protection and assistance for children as particularly vulnerable victims, and for their families. According to the Commission's report of 2007 on the implementation of this instrument, the situation in Member States seems to be generally satisfactory as far as criminalization and penalties is concerned, but information on assistance to victims is incomplete.

The Commission is currently setting up a mechanism to stop payments made with a credit card or an electronic payment when purchasing images of sexual abuses of children on the Internet. In 2005, to implement this mechanism, Europe VISA created the CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection). CEOP has some hundred employees, mainly computer experts and financial investigators who scan millions of Internet sites in search of illicit content. When such sites are found, information is passed on to the police and VISA which checks with its "card quire" if transactions were made for the companies running these sites.

After several preparatory meetings, a draft document moots the possibility of a one-stop-shop for all the partners (banks, credit card companies, Internet access providers and national authorities). This one-stop-

shop would bring under one roof in the detection of illicit content on the Internet, finding the sites involved and informing the banks so as to stop financial transactions and informing the authorities in order to bring offenders to justice.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/08/231&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

T **Council of Europe: International Roma Day**

▶ **Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis congratulates Roma on the International Roma Day (8/04/2008)**

"I congratulate our fellow Europeans on the occasion of the International Roma Day. We should use this opportunity to celebrate the contribution of the Roma people to the cultural diversity and richness of Europe. For some time, the Council of Europe has been campaigning against prejudice towards the Roma community in the South East Europe, and we want to extend the "Dosta!" campaign to all Council of Europe member states. "Dosta" means "Enough" in Romani, but today is also an opportunity to say "More!", meaning more rights, more equality, more integration and more respect for our fellow Europeans who belong to Roma community."

Recommendation (2008)5 on Roma and/or Travellers in Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 20 February 2008, gives clear guidelines for the drafting of national strategies for Roma, focusing on the active participation of Roma and Travellers communities in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of measures affecting them. Prepared with the contribution and support of the Roma and Travellers Forum and addressed to the governments of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, this recommendation is considered as a first step towards a genuine pan-European policy on Roma.

http://www.coe.int/T/DC/Press/WCD/AIPR_en.asp#

T **Council of Europe: CPT in the North Caucasian region of the Russian Federation**

▶ **Council of Europe anti-torture committee returns to the North Caucasian region of the Russian Federation (8/04/2008)**

A delegation of the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) carried out a visit to the North Caucasian region of the Russian Federation from 27 March to 3 April 2008. It was the CPT's tenth visit to this part of the Federation since the year 2000.

During the visit, the Committee's delegation examined for the first time the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria; it also returned to the Republic of Ingushetia.

http://www.coe.int/T/DC/Press/WCD/AIPR_en.asp#

T **Council of Europe: Serbia**

▶ **Accreditation of international observers for the Serbian parliamentary elections 'should not be conditional on extraneous issues' (10/04/2008)**

The accreditation of international observers for the 11 May 2008 Parliamentary elections in Serbia should not be conditional on extraneous issues, concluded the pre-electoral delegation¹ of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Serbia should honour its commitments to international organisations of which it is a member; and should not link the accreditation of observers to the issue of Kosovo.

Serbia is a full member of the Council of Europe, an organisation distinct from the European Union, and is a community upholding the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law for 800 million people. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) recognises Serbia's advances along the path of democracy-building. In this connection, based on exchanges it had in Belgrade, the delegation believes that the upcoming elections will be well organised and conducted properly.

They will be of pivotal importance in that they will determine the vector of Serbia's development for the future. The citizens of Serbia deserve the right to unimpeded travel; the younger generation of Serbia should have the right to receive education abroad. PACE stands ready to throw its support behind the Serbian people in their efforts to turn their country into a true 21st century democracy.

While satisfied with the state of Serbia's preparation for the upcoming elections, some issues still need further improvement: there is a need for effective provisions and enforcement mechanisms covering party and campaign funding; the powers of the Republic Election Commission should be expanded to allow it to better monitor the entire process, including the control over the quality of the voters list; media monitoring during campaign periods should be put in place, although the delegation is not aware of any grave problems in the latter area. The delegation understands that such improvements cannot be introduced in time for the May 11 vote and regards these issues as challenges for the future. In addition, the delegation encourages greater involvement of people belonging to national minorities in the political process to ensure their better representation in the Parliament.

http://www.coe.int/T/DC/Press/WCD/AIIPR_en.asp#

T **Council of Europe: Ukraine**

- ▶ **Commissioner Hammarberg to address human rights conference in Ukraine** (11/04/2008)

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, will address the international conference to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 10th Anniversary of the Ombudsman of Ukraine at the National Parliament on Monday 14 April.

The Commissioner's speech will focus on the modern challenges faced by European countries, in particular Ukraine, in the field of human rights. He will also highlight the recommendations published in his assessment [report on Ukraine](#) in October 2007 and emphasise the important role that Ombudsmen can play in protecting individuals.

Commissioner Hammarberg will also hold discussions with Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko on major human rights issues in Ukraine.

http://www.coe.int/T/DC/Press/WCD/AIIPR_en.asp#