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- June 5, 2007

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- June 5, 2007

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- June 4,5, 2007

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- June 4,5 2007

### **CONFERENCES / EVENTS**

## REGIONS:

### AFRICA

#### Africa

► **MEPs call for “African solutions”** (10/05/2007)

The war-ravaged Horn of Africa (Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda) will be on the agenda of the plenary with MEPs asking for "African solutions" to stabilise the region. They also call for consolidation of the EU presence through the appointment of an EU special representative.

MEPs doubt that in a region where five out of seven countries are in conflict with their neighbours, where Somalia has been lacking a functioning government for the last 15 years, where the percentage of the population below poverty is more than 22 % the concept of regional partnership work as a "cure-all" for such a complex inter-related issue.

The House believes that, in its efforts to address the crisis in the Horn of Africa region, the EU should seek African solutions, with the involvement of the regional organisations in place, the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). These organisations should be strengthened through the EU-funded African Peace Facility able to provide the necessary resources.

According to MEPs, the Commission and the Council should to start a consultation process with the UN, AU, IGAD, Arab League, USA and China, on the initiative of convening a Comprehensive Security Peace and Development Conference to deal with the security concerns of all Horn of Africa States simultaneously.

MEPs deplore the fact that neither the European Parliament nor the Parliaments of the African countries, nor the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, nor civil society representatives were duly consulted at any stage of the formulation of the EU-Africa Strategy adopted in December 2005.

The fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, as well as neglected diseases and female genital mutilation, must be one of the key strategies for eradicating poverty according to the House.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/028-6474-129-05-19-903-20070507IPR06413-09-05-2007-2007-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/028-6474-129-05-19-903-20070507IPR06413-09-05-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm)

#### Somalia

► **Council Conclusions on Somalia** (14/05/2007)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The Council remains concerned about the situation in Somalia. In particular, it expresses its dismay over the humanitarian situation in Mogadishu and other parts of South and Central Somalia and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people with limited access to life-saving relief. The Council reiterates the obligation of all parties to comply with international humanitarian law and urges the Somali authorities to do their utmost to remove any obstacle to the free movement of aid and humanitarian relief workers into and throughout the country. It calls upon international donors to provide greater assistance for humanitarian and reconstruction work and upon the wider region to help facilitate the cross-border provision

of aid to Somalia. The Council acknowledges the efforts of civil society actors to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. The EU will step up urgent humanitarian assistance to the population, including internally displaced people.

2. The Council welcomes the talks between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Ethiopia and the Hawiya leadership committee. The Council encourages all parties to show continued restraint and to consolidate the cessation of hostilities, paving the way for comprehensive cease-fire arrangements, including mechanisms for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The EU remains ready to assist in this process if requested.

3. The Council condemns the use of force by all sides and emphasises that the problems of Somalia can only be solved by political means, building on the Transitional Federal Charter. The EU reiterates the need for a genuine political process, as set out in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1744 (2007). In particular, the EU renews its urgent appeal to the Transitional Federal Institutions to engage in an inclusive, meaningful and consensual dialogue involving all sections of Somali society. The Council expects the Transitional Federal Institutions to convene the National Reconciliation Congress (NRC) as soon as possible. It reiterates its readiness to support the Congress financially and otherwise, provided that the TFG will ensure an all inclusive and transparent process.

4. The Council reaffirms its support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in creating the conditions for the stabilisation of the country and an early withdrawal of Ethiopian forces. The EU is committed to support AMISOM's planning and operational capacity, including the potential development of its role in the monitoring and verification of a ceasefire. It calls on all Somali actors to work with AMISOM to help achieve these aims. Recalling the EU's and Member States' financial and planning support for AMISOM, the Council calls on all international partners to provide further financial, logistic and technical support for AMISOM and on those African troop-contributing countries not yet on the ground in Somalia to deploy as soon as possible."

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=71&LANG=1&cmsid=349](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=71&LANG=1&cmsid=349)

## Iraq

### ► Council Conclusions on Iraq (14/05/2007)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The Council warmly welcomes the fact that the Iraq conferences in Sharm El Sheikh took place successfully on 3 and 4 May 2007 with very broad international participation. It congratulates all parties that have worked hard to make the conferences a success, in particular Egypt as the host country. The results of the conferences are encouraging and hopefully will contribute to an improvement of the situation in Iraq.

2. The Council commends the Iraqi Government for the ambitious commitments it has made in the "International Compact with Iraq", which was endorsed on 3 May, to promote reforms in the political, security, economic and social fields. The implementation of these commitments will be central in developing co-operation between Iraq and all its international partners. Progress towards these targets will help to further enhance the EU's engagement with Iraq. The Council underlines its appreciation for the UN's continued assistance to Iraq including in the Compact process.

3. The Council welcomes the Ministerial conference of Iraq's Neighbouring Countries with international participation, including the EU. The international community, and in particular the States in the region, have a responsibility to support and promote the difficult process of national reconciliation and stabilisation in Iraq, and to prevent outside interference that could undermine this process. The Council expresses its hope that the conference give rise to a long-term process of regional confidence building through dialogue and co-operation. It underlines in this context the importance of an effective and result-oriented follow-up mechanism, including the early convening of the agreed working groups on security, refugees and energy. The European Union is ready to assist and provide expertise in this process."

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=71&LANG=1&cmsid=349](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=71&LANG=1&cmsid=349)

## AMERICAS

## ASIA

### Armenia

#### ► EU Presidency on the parliamentary elections in Armenia (13/05/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union notes with satisfaction that the parliamentary elections held in Armenia on 12 May were, on the whole, conducted fairly, freely and largely in accordance with the international commitments which Armenia had entered into. The Presidency welcomes the fact that, compared to previous elections, significant progress has been made.

The Presidency also welcomes the fact that the parliamentary elections were observed and monitored closely and in a professional manner by a comprehensive ODIHR election observation mission and by delegations from the OSCE and Council of Europe Parliamentary Assemblies. The Presidency has taken note of the interim joint statement issued by these election observation missions on 13 May.

Looking ahead to the presidential elections due to be held at the beginning of 2008, the Presidency calls on Armenia to investigate and resolve the procedural problems which still exist, particularly those concerning vote-counting but also the isolated cases of irregularities which were observed.

The Presidency of the European Union is very much in favour of intensifying cooperation with Armenia. This would breathe new life into the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Action Plan agreed under it.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/May/0513Armenien.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0513Armenien.html)

## EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE ) AND CIS

### Serbia

#### ► EU Presidency Statement on the election of the Speaker of Serbia's Parliament (09/05/2007)

The EU Presidency noted with concern yesterday's election (8 May) of the deputy chairman of the Serbian Radical Party, Tomislav Nikolic, as Speaker of the Serbian Parliament. To date, the Serbian Radical Party has always been strongly opposed to Serbia forging closer ties with the European Union.

The EU Presidency calls upon all reform-oriented parties in Belgrade to use the period until 15 May envisaged under Serbia's constitution to form a democratic, majority-based government which reaffirms the pro-European orientation of Serbian policy

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/May/0509Serbien.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0509Serbien.html)

## **Serbia**

- ▶ **EU Presidency statement on the political situation in Serbia** (12/05/2007)

Serbia's President, Boris Tadic, announced yesterday the formation of a government by democratic parties. The parties involved – the Democratic Party of President Boris Tadic, the Democratic Party of Serbia of Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica, and the G17 Plus party led by Mladjan Dinkic – would thus have succeeded in agreeing on a joint, pro-reform and pro-Europe government shortly before the constitutional deadline expires on 14 May.

The EU Presidency welcomes these latest developments in Belgrade and expresses the hope that the future government will initiate the relevant reforms so that the negotiations with Serbia on a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) between the EU and Serbia, which have been on hold for the past year, can be resumed.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/May/0512Serbien.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0512Serbien.html)

## **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

- ▶ **EU Presidency statement on the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina** (10/05/2007)

On 3 May 2007, the EU Member States approved the text of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The conclusion of this Agreement could bring Bosnia and Herzegovina a step closer to the EU.

At the opening of negotiations it was agreed that the conclusion of an Agreement would depend on the progress made in building up the country's public administration, in implementing police reform and in implementing public broadcasting legislation, as well as on full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The Presidency, however, is concerned that the necessary reforms have not yet been effected.

The EU Presidency therefore calls upon all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to work together constructively to overcome the remaining obstacles as soon as possible. To this end, the political leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina must assume its responsibility in a clear, immediate and determined way, and overcome the current lack of progress.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/May/0510Bosnien.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0510Bosnien.html)

## **Azerbaijan**

- ▶ **OSCE : Statement of the European Union on Media Freedom in Azerbaijan** (10/05/2007)

In Permanent Council on 26 April, the European Union expressed concern about the sentencing of Mr. Eynulla Fatullayev, the editor of *Realny Azerbaijan* and *Gundalik Azarbaycan*, to two and a half years in prison on libel charges.

We have on numerous occasions supported the call of the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media to end the use of criminal defamation legislation to limit media freedom in Azerbaijan. It was therefore with great regret that we learnt that on 4 May, two more journalists, Mr. Rafiq Tagi, a journalist of *Senet*, and his editor Mr. Samir Sadagatoglu, were sentenced to three and four years imprisonment respectively for the



publication of a philosophical essay which was allegedly an "incitement to national, racial and religious hatred".

These sentences strongly contradict the positive signs the EU perceived to emerge from the meetings in April of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Miklos Haraszti, and EU Special Representative for South Caucasus, Amb. Peter Semneby, who were attending in Baku the Conference "Role of Media in the development of tolerance and mutual understanding", organized jointly by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The EU appreciated in particular the open discussion between President Aliyev and Mr. Haraszti. The agreement between Minister Mammadyarov and Amb. Semneby on a systematic dialogue between the EU and Azerbaijan on media-related issues is an encouraging step.

The EU also welcomes positive developments in other areas, such as the granting of a license for six more years to the private broadcaster ANS TV and Radio.

But we cannot accept, as put forward on several occasions by the Delegation of Azerbaijan, that it is appropriate to counter a lack of journalists' professionalism by a continued regulation of the media through criminal courts. We therefore call on Azerbaijan to heed the pertinent suggestion of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to President Aliyev to introduce a legal moratorium on criminal prosecution of defamation as soon as possible, and to take advantage of his offer to assist in reforming legislation on defamation. In this regard, we would draw attention to Mr. Haraszti's press release of 7 May in which he says that "Only actual incitement to violent ethnic or religious hatred should be criminalized."

**The European Union would like to reiterate that a strong commitment is needed on the part of the Azerbaijani authorities to protecting journalists both from intimidation and violent attacks. In this context, we call on the authorities to investigate all cases of violence against media representatives, in particular the murder of Mr. Elmar Huseynov on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2005, and the recent brutal attack on Mr. Uzeyir Jafarov, editor of the newspaper *Gundalik Azarbaycan*.**

We stress once again the importance of freedom of expression in a democratic society and remind Azerbaijan that the creation of an environment where the media can work freely, effectively and without fear is a values enshrined in the European Neighbourhood Policy and set out in the Action Plan that Azerbaijan has signed with the EU, as well as in the commitments made by the country in the context of its membership of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Statements\\_in\\_International\\_Organisations/May/0510Azerbaijan.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Statements_in_International_Organisations/May/0510Azerbaijan.html)

## **Georgia**

- ▶ **OSCE: Statement of the European Union on threats against monitors in South Ossetia, Georgia (10/05/2007)**

The European Union listened carefully to the statement just made by the Ambassador of Georgia.

The EU reiterates its concerns about the high number of violent incidents in South Ossetia. We are particularly concerned about the Spot Report of the OSCE Mission to Georgia of 7 May, which describes how a joint JPKF/OSCE monitoring patrol, upon their recovery of an anti-aircraft weapon and missile inside the zone of conflict, were threatened at gunpoint by armed men who claimed to belong to the South Ossetian "Ministry of Interior". This treatment of JPKF/OSCE staff, preventing them from performing their monitoring duties, is unacceptable and harms efforts to reach a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Given the tense situation on the ground, the EU urges all parties to exercise caution, to refrain from provocative actions and to make good on previous promises regarding de-militarization as a confidence-building measure.

The EU calls upon all the parties to the conflict in South Ossetia to implement the existing decisions of the Joint Control Commission. The EU is disappointed that the informal consultative meeting of the JCC Co-Chairmen in Tskhinvali on 19 April failed to reach any agreement on the next steps in the conflict resolution process. The EU also encourages the parties to continue using all existing negotiation formats to explore ways of increasing the effectiveness of the conflict resolution process.

The EU would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its appreciation for the valuable work done in South Ossetia by the OSCE Mission.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Statements\\_in\\_International\\_Organisations/May/0510Georgia.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Statements_in_International_Organisations/May/0510Georgia.html)

## Russia

### ► **Human Rights must be a core principle of EU-Russia relations say MEPs** (10/05/2007)

Russia remains an important partner for Europe, especially in energy relations, but this relationship must set democratic values and human rights as its core principle, says a resolution adopted by a large majority in the EP. The lifting of Russia's ban on Polish agricultural products is another demand of the House. On Estonia, it calls on Russia to "fully respect its obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations," guaranteeing the protection of embassies and diplomats.

The House reiterates its support for Russia's WTO membership, and welcomed the initiatives to achieve visa-free travel between the EU and Russia. It also welcomes intensified dialogue on energy issues, and stressed that equal access to infrastructure and investment, as well as "the principles of interdependence and transparency should be the basis" of cooperation in the energy field. These principles should be applied to major energy infrastructure projects, such as the Baltic gas pipeline.

**However, MEPs express deep concern about the use of force by Russian authorities against protesters in Moscow and St. Petersburg and reiterated that "a robust defence of human rights and democratic values should be a core principle of any EU engagement with Russia".** They also worried about continuing reports of the use of torture in prisons in Chechnya and the restriction of democratic freedoms, for instance, the freedom of the media, in the run-up to the upcoming elections, MEPs also want to halt the process of depriving some political parties of their legal status and their eligibility to participate in the upcoming legislative and presidential elections.

### **Anti-ballistic missile system**

The House expresses its concern about declarations made by President Putin in reaction to the United States' plans to deploy components of its anti-ballistic missile system in Poland and the Czech Republic. MEPs demand a thorough discussion of these proposals, including the need for them, a threat assessment and the possibility of different areas of security both in the EU and NATO frameworks.

### **Polish meat and Estonian bronze**

The Parliament welcomes the common line taken by the EU on the lifting of Russia's ban on Polish agricultural products (oral amendment moved by Charles Tannock (EPP-ED, UK)), which has blocked negotiations on a new EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation agreement (PCA). The House also expects that Russia will lift the embargo on some Moldovan and Georgian products, such as wine.

The resolution also calls on the EU to "demonstrate solidarity with Estonia and speak with one voice in the context of recent events in Tallinn," and calls on Russia to "fully respect its obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations," guaranteeing the protection of embassies and diplomats.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/030-6467-129-05-19-903-20070507IPR06398-09-05-2007-2007-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-6467-129-05-19-903-20070507IPR06398-09-05-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm)

## Uzbekistan

### ► Council Conclusions on Uzbekistan (14/05/2007)

The Council took note of the developments in Uzbekistan and prospects for future relations between the EU and Uzbekistan and adopted the following conclusions.

"1. **The Council remains seriously concerned about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan.**

2. The Council learnt with great concern of the sentences of imprisonment passed on the human rights defenders Ms. Umida Niazova and Ms. Gulbahor Turaeva. It took note of the revised verdict against Ms. Niazova of 8 May and her release. **The Council calls upon the Uzbek authorities to release Ms. Turaeva and other detained human rights defenders and to lift restrictions of movement against Ms. Niazova.** The Council calls upon Uzbekistan to respect fully its commitments to international human rights standards.

3. The Council welcomes the Uzbek confirmation that full cooperation with the ICRC will be resumed soon and expects swift implementation.

4. **The EU reiterates its readiness to pursue a comprehensive and regular dialogue with Uzbekistan on human rights. In this context, the Council welcomes the fact that a first round of a human rights dialogue between the EU and Uzbekistan took place in Tashkent on 8-9 May 2007.** It appreciates the readiness of the Uzbek side to engage in this dialogue. The EU looks forward to its continuation in an open and constructive manner with a view to achieving concrete and sustained results.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=71&LANG=1&cmsid=349](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=71&LANG=1&cmsid=349)

## MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

## Syria

### ► EU Presidency statement on the sentencing of Syrian opposition figure Dr Kamal Labwani (11/05/2007).

The Presidency of the European Union expresses its deep regret at the sentencing of Dr Kamal Labwani on 10 May 2007 to life imprisonment, commuted to 12 years' imprisonment.

This verdict against the leader of the Liberal Democratic Union, a Syrian citizen, is based on allegations of intriguing with or contacting a foreign state to incite an act of aggression against Syria, a charge that was only later added to the case against him. On 8 November 2005, Dr Labwani was arrested on a charge of spreading lies or false information. This charge was dropped in 2006 following a general amnesty.

The European Union reiterates its commitment to freedom of opinion and the right to a fair trial, as laid down in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which was ratified by Syria on 21 April 1969. The European Union has serious doubts that these rights of the defendant have been respected. The European Union therefore calls on the relevant Syrian bodies to reverse the judgment.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/May/0511Syrien.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0511Syrien.html)

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