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REGIONS:

AFRICA

Sudan

► **EP Resolution** (24/05/2007)

Death sentences in Sudan

The resolution on Sudan highlights the cases of two women sentenced to death by stoning for committing adultery and two teenagers condemned to be hanged for murder and robbery.

Two women sentenced to stoning

In the first case, a judge sentenced Amouna Abdallah Daldoum and Sadia Idries Fadul, on 6 March and 13 February 2007 respectively, to death by stoning for adultery. On appeal, according to a letter from the Sudanese Embassy in Brussels, the death sentences have been quashed and the case is to be reviewed.

MEPs welcome the quashing of the death sentence – if confirmed – and call on the Sudanese Government "to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Sadia Idris Fadul and Amouna Abdallah Daldoum". They also point out that "stoning is a cruel and inhuman punishment, and severe punishment of adultery violates the basic human rights and international obligations subscribed to by Sudan".

Minors condemned to be hanged

In the second case, on 3 May the Criminal Court of Nyala in South Darfur sentenced Zakaria Mohamed and Ahmed Abdullah Suleiman, both aged 16, to death by hanging on murder and robbery charges.

Parliament's resolution "strongly reminds the Government of Sudan that the use of the death penalty against child offenders is prohibited under international law". Indeed, Sudan has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, under which it has undertaken not to carry out executions of anyone under 18 years of age.

MEPs therefore call on the Sudanese Government "to repeal the death sentences against, and guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of, Abdelrahman Zakaria Mohamed and Ahmed Abdullah Suleiman".

Sudan's international obligations

On 14 March 2007 the European Commission announced an additional €45 million in humanitarian aid to Sudan (bringing the total so far for 2007 to €85), demonstrating the EU's commitment to the people of Sudan but Parliament's resolution stresses that, under the Cotonou Agreement, EU cooperation with ACP countries is subject to respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. Moreover, the Sudanese Government has signed up to a range of international agreements on human rights, which it should respect.

EU action

The EU institutions can play a role by bringing pressure to bear. **The resolution therefore calls on the Commission, Council and Member States "to condemn the use of the death penalty, flogging and other corporal, cruel or degrading punishments" and to promote women's rights and human rights in general in their relations with the Sudanese authorities.**

Lastly, the resolution **calls on the Sudanese Government to revise its judicial system and to ratify**

the Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty. The government is also urged to accede to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, as well as the Protocol of the Court of Justice of the African Union.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-6878-141-05-21-902-20070516IPR06781-21-05-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

For the text of the EP Resolution go to the EP website, under activities, parliamentary business, text adopted.

AMERICAS

Venezuela

► EP Resolution (24/05/2007)

TV station in Venezuela under threat

Freedom of speech is the central issue in a resolution which condemns the decision by the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, not to renew the broadcasting licence of one of the country's leading television and radio stations, Radio Caracas Televisión (RCTV). The current licence expires on 27 May 2007.

MEPs were divided over some aspects of this issue, with rival resolutions coming from the EPP-ED, ALDE and UEN groups on the one hand, and the PES, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL on the other. The former was adopted by 43 votes to 22 with 0 abstentions.

The adopted resolution states that non-renewal of the licence "will deprive a large section of the public of a pluralist source of information, thus undermining the right of the press to criticise the authorities". According to the Venezuelan government itself, Radio Caracas Televisión is the only media organ whose licence is not being renewed.

Venezuela government's legal obligations to protect free speech

The EP points out that Venezuela's Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, communication and information and that Venezuela is a signatory to various international pacts which underpin civil and political rights. MEPs believe that if there is any substance to accusations which have been made by the authorities against the RCTV management, these could be tested through "ordinary legal proceedings".

The government is urged, in the name of "the impartiality of the state", to ensure "equal treatment under the law for all media, whether privately or publicly owned and irrespective of all political or ideological considerations".

MEPs also call for "a dialogue between the Venezuelan Government and the country's private media" and they deplore "the government's total unwillingness to engage in dialogue in general, notably in the case of RCTV".

In order to keep up the pressure, the resolution concludes by calling on the relevant delegations and committees of Parliament to examine this issue.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-6878-141-05-21-902-20070516IPR06781-21-05-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

For the text of the EP Resolution go to the EP website, under activities, parliamentary business, text adopted.

Venezuela

- ▶ Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the non-renewal of the broadcasting licence of the Venezuelan channel RCTV (28/05/2007)

The European Union has noted with concern that the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has decided to let the broadcasting license for Radio Caracas Television (RCTV) expire on 27 May without holding an open competition for the successor license. The European Union believes it is important to recall the promises made by the Venezuelan authorities regarding an open competition and a tender process for that same licence.

The European Union shares with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela a belief in democratic values. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are essential elements of democracy. The European Union expects therefore that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will uphold these freedoms and support pluralism in the diffusion of information.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0528Venezuela.html

ASIA

Kashmir

- ▶ MEPs support bilateral talks, urge action on democracy and human rights in Kashmir (24/05/2007)

MEPs welcome and encourage bilateral talks between India and Pakistan to find a solution to the Kashmir conflict, while criticising Pakistan for lack of progress on democracy and human rights. The own-initiative report by Baroness Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne (ALDE, UK), passed by an overwhelming majority in the plenary in Strasbourg. (522 votes in favour 9 against with 19 abstentions)

MEPs emphasised that the recent "earthquake has had an immense impact on the lives of the Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC)," although "the size and impact of the earthquake had a much greater effect on the Pakistani side." They recommended that the EU consider favourably any further requests for assistance for reconstruction in the area, while also emphasising that the EU "take a firm stance in upholding the democracy and human rights clause in its agreements with both India and Pakistan."

The report welcomes the increase in the number of visas issued for travel between India and Pakistan, as well as the re-opening of truck and bus services, but adds that it is vital to remove "all obstructions and hindrances for all Kashmiris to travel freely to the entire state." It also argues for setting up exchange programmes, including a common University.

Political settlement

The House believes that the "resolution of the continuing conflict along the LoC can best be achieved jointly by a constant engagement between the governments of India and Pakistan, involving the peoples of all parts of the former princely state." It also commended both countries on the peace moves underway, and welcomed the restoration of bilateral talks. The report reaffirms that "all peoples have the inalienable right of self-determination," while pointing to the fact that "the pre-conditions for invoking the plebiscite have not been met at present."

Human rights and democracy

Although stressing that India and Pakistan (along with China) are both important EU partners, MEPs also note that "India is the world's largest secular democracy and has devolved democratic structures at all levels," while "Pakistan still lacks full implementation of democracy in AJK, [...] has yet to take steps towards democracy in Gilgit and Baltistan," and "President Musharraf has not been able

to implement his undertaking made in 1999 that 'the armed forces have no intention of staying in charge any longer than is absolutely necessary to pave the way for true democracy to flourish in Pakistan.'

MEPs also regret the "negative chain of events set in motion by the suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammed Chaudhry" and deplored the recent outbreaks of violence in Pakistan. They also regretted the "continuing ambivalence of the current Government of Pakistan with regard to the ethnic identity of Gilgit and Baltistan." The report calls on Pakistan to ensure free and fair elections in the AJK, Gilgit and Baltistan.

The House also expresses concern at "documented human rights violations by Pakistan" in Gilgit and Baltistan and at reports of torture and mistreatment, discrimination, and corruption in AJK. It also calls on the Indian government to "put an end to all practices of extrajudicial killings, 'disappearances', torture and arbitrary detention in Jammu and Kashmir," and to establish an independent commission of inquiry into serious violations of human rights by Indian security forces. MEPs call on both governments to allow international human rights groups access to the region for investigations, and stressed "the risk of maintaining the death penalty in a complex political situation" such as the one in the region, arguing for a moratorium to be established.

(...)

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-6874-141-05-21-903-20070516IPR06777-21-05-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

Burma/Myanmar

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the possible extension of the house arrest for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (24/05/2007).

The EU strongly reiterates its call on the authorities of Burma/Myanmar to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the National League for Democracy, from house arrest and to free all other political detainees. The Nobel Peace Prize laureate has now been held in isolation without charge for four consecutive years since the attack on her convoy on 30 May 2003, and has spent more than eleven of the last 17 years in detention.

The end of her present term of detention on 27 May 2007 should be seen as an opportunity for national reconciliation and genuine democratic transition, to which the government has repeatedly declared itself to be committed. The EU also joins other members of the international community who have called on Burma/Myanmar to listen to the voice of its people, and to allow them to develop and achieve prosperity.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0524Burma.html

Burma/Myanmar

- ▶ Presidency Statement on the extension of the house arrest of on opposition leader and Nobel Prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (25/05/2007).

The Presidency of the European Union deeply condemns today's decision of the Government of Myanmar to extend the house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for yet another year and deplores that all international appeals, including that of the EU on 24 May 2007, have once more gone unheard.

The government's decision demonstrates persistent unwillingness to engage all political and ethnic forces of the country in a genuine dialogue with a view to bringing about true national reconciliation and the establishment of democracy.

The Presidency of the European Union calls on the Government of Myanmar to review this decision with a view to inclusive dialogue, reconciliation and democratic change.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0525Myanmar.html

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Ukraine

► EU Presidency statement on developments in Ukraine (25/05/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union is increasingly concerned about recent developments in Ukraine. The Presidency urges President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yanukovich to assume the responsibility which they have to resolve the political crisis in Ukraine through negotiations, as agreed.

All efforts should now be focused on reaching a peaceful joint settlement quickly. The agreements reached on 4 May with regard to the holding of parliamentary elections represent an important starting point and should now be built upon.

The Presidency urgently appeals to all those with political responsibility to distance themselves from action which could result in any further escalation of the dispute, and in particular the use of armed security forces.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0525Ukraine.html

Ukraine

► EU Presidency statement on the situation in Ukraine (27/05/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union welcomes the agreement reached by President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yanukovich to hold parliamentary elections in the Ukraine on 30 September 2007. It urges both sides to now implement this political compromise step by step, and encourages the leadership to jointly advance the constitutional-reform process up to the agreed date of the elections in harmony with European values, in order to provide their country with a stable, reliable and universally-recognized framework for political discourse. It calls on all involved to help ensure the success of the compromise now achieved by refraining from unilateral measures.

With a view to the implementation of the agreements now reached, the Presidency will continue, as in the past, to maintain close contact with both sides.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0527Ukraine.html

Belarus

► EU Presidency statement on the release of members of the opposition in Belarus (29/05/2007)

The EU Presidency welcomes the recent release of two prominent members of the Belarusian opposition, Nikolai Statkevich and Pavel Severinets. It also welcomes the earlier release – although subject to conditions - of the four members of the organization Partnerstvo convicted in autumn 2006.

The Presidency calls upon the Belarusian Government to release all other political prisoners without delay.

The Presidency also calls for a stop to the repression of opposition youth groups. Following today's judgement against "Malady Front" it appeals to the Belarusian Government to release the already convicted "Malady Front" member Dmitri Dashkevich.

The Presidency reiterates the EU's offer to enter into a full partnership with Belarus within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. However, this cooperation is contingent upon the Belarusian Government professing its strong commitment to democratic values, human rights and the rule of law and initiating democratic reforms

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0529Belarus.html

Turkey

► **EU Presidency statement on the attack in Ankara** (23/05/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union was deeply shocked to learn of the ruthless terror attack in Ankara yesterday evening in which so many people were killed or injured.

The Presidency utterly condemns this terrible crime and extends its deepest sympathy to the families of the victims. The Presidency wishes those injured a speedy recovery and assures the Turkish people of its full support.

The people behind this cowardly crime must be tracked down and brought to justice. The fight against them must be waged with all the instruments that a State based on the rule of law has at its disposal.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0523Ankara.html

Serbia

► **Serbia on the road to Europe** (01/06/2007)

Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed the resumption of association negotiations between the European Union and Serbia. Following talks with Serbia's President Boris Tadic, the Chancellor said that the new Serbian Government's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was a crucial step.

"We want Serbia to be an anchor of stability in the Western Balkans", the Chancellor stressed. She welcomed the newly formed Serbian Government. The arrest of the former Serbian General Tolimir the previous night showed that Serbia, just like Bosnia and Herzegovina, was cooperating well with the International Tribunal. President Tadic affirmed his "firm political will" to continue the cooperation with the International Tribunal in The Hague.

Tolimir was charged by the International Tribunal on the grounds of his alleged participation in the Srebrenica massacre. The European Union had made the continuation of negotiations on association with Serbia contingent upon the Serbian Government's cooperation with the Tribunal.

Serbia is counting on Germany's support The Chancellor stated that the country's economic development is "of crucial importance" for ensuring that people accepted an opening up towards Europe. President Tadic called Germany a "key partner for Serbia, both strategically and within the EU". As the EU's largest economy, Germany was aware of its responsibility, the Chancellor stated. The German Government would therefore encourage German business to become more involved in Serbia.

Kosovo: differences of opinion and hope for compromise The talks also focused on Kosovo's future. The Chancellor once more expressed her support for the adoption of a UN Resolution based on the Ahtisaari Plan. This Plan envisages autonomy for Kosovo with its own national symbols monitored by the international community. Tadic stated once more that Serbia would not accept Kosovo's independence. Nevertheless, he was hoping for a constructive "political process" and saw scope for a negotiated compromise. Despite differing views on the Kosovo question, the Chancellor concluded, Germany supported Serbia's course towards the European Union.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/June/0601Tadic.html

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Lebanon

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the situation in Lebanon (21/05/2007)**

The Presidency of the European Union is deeply concerned at the recent outbreak of violence in Lebanon which killed over 50 people and injured numerous others.

It condemns in the strongest possible terms the attacks on Lebanese security forces and underlines its support for the government of Prime Minister Siniora. The Presidency also condemns the bomb attack of 20 May 2007 in Beirut which led to one fatality and caused several injuries. It conveys its sincere condolences to the family of the victim and wishes those injured a speedy recovery.

The Presidency calls on all sides in Lebanon to reject violence and to do everything possible to prevent the situation from escalating. It emphasizes the urgent need to meet the demands of the international community, and in particular to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701. This includes enforcing the Lebanese state's sole right to the use of force and disarming all militias in Lebanon as the prerequisite for the permanent stabilization of the country.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0521Libanon.html

Syria

- ▶ **EP Resolution on Syria (24/05/2007)**

In a resolution on Syria, Parliament expresses concern at recent verdicts against political prisoners and human rights activists in Syria, which it says affect every political strand of the opposition.

MEPs are "deeply concerned at the restrictions imposed on, and the charges made against, Mahmoud Issa, Fayek El Mir, Aref Dalila, Kamal al Labwani, Anwar Al Bunni, Michel Kilo, Suleiman Al-Shamar and Khalil Hussein for exercising their democratic rights and engaging in peaceful activities". The resolution refers briefly to the activities of each of these individuals

Parliament urges the Syrian authorities to comply strictly with international human rights law and to respect freedom of opinion and the right to a fair trial. More specifically, **it calls on the authorities to ensure that "the detainees are well treated and not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment" and that "detained or imprisoned persons are given prompt and regular access to their lawyers, doctors and families".**

In fact, says the resolution, the relevant Syrian bodies should "reverse the judgments, drop the charges still pending in the Military Court of Damascus and release all the abovementioned prisoners of conscience and political prisoners".

EU support for democracy campaigners in Syria

More broadly, Parliament calls on the European Union "to provide all necessary support to Syrian civil society activists through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the newly adopted European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), including by implementing without delay the so-called ad hoc measures dedicated to human rights defenders".

It also asks Syria, which could play an important role in promoting peace in the region, to improve and support human rights and freedom of expression in the country generally. MEPs would like Syria to support the setting up of "a penal tribunal with an international character" after the Judge Brammertz inquiry in Lebanon into the 2005 assassination of Rafiq Hariri.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-6878-141-05-21-902-20070516IPR06781-21-05-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

For the text of the EP Resolution go to the EP website, under activities, parliamentary business, text adopted.

Iran

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on human rights cases in Iran** (25/05/2007).

The European Union is deeply concerned by recent developments in the human rights situation in Iran. The EU is particularly troubled by the recent wave of arrests of civil society and women's rights activists. Teachers, students, union members, scholars and journalists exercising their right to freely express their opinion are facing constant intimidation, and stricter dress codes for men and women are being imposed by force. It has been noted with concern that at least three offices of non-governmental organisations were recently closed. The EU also wishes to draw attention to the worsening of the situation of ethnic and religious minorities in Iran, in particular to the plight of the Baha'i, who are excluded from public life, discriminated against and harassed.

The EU expresses its concern about continued executions in Iran and urges the Iranian Government to actively respect and protect the fundamental human rights of its citizens by completely abolishing, in particular, the juvenile death penalty, amputations and other cruel punishments, such as stoning. It calls on Iran to uphold its moratoria on these practices and, as a matter of urgency, to introduce them into law, as recommended by the last UN General Assembly resolution on human rights in Iran.

In particular, the EU **deplores the execution of Mohammad Moussavi** on 22 April 2007 in Shiraz, Iran, despite the fact that he was only 16 at the time of his crime. The EU had previously raised his case on two occasions with the Iranian authorities, including in 2005, when the Iranian authorities told us that the Chief of the Judiciary would intervene to stop any juvenile executions which came to his attention. The EU recalls its long-held position that the death sentence may not, in any circumstances, be imposed on persons who were below the age of 18 when their crime was committed.

This execution is a direct contravention of Iran's freely undertaken obligations under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It is also a breach of the moratorium on the execution of juvenile offenders that the Iranian Government announced in 2005 and which it assures the EU is still in place. The EU urges the Iranian Government to implement the moratorium fully and to consider alternative sentences for the juvenile offenders remaining on death row in Iran.

The EU also expresses its deep concern that two amputation sentences were carried out against thieves in Kermanshah, Western Iran on 27 February and 13 May 2007. These sentences contravene the commitment that Iran made to the EU in March 2003 to implement a moratorium on amputations. The EU calls on the Iranian Government to take action to ensure that no amputation sentences are handed down by judges or carried out in future.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0525Iran.html

Israel

► Pöttering takes peace message to Israeli Knesset (30/05/2007).

On day 3 of his visit to the Middle East President Pöttering addressed the Israeli Knesset and called for a "new start" in the region. He asked for consideration to be given to a joint peace conference, and reaffirmed Parliament's support for a two state solution to the Israeli-Palestine dispute. He spoke of the path of reconciliation that Europe had taken in the last 50 years as an example of creating peace and pledged to bring young people from all sides to the European Parliament in 2008.

During his visit to the region he had already held talks with several figures including Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and acting Israeli President and Speaker of the Knesset Dalia Itzik. On Thursday he travels to Amman to meet King Abdullah of Jordan

Speaking to Israeli MPs he stressed the shared mutual heritage: "we respect Israel's heritage, which is part of our own European heritage" he told them. On the holocaust he spoke of the "unparalleled suffering" inflicted on the Jewish people

"The region is once again in flames"

Turning to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute he said that "the region is once again in flames". He said that the European Parliament stands "shoulder to shoulder" with the Jewish and Palestinian people as they both "have the right to a secure existence". He stressed that "Israel has a right to defend itself. However, I urge Israel to avoid reacting disproportionately" - a move that would affect "innocent victims among the civilian population". He told MEPs that "international law is binding on us all".

International initiatives

He suggested a "joint conference" to bring both sides - and the international community together. He asked "would it not be possible for Israel, the Palestinians, the Arab States and the Middle East Quartet to consider together the format and procedures for and the substance of such a conference?" Mr Pöttering also reiterated the European Parliament's position of the best hope for peace being "a two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders" on the basis of the 'land for peace' principle.

He reminded those present that it was not so long since Europe had been in state of war. "Fifty years ago, former enemies decided to set aside the mistrust, not to say hatred, that still existed at the time and to instead choose reconciliation" he said. He also urged Israel to use the opportunities presented by the Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary Assembly for reconciliation.

Parliament initiatives

President Pöttering asked for Israel support for an initiative the European Parliament would like to host to celebrate the 2008 "Year of Intercultural Dialogue". A meeting of young people from Israel, Palestine, the Arab States and Europe would be a way of bringing people together he urged. Continuing on the theme of young people he said that "peace begins with the education of our children" and called for a re-examination of school books to make them free of prejudice and stereotypes.

"Palestinian mothers and wives weep just as Israelis do"

Reflecting on the conditions he had seen during the tour of the West Bank and the Gaza strip on Monday and Tuesday he told MPs that "I was deeply shocked by the economic, social and humanitarian

conditions which I saw there". Speaking of the need for funding to support vital services he said "I ask the Government of Israel: please release the Palestinian funds, of about 700 million dollars, which are based on customs revenue"

An important message of the speech was stressing the common humanity on both sides of the conflict. He told MPs that "the laughter of Palestinian schoolchildren is just as heart-warming as the laughter of Israeli schoolchildren" and that "Palestinian mothers and wives weep just as Israelis do, if their husbands have no work, or are in prison or dead".

Called for courage for a "new start"

During his address he also mentioned the inter-religious dialogue he had seen in Bethlehem. "This dialogue which aims to pull down the walls in people's hearts and minds is opposed by the wall that exists in reality". Also said that "holy places of religions should always be freely accessible". Finally he ended saying "we should have the courage to make a new start together".

Delegation and Plenary debate: support for restoring aid to Palestinians

Last week in Strasbourg MEPs debated the Middle East on 22 May and expressed grave concern at the escalation of violence in the Palestinian territories, Israel and Lebanon. During the debate a large majority of MEPs called for support for the Palestinian National Unity Government.

This came after a visit of a delegation in early May of MEPs to the Palestinian territories. They called for an end to the political and economic boycott of the Palestinian government.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/030-7239-148-05-22-903-20070530STO07238-2007-28-05-2007/default_en.htm

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

EU / UN REFORM

MISCELLANEOUS

EU Police Mission in Afghanistan

► **Council decides on EU Police Mission in Afghanistan (30/05/2007)**

The Council adopted today a joint action on the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan - EUPOL Afghanistan. The mission aims at contributing to the establishment of sustainable and effective civilian policing arrangements under Afghan ownership which will ensure appropriate interaction with the wider criminal justice system. It will also support the reform process towards a trusted and efficient police service which works in accordance with international standards.

The mission will carry out its tasks through monitoring, mentoring, advice and training at the level of the Afghan Ministry of Interior, regions and provinces. It will work towards a joint overall strategy of the international community in police reform and support the government of Afghanistan in coherently implementing their strategy.

Brigadier-General Friedrich Eichele (Germany) is appointed Head of Mission.

The mission is established for a duration of three years. The operational phase is due to begin on 15 June 2007.

EUPOL Afghanistan will consist of some 160 police, law enforcement and justice experts. Candidate and other third states may be invited to contribute to EUPOL Afghanistan.

The EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) will exercise the political control and the strategic direction regarding the mission. The High Representative will give guidance to the Head of Mission through the EU Special Representative for Afghanistan.

The financial reference amount intended to cover the expenditure (common costs) related to EUPOL Afghanistan until 29 March 2008 will be EUR 43,6 million.

EUPOL Afghanistan will be part of the overall EU commitment to Afghanistan and of a coordinated EU approach. In the period 2002-2006, the EU, as the second largest donor, contributed collectively EUR 3,7 billion (EC budget and EU member states) in aid to Afghanistan, amounting to one third of the aid provided by the international community.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.ASP?lang=en>

Middle East Quartet

► Middle East Quartet meets in Berlin (30/05/2007)

The Middle East Quartet, consisting of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, met in Berlin for the second time during the German EU Presidency to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier invited the Quartet members to Berlin in view of the tense situation in the Middle East at present. The recent escalation in violence between Israelis and Palestinians was the main issue discussed at the meeting. The Quartet urged a return to the cease-fire: "We all agree that the spiral of violence and counterviolence has to be stopped", was how the Federal Foreign Minister summed up the discussion to media representatives after the meeting. He went on to say that the message the Quartet wanted to send was that the international community was prepared to support the parties to the conflict in these difficult times.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier urged the parties not to lose sight of what was most important and called for the resumption of direct talks between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas. In order to restore calm on a lasting basis it was also necessary, he added, to give substance to the political perspective for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

To this end, the Quartet decided to meet the parties to the conflict in the region before the end of June. The dialogue with the Arab League will also be continued. Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier also expressed the hope that the direct talks between the Arab League and Israel will evolve into an ongoing dialogue.

The Quartet adopted a [joint declaration](#) at the meeting.

In addition to European Union Council President and German Foreign Minister Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the meeting was attended by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, EU High Representative for the CFSP Javier Solana, and EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/May/0530Nahost.html

Special tribunal for Lebanon

► EU Presidency Statement on the UN Security Council decision to set up a special tribunal for Lebanon (31/05/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union welcomes UN Security Council Resolution 1757 (2007) to establish a special tribunal to deal with the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and other political killings in Lebanon.

This UN Security Council Resolution sends out an important signal from the international community that politically motivated attacks and killings in Lebanon must not go unpunished.

The Presidency would welcome it if the Lebanese Republic were to seize the opportunity granted it by the UN Security Council to ratify the special tribunal itself by the 10 June 2007 deadline.

The Presidency calls on all States and the parties in Lebanon to help ensure that the tribunal is established quickly and to cooperate fully with the tribunal.

In this context, the Presidency reiterates its call to all sides in Lebanon to resolve the domestic political crisis through dialogue, by following democratic procedures and by respecting the country's democratically legitimized institutions.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/0531Libanon.html

ICTY/Serbia

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the arrest of the suspected war criminal Tolimir in Bosnia and Herzegovina** (01/06/2007)

The EU Presidency welcomes the arrest of Zdravko Tolimir, a suspected war criminal indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 31 May 2007. The ICTY charged Mr Tolimir in 2005 with crimes against humanity and war crimes connected to the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. He now has to be transferred without delay to the Criminal Tribunal in The Hague.

In particular, the EU Presidency welcomes the cooperation between the security authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia which led to this arrest. The two states have thus again proved their readiness to cooperate with the ICTY.

Following Tolimir's arrest, the number of persons charged with war crimes by the ICTY who remain at large has now fallen to five, including Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. The EU Presidency calls upon Serbia and upon Bosnia and Herzegovina to do everything they can to also arrest these persons and transfer them to the ICTY.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0601Tolimir.html