

SUMMARY

REGIONS:

AFRICA

Somalia

- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the attack on the Somali Prime Minister (04/06/2007)

Darfur

- ▶ MEPs and Nobel Prize laureates condemn lack of international action (05/06/2007)

Comoros

- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the situation in the Comoros (08/06/2007)

AMERICAS

Colombia

- ▶ EU presidency statement on the release of former FARC fighters (06/06/2007)

ASIA

Sri Lanka

- ▶ Post Tsunami reconstruction-triumph or tragedy? (7/06/2007)

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Serbia

- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the European Commission's announced intention to resume negotiations with Serbia on a Stabilization and Association Agreement (07/06/2007)

Kosovo

- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the deliberations G8 Heads of State and Government held on Kosovo at the Summit in Heiligendamm (07/06/2007)

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Iran

- ▶ EU Presidency statement on the anti-Israeli remarks made by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran (05/06/2007)

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

EU / UN REFORM

MISCELLANEOUS

EU-UN

- ▶ Federal Minister Steinmeier and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon sign Joint Statement on UN-EU Cooperation in the field of Crisis Management (07.06.2007)

Human Rights Council

- ▶ MEPs concerned that UN Human Rights Council fails to address urgent human rights situations (07.06.2007)

IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

EU - THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

Committee on Development

- June, 28, 2007

Committee on Foreign Affairs

- June, 12, 2007

Subcommittee on Human Rights

- June, 28, 2007

Subcommittee on security and defence

- June, 28, 2007

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

- June, 11, 2007

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- June, 25, 26, 2007

Committee on budgetary control

- June, 26, 27, 2007

CONFERENCES / EVENTS

REGIONS:

AFRICA

Somalia

► **EU Presidency Statement on the attack on the Somali Prime Minister** (04/06/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union categorically condemns the attack in Mogadishu on Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi, which left several people dead, including a local employee of the European Commission, and injured many others. The Presidency offers profound condolences to all those who have lost loved ones and wishes a speedy recovery to those who have been injured.

The Presidency of the European Union condemns this attack as an assault on the whole peace and reconciliation process in Somalia.

It urges all parties to agree an immediate and permanent ceasefire. Somalia's multiple problems can be resolved only by political means. All parties are called upon to continue doing everything possible to avert violence and promote an inclusive reconciliation process. The national reconciliation congress, which is planned for 14 June 2007 and is of vital importance for the restoration of government authority and democracy in Somalia, must go ahead.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0604Somalia.html

Darfur

► **MEPs and Nobel Prize laureates condemn lack of international action** (05/06/2007)

Protecting people against ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide is an international responsibility, that calls for co-ordinated international action, enforced with sanctions, said Nobel Peace Prize winners Jody Williams and Archbishop Desmond Tutu on Tuesday, at a special meeting of MEPs on the Darfur crisis.

Darfur, Archbishop Tutu said, has become "shorthand for the most ghastly example of our inhumanity towards one another. [...] Though there is much that we, African leaders, should be proud of, we should hang our heads in shame" when it comes to Darfur. Praising those who refused to let the crisis in Darfur go unnoticed over the last four years, the Archbishop also thanked MEPs for not giving up on Africa - and for not succumbing to what he referred to as "Afro-pessimism".

International responsibility to protect

International land-mine ban campaigner Jody Williams, who headed a UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) mission to Darfur in March, had little faith in the Sudanese authorities. The government, she said, is "very sophisticated in the art of promising things that never happen." It is "very difficult", therefore, "to believe Khartoum when they speak".

Her mission had concluded, she said, that a state is responsible for protecting its population against ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide. If it fails to do so, "the responsibility to protect" becomes "the responsibility of the international community, via the UN." That said, she added, "all [of us] have failed to protect the people of Darfur". I have no "Afro-pessimism but I have Darfurian pessimism".

Call for sanctions

"I support wholeheartedly the imposition, in the face of its intransigence, of specific, targeted sanctions against Khartoum", said the Archbishop. **The EU should make three key demands to Sudan: allow "unimpeded access" into Darfur both for a UN force and for humanitarian aid; and disarm the Janjaweed militia. Omar al-Bashir's government should be given a non-negotiable deadline for these conditions to be met; if it complies, sanctions would be suspended**, he suggested. "Let us not give up that change can happen in Khartoum", he said.

Call for co-ordinated peace initiative

Ms Williams argued that international actors should draw up "a single, co-ordinated peace initiative" accompanied by "mediation, funding and consistent diplomatic intervention". The EU should not hesitate to "isolate Sudan economically and politically" without waiting "for an elusive consensus in the Security Council", she added.

MEPs react and call for action

The Sudanese government has been in "Orwellian denial" of what amounts to genocide against its own people, and will "never admit the truth" argued Glenys Kinnock (PES, UK). The EU should demand "an immediate ceasefire", she proposed, later adding that "the international community [is] sleepwalking into another Rwanda".

Simon Coveney (EPP-ED, IE) expressed his outrage with the "lack of EU action" in Darfur. Four years into the crisis, he said, "we still hear that it's time to do something". By doing nothing, however, we "share some of the blame." We have heard the Council express "grave concern" about the situation in Darfur "fifty-four" times, he complained – and still have no targeted sanctions in place. Giving EU money to help the AU force in place is not enough, he argued. Instead, "we need to set deadlines and have consequences if they are not met".

Darfur is not only a humanitarian disaster, but "a political disaster", too, said Graham Watson (ALDE, UK), citing the international community's "impotence and incompetence" in protecting the world against genocide. What is needed is "a full African Union-United Nations force" – anything short of this will be insufficient, he argued, adding that Europe, meanwhile, "should be leading a Marshall Plan for Africa, starting with Darfur."

"We must – and we want – to do more", said Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström, announcing that the EU would provide a further €40 million to support the African Union's Mission to Darfur (AMIS). Underlining the need for an international consensus, the Commissioner saw it as essential that China and other actors apply their "diplomatic weight" in Khartoum.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit (Greens, FR) advocated using the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing to provide leverage against China, Sudan's most important diplomatic ally, trade partner and arms supplier. We must "genuinely threaten" the Olympic Games if the Chinese government does not revise its relations with Khartoum, argued the Greens' leader. "You cannot hold the Olympics of peace, while supporting the regime in Khartoum", he concluded.

Gernot Erler, speaking on behalf of the German Presidency of the Council, agreed on the need for a ceasefire, as well as for a "robust peace mission" to supervise any forthcoming peace process. The EU would continue contributing financially to AMIS, in preparation of a hybrid AU-UN mission, he said.

Jody Williams agreed with those who believe that rhetoric is meaningless without action: "If you're not prepared to protect the people of Darfur," she said, "more words on paper are not relevant".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-7412-156-06-23-902-20070604IPR07390-05-06-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

Ethiopia

- ▶ **Ethiopian government's stance on human rights attacked** (05/06/2007)

The lack of democracy and the large-scale human rights violations in Ethiopia were condemned by MEPs on Tuesday at a hearing held by the EP's Development Committee and the Human Rights Subcommittee. The Ethiopian Government's refusal to send a representative to speak to MEPs was also criticised.

"The human rights situation has deteriorated since 2005 with the imprisonment of members of the opposition and human rights defenders who still await trial", said Josep Borrell (PES, ES), chair of the Development Committee, at the start of the meeting

The former President of the European Parliament **expressed disappointment at the refusal to attend the meeting by the ambassador of Ethiopia to the EU, Ato Berhane Gebre-Christos**. In a letter addressed to MEPs, the Ethiopian foreign minister stated that the invitation could not be accepted, partly because "the list of invited speakers to this hearing does not indicate any intention to try and reach a balanced or accurate assessment of the stage of democratisation in Ethiopia today".

Referring to the parliamentary elections of May 2005, which were marred by fraud, the chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee, H el ene Flautre (Greens/EFA, FR), emphasised "the importance of envisaging follow-ups to election observations". "By acting as if there was nothing wrong, we strip the European Union's policy in this area of all credibility", she said

Judge Woldemichael Meshesha Damtto, former vice-chair of the commission of inquiry set up following the protests which took place in June and October 2005 against the election results, said the members of the commission had been pressed by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to alter their findings. "The civilians used no weapons, the forces used excessive violence, 193 people were killed, 760 were injured and 20,000 were arrested and held in military camps", he said. These claims were backed up by Mulualem Tarekegn, an opposition figure and former member of the Ethiopian Parliament, who today lives under international protection in Sweden

In an urgent resolution adopted in November 2006 in Strasbourg, the EP called on the Ethiopian Government "to publish unamended and in its entirety, and without any further delay, the final report of the Commission of Inquiry".

Ana Gomes (PES, PT), who led the EP election monitoring mission for the 2005 parliamentary elections and is attacked by name in the letter from the Ethiopian foreign ministry, said she was accustomed to the attitude of the Ethiopian authorities, who attacked her personally instead of taking notice of the EU observers' findings. "The attitude of the present government, which is violating the human rights and the aspirations to democracy of its people, and the behaviour of the Ethiopians in Somalia, who are committing atrocities, are a disgrace", she said

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-7479-156-06-23-902-20070605IPR07478-05-06-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

Comoros

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the situation in the Comoros** (08/06/2007)

The Presidency appeals to the various forces within the Union of the Comoros to work towards ensuring that the forthcoming elections of the presidents of the autonomous islands are transparent and go off without incident. It recalls that the European Union, in coordination with other partners involved in the development of the Comoros, has provided political and financial support for the current process. The EU and France have made the main contribution towards the UNDP Fund for the elections.

The Presidency welcomes the agreement of 11 May 2007 between the Union of the Comoros and the island of Anjouan, which sets forth the modalities for the political transition until the election of a new President of Anjouan. It points to the positive role of the African Union, the Arab League and South Africa in bringing about this agreement.

The Presidency welcomes the efforts of the international community for a peaceful resolution of the differences concerning the distribution of competences between the Union and the autonomous islands, as well as for the preservation of national unity. It calls upon Comorian leaders to strive towards improving the work of the institutions, to strengthen them and to start thinking about creating structures in preparation of the next elections envisaged in the constitution of the Union of the Comoros, and to make the necessary plans.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0608Komoren.html

AMERICAS

Colombia

- ▶ **EU presidency statement on the release of former FARC fighters** (06/06/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union takes note of the release from prison of a large number of former fighters of the FARC guerrilla group by the Colombian Government, and would call to mind once again the statement which it issued on 23 February 2007 to mark the fifth anniversary of the kidnapping of Ingrid Betancourt and her campaign director.

Against this backdrop, the European Union reiterates clearly and unambiguously that it condemns kidnappings regardless of where they occur. Therefore, the European Union once again urges illegal groups in Colombia to release all abductees immediately and to distance themselves from abductions and hostage-taking.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0606Farc.html

ASIA

Sri Lanka

- ▶ **Post Tsunami reconstruction-triumph or tragedy?** (7/06/2007).

The Asian Tsunami of 26 December 2004 was an event of unprecedented devastation. Almost 200,000 people died in 12 countries and many more had their homes and livelihoods destroyed. Almost 3 years on a public hearing in Parliament looked at how reconstruction was faring in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, whether the money donated was spent properly and what role NGOs have played in the reconstruction. A separate hearing debated human rights in Sri Lanka amid the conflict with Tamil rebels.

The hearing held by Parliament's Development Committee was opened by British Conservative MEP Nirj Deva who was in Sri Lanka that fateful day. He recalled the waves crashing against his hotel and described it as leaving "an indelible mark on my consciousness". MEPs were joined by NGOs and representatives of the Sri Lanka and Indonesian governments as well as human rights workers.

Sri Lanka: Tsunami early warning systems in place

Sri Lanka and its 20 million people suffered devastating losses in the Tsunami. The most iconic image was of the Colombo-Galle train lying scattered after being hit by the Tsunami. Over 800 passengers on board were killed. They were among the 35,000 people who died that day. The devastation was not just in terms of mortality. Over 100,000 homes and 400,000 livelihoods were also destroyed.

Mr Jayantha Samarasinghe of the Sri Lanka reconstruction agency told MEPs of how reconstruction efforts were proceeding. Among the figures he cited were that 134 of the 183 damaged schools were back in action, 80 railway bridges had been rebuilt and 75% of the fishing sector had been restored.

In terms of early warning he said that the Dutch government had donated 50 Tsunami early warning towers. He also said that villages in coastal regions in danger of flooding had all worked out "escape routes" to higher ground. He said that if enough time was given then villages could be evacuated in 2 minutes.

Margrete Auken for the Greens/European Free Alliance asked if there had been any caste discrimination in distributing aid. Mr Samarasinghe replied that "everybody helped everybody". Dutch PSE member Max Van den Berg - who saw the aftermath of the Tsunami in India - said he was "very impressed" by the way the authorities and civil society had pulled together.

Sir Robert Atkins of the European People's Party and European Democrats (EPP-ED) was critical of the structure of the reconstruction planning in Sri Lanka - describing it as a "recipe for a bureaucratic nightmare".

Indonesia: Tsunami creates peace process

The Island archipelago of Indonesia was the country worst affected by the Tsunami. The western tip of Sumatra was devastated with some villages losing 70% of their inhabitants. In total 130,000 people died, 37,000 are still missing and around 500,000 were made homeless. In total 5.18 billion euro on aid was pledged from 40 countries. Two thirds of EU aid went to Indonesia.

Nadjob Kesoema Riphath (Indonesian ambassador) outlined progress by end 2006. He said that of the 2000 schools damaged, 623 had been rebuilt, an early warning system installed and coastal protection had been boosted through measures such as salt water dykes installed.

Politically the Tsunami has had a beneficial effect according to the ambassador who said that the peace process in Aceh had been invigorated. Tsunami had helped bring together Indonesian government and Aceh rebels together and a peace process now in place. The ambassador thanked the international community for their help and spoke of the "outpouring of compassion in the hour of our greatest need".

NGOs: United Nations should have coordination role

The hearing was told that a staggering €8.8 billion Euros had been donated for all the countries affected. That works out to €5,000 per victim. The hearing was told that the average for a disaster was donations in the regions of €3-4 per person affected. The money came from EU, the UN, national Governments and the general public around the world who had watched the aftermath of the disaster on TV.

The question was whether the money had been spent correctly and how did NGOs perform in the short and medium term. In Indonesia for example 500 arrived in region after Tsunami with just 120 now remaining.

Speaking for the NGOs Hans van den Hoogen of Oxfam International Tsunami Management fund said that Oxfam had spent €117 million of the €158 million donated. He recommended that the UN should have a coordination role in disaster areas. He also said that local organisations were vital as was greater accountability by NGOs both to donors and people they were helping.

François Danel for the French NGO "Action Contre la Faim-ACF" said that a UN Coordination is vital and that people can become too dependent on aid. He said impartiality is the ACF watchword and EU humanitarian aid should be impartial of EU policy.

Anders Wijkman of the EPP-ED spoke of the need for strict standards for NGOs: "Bluntly, victims have the right to be protected from incompetence"

As the hearing drew to a close Nirj Deva asked "are we content with everything that happened?". "Perhaps not - but we can say that in general the money has been well spent".

Hearing II: Human Rights in Sri Lanka

In a separate hearing MEPs debated human rights abuses in Sri Lanka in the 25 year conflict which has claimed 60,000 lives. **There have been allegations that both government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam - the LTTE - otherwise known as the "Tamil Tigers" have committed grave human rights abuses.**

In Sri Lanka there was a delay in distributing aid due to Dispute between the Government in Colombo and Tamil rebels in the North. A proposed Post Tsunami Management Structure (PTOMS) was proposed in early 2005 whereby the Government and the LTTE would share decisions on tsunami aid allocations in the north and east. But discussions were drawn out on this at the end of 2005 following a decision by the Supreme Court.

Geoffrey Van Orden (EPP-ED) said the "the prime target of the LTTE is the Tamils themselves". He called for the Sri Lanka government to prosecute those who killed 17 aid workers in August 2006 as well as a "credible devolution package" for the Tamil homeland.

Max Van den Berg noted that "the logic of destroying your enemy does not achieve anything" as illustrated by the situations in Northern Ireland and Spain."

Robert. Evans (PES) agreed that "parallels can be drawn with the Northern Ireland, the Middle-East and Spain situations". "I don't believe a military solution is possible".

Nirj Deva (EPP-ED, UK) said "Sri Lanka was and is a functioning democracy. In 1956, it had the highest GDP per capita in Asia, besides Japan". "Why can't the LTTE come to the negotiating table and discuss peace? The government can't talk to itself?" he asked

François Danel for ACF was deeply moved when he spoke about the aid workers who had been killed in August 2006. **He asked for the Parliament to urgently consider the matter of human rights in Sri Lanka in a Plenary session.** Mrs Aruni Wijewardane - Sri Lankan Ambassador to Austria - said in her presentation that the Tamils had refused to come to the negotiating table and that the government in Colombo was ready to offer a model of autonomy to the Tamil region. She confirmed her government's will to find and prosecute the people responsible for the killing of the ACF aid workers.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/025-7351-156-06-23-903-20070601STO07342-2007-05-06-2007/default_en.htm

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Serbia

► EU Presidency Statement on the European Commission's announced intention to resume negotiations with Serbia on a Stabilization and Association Agreement (07/06/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union welcomes the announcement today (7 June) by European Commission President José Manuel Barroso that the negotiations with Serbia on a Stabilization and Association Agreement will be resumed as early as next week. This step was made possible by Serbia's recently demonstrated willingness to cooperate with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). At the end of her latest visit to Serbia ICTY Prosecutor Carla del Ponte also concluded that Serbia is willing to cooperate. Federal Minister Steinmeier was briefed by Ms del Ponte by telephone on the outcome of her visit.

The recently formed democratic Serbian Government had made cooperation with the ICTY one of its top priorities. The arrest at the end of last week – with the help also of Serbian security services - of General Zdravko Tolimir, who has been indicted for war crimes inter alia in Srebrenica, and his surrender to The Hague are a first tangible sign of this willingness to cooperate.

In this connection Federal Minister Steinmeier issued today in Berlin the following statement:

"I welcome today's announcement by Commission President Barroso that he intends to resume negotiations with Serbia on a Stabilization and Association Agreement as early as next week. Serbia's recently demonstrated willingness to cooperate with the ICTY – its contribution, for example, to the arrest of General Tolimir - has made possible this important step towards forging closer links between Serbia and the EU. I expect the Serbian Government to remain firmly committed to this path."

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0607Serbien.html

Kosovo

► EU Presidency Statement on the deliberations G8 Heads of State and Government held on Kosovo at the Summit in Heiligendamm (07/06/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union reaffirms the view of the EU that the issue of Kosovo's future status remains the most urgent political problem in the Western Balkans. In the interest of the stability of Kosovo, Serbia and the entire region this issue must be settled soon.

The European Union believes that a new Resolution by the United Nations Security Council must be the basis for a settlement of the status issue. From the start the European Union has supported the efforts of UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. The only way to settle the status issue is by a compromise that gives neither side everything it wants. President Ahtisaari has put forward a plan which offers a good basis for a settlement. In the European Union's view, this plan will contribute to the economic and political development of Kosovo and the entire region and enhance stability throughout the region.

The Presidency of the European Union calls upon all parties to intensify their efforts to ensure the adoption of a new Resolution by the United Nations Security Council. The aim must be to give people in the region a real prospect of living in peace and security.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0608Kosovo.html

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Iran

► **EU Presidency statement on the anti-Israeli remarks made by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran (05/06/2007)**

The Presidency of the European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the latest anti-Israeli remarks made by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Iran has thus once again alienated itself from the international stage and given the world community further cause for mistrust.

The Presidency of the European Union calls on Iran to distance itself clearly from all threats made towards Israel, to unconditionally acknowledge Israel's right to exist and to act responsibly in the region.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0605Iran.html

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EU-UN

- ▶ **Federal Minister Steinmeier and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon sign Joint Statement on UN-EU Cooperation in the field of Crisis Management** (07.06.2007)

In view of the international community's ever increasing peacekeeping tasks, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier today (7 June) signed in Berlin a Joint Statement on intensified cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in the field of international crisis management.

The European Security Strategy drawn up in 2003 attaches key importance to the United Nations and to cooperation between the world organization and the European Union. The EU and the United Nations are working actively together to promote effective multilateralism.

In the field of crisis management the EU is already an important and reliable partner of the United Nations. The successful European operation EUFOR RD Congo, which was deployed to support the efforts of MONUC, the UN mission in the country, to organize last year's elections or the major contributions EU Member States are making to UNIFIL, the UN mission in Lebanon, are just two examples of this future-oriented cooperation. The EU and the United Nations are also working closely together to support the African Union peace mission in Darfur. Within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy, the EU is preparing to conduct a wide-ranging rule of law and police mission in Kosovo, which will build on the progress achieved by the UN mission UNMIK.

The main focus of the memorandum signed today is on concrete measures to intensify the ongoing political dialogue between the United Nations and the EU. The memorandum builds on the Joint Declaration of 24 September 2003 on cooperation in crisis management and takes this document a significant step further. Accordingly, EU Member States will in future be more closely involved in existing consultation processes.

[Joint Statement of UN-EU Cooperation in the field of Crisis Management, Berlin, 7 June 2007](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/June/0607AAEUVNKrisenmanagement.html)
http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/June/0607AAEUVNKrisenmanagement.html

Human Rights Council

- ▶ **MEPs concerned that UN Human Rights Council fails to address urgent human rights situations** (07.06.2007)

In adopting a joint resolution from the PES, ALDE, UEN, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups, the House welcomes the organisation of special sessions to respond to urgent crises. The EP is concerned, however, at the failure of the Human Rights Council (HRC) to take action to address many of the world's most urgent human rights situations.

MEPs regret in particular the weakness of the HRC resolution on Darfur, as well as the decision taken under the confidential procedure to discontinue consideration of complaints of human rights abuses by Iran and Uzbekistan under the '1503' procedure. The House notes that the confidentiality under the '1503' procedure has not triggered the expected deliverables in terms of better cooperation from the authorities concerned. MEPs ask for the introduction of more transparent procedures

The House welcomes, in view of its condemnation four months earlier by UN General Assembly for human rights abuses and its lack of cooperation with Special Procedures, the fact that Belarus has not been elected to the Council

The European Parliament calls for competitive elections in all regions in order to provide real choice among UN Member States. MEPs regret that some countries with problematic human rights records have been elected, owing to clean slates

MEPs encourage the EU to continue to press for membership criteria for election to the HRC, as well as for monitoring of the actual implementation of the Member States' election pledges.

The resolution stresses that the credibility and effectiveness of the HRC in the protection of human rights rests on cooperation with Special Procedures and their full implementation, as well as on the adoption of the reforms and mechanisms in a way which will strengthen its ability to address human rights violations around the world

EU involvement

MEPs call on the countries which have entered into agreements with the EU that include human rights clauses to cooperate with the EU in increasing the potential of the Council to enhance human rights around the world. The EP calls on its interparliamentary delegations and assemblies to examine this aspect at their meetings

Finally, the House recognises the active involvement of the EU and its Members States in the first year of work of the HRC and looks forward to a successful Presidency of the UNHRC by Romania.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-7571-157-06-23-902-20070606IPR07545-06-06-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm