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▶ “Ad hoc” committee on women's rights in the Euro-Mediterranean countries: Monday, 26 June 2006, Warsaw, Poland

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

➤ 29 May et 1st June 2006

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Committee on Development

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➤ 19 June 2006

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➤ 20 June 2006

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REGIONS:

AFRICA



AMERICAS



ASIA

Timor

► **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Timor-Leste** (29/05/06)

The European Union is concerned over the deteriorating security situation in Timor-Leste. The EU calls on all parties involved **to refrain from any further violence and to contribute towards re-establishing public order and tranquillity.**

The EU welcomes the positive responses by the Governments of Portugal, Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia to requests made by the Government of Timor-Leste to dispatch defence and security forces with a view to assisting Timor-Leste in restoring and maintaining security.

The EU also welcomes **the initiatives of the Secretary-General of the UN, including his intention to send a special envoy to Timor-Leste in order to facilitate the political dialogue.**

The European Union will continue to monitor closely the situation in Timor-Leste.

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

China

► **Presidency press statement on EU-China human rights dialogue** (26/05/06)

The European Union and China held the 21st round of the EU-China human rights dialogue on 25-26 May 2006. Meeting in Vienna, senior officials from the EU and China discussed in an open and constructive way a wide range of key human rights issues, focusing on the internal human rights situation in China, as well as co-operation on human rights in international fora. The human rights dialogue has been taking place on a bi-annual basis since 1995 and forms an essential part of overall EU-China relations. The Council of the EU has established a number of key areas of concern on which it wishes to see concrete progress on the ground in China.

The 21st EU-China Human Rights Dialogue focused in particular on the issue of **freedom of expression**, following worrying trends in China towards **more restrictions in the media and on the internet, arrests and intimidation of journalists and individuals**, as well as closure of newspapers. The dialogue round also covered extensively concerns relating to **administrative detention and in particular the system of**

re-education through labor. The EU pressed for the implementation of recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on torture, Manfred Nowak, following his recent visit. **As a positive step towards the prevention of torture,** the Chinese side informed the EU on measures to establish a system of taping of police interrogations. **On death penalty,** the Chinese side provided information on the status of the review by the Supreme People's Court of all death penalty cases. In this connection, the EU addressed the issue of organ transplantation, in particular from executed prisoners. The EU expressed concern **regarding freedom of religion and rights of minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang.** There was also an extensive discussion about the situation of NGOs in China. Questions surrounding the recent establishment of the UN Human Rights Council were prominently reflected on the agenda. In reply to Chinese questions, the EU provided the Chinese side with answers to particular human rights issues in the EU. In the context of the 21st round of the dialogue, meetings were held with the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia and with the Austrian Human Rights Advisory Board. Immediately prior to the dialogue, a two-day EU-China legal seminar took place with NGOs, academics and government representatives from China and EU Member States which focused on human rights education and implementation of recommendations made by UN Special Rapporteurs and Treaty Bodies. The outcome of the seminar was addressed in the ensuing discussion at the dialogue.

The EU Troika was led by Ambassador Ferdinand Trauttmansdorff, Legal Adviser, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Austria, which currently holds the EU Presidency. The Chinese delegation was led by Ambassador Wu Hailong, Director-General for International Organizations, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of China. **In a meeting of the Chinese delegation with Dr. Johannes Kyrle, Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs of Austria, the EU highlighted areas in which it wishes to see progress on human rights in the context of overall relations with China, in particular the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the release of remaining 1989 prisoners, and the reform of the system of re-education through labour.**

The next round of the EU-China human rights dialogue is scheduled to be held in China in the second half. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/latest.ASP?lang=1&cmsid=363

Maldives

► **EU Declaration on recent arrests of demonstrators in the Maldives** (25/05/06)

Over the last months, the Maldivian security forces have repeatedly cracked down on peaceful gatherings in Male. The EU is very concerned over recent numerous arrests of peaceful demonstrators by security forces. These arrests create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among the civilian population and go against the spirit of the Government's Road Map for the Reform Agenda published in March 2006.

The EU considers freedom of expression and freedom of association fundamental democratic rights, which only serve a purpose if the people can exert these rights free from fear and intimidation. The activities of the Maldivian Government's security forces cast serious doubts on a full commitment to the reform process. The EU calls upon the Maldivian Government to act in the spirit of its Road Map for the Reform Agenda and to create a favourable atmosphere for the political reforms it has committed itself to.

The EU considers it important for the government at this stage clearly to show the people of the Maldives a more accommodating approach to political opposition. As it does for the opposition to engage constructively in return.

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

Myanmar

► **Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Burma/Myanmar**
(25/05/06)

The EU notes with deep concern that the process of democratisation in Burma/Myanmar has recently suffered a worrying setback as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has stepped up its pressure against ethnic groups and the two main political parties, the National League for Democracy and the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy. The EU notes that the actions of the SPDC clearly contradict its professed intention to establish a genuine democratic nation.

The EU remains deeply concerned that NLD leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) has been detained continuously for three years without charge since the attack on her convoy on 30 May 2003. The EU notes that the house arrest of ASSK will expire on May 27 and urges the Burmese government to fully restore her freedom and civil liberties. The EU is hopeful that the Burmese government will use this opportunity to enter again into a dialogue with the NLD leadership. The EU considers the recent statements made by the NLD a clear signal of the NLD's commitment to reaching a peaceful transformation and urges the SPDC to respond positively and constructively.

The EU is concerned about the detention of numerous elected members of Parliament and calls for the immediate release of all of the estimated 1150 political prisoners in Burma/Myanmar. It is particularly concerned to learn that humanitarian conditions in a number of prisons are deteriorating.

The EU urges the SPDC to cease its harassment of politicians and human rights defenders, to lift restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, and to accelerate the democratisation process in Burma/Myanmar. This process should engage all political and ethnic forces of the country in a genuine dialogue and lead to the speedy completion of a constitution under civilian rule, which commands popular support and promotes a peaceful and sustainable development.

The EU welcomes that UN Undersecretary General Gambari was able to meet the most senior leaders of the SPDC as well as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and representatives of her party during his recent visit to Yangon. The EU reaffirms its support for UN efforts to help Burma/Myanmar move in the direction of an all-inclusive democracy and true national reconciliation and calls on the SPDC to co-operate with the UN and its agencies.

The EU will continue to closely monitor the situation in Burma/Myanmar and will coordinate its action with other countries and organizations, including Asian States that have shown keen interest in encouraging Burmese authorities to engage in a credible reform process.

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

Russie

► 17th EU-Russia Summit, Sochi (25/05/06)

The leaders of the EU and Russia met today in Sochi in Russia for the seventeenth EU-Russia summit. The friendly and open meeting focused on the practical implementation of the Road Maps for the Four Common Spaces as agreed at the previous EU-Russia Summit on 10 May 2005.

The leaders welcomed the ongoing work on the Common Economic Space (CES) which has the overall objective of bringing down barriers to trade and investment and promoting reforms and competitiveness, based on the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and good governance (...). **In the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice** the leaders welcomed the signature of agreements on visa facilitation and on readmission, which took place in the margins of the summit. The two agreements will open the way for easier contacts across the European continent, while creating conditions for effectively fighting illegal immigration. The particular importance of the ongoing cooperation to tackle common challenges for both the EU and Russia, like terrorism, drugs and organised crime, and the need to improve border management and migration control was underscored. **The leaders also noted the results of the third round of EU-Russia Human Rights Consultations held in Vienna on 3 March 2006, and looked forward to the next regular round during the Finnish EU Presidency.**

In the Common Space of External Security, the leaders reviewed co-operation on the international scene, including on countries in the common neighbourhood (Belarus, Moldova, South Caucasus). The EU side expressed hope for a breakthrough in Nagorny-Karabakh. They also welcomed recent steps to intensify practical co-operation in crisis management and stressed the need to strengthen multilateral non-proliferation mechanisms (...)The leaders discussed the future EU-Russia relations after the expiry of the first period of validity of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) in 2007. They looked forward to the start of negotiations for a new agreement which should provide a comprehensive and durable framework for the EU-Russia strategic partnership and agreed to allow the PCA remain valid until a new agreement enters into force.

Both sides addressed, in a constructive spirit, internal developments in the EU and Russia, including the situation in Chechnya. They welcomed the agreement on the terms of the European Commission's 20 Mio Euro programme for assistance to socio-economic recovery in the North Caucasus as a further sign of EU willingness to cooperate in this region.

They also discussed a wide range of international issues of strategic importance, including Iran, the Balkans and the Middle East Peace Process.

Belarus

► Council adopts financial restrictive measures (18/05/06)

The Council adopted a common position amending common position 2006/276/CFCP **imposing restrictive measures against certain officials of Belarus by freezing all funds and economic resources of persons who are responsible for the violations of international electoral standards and the crackdown on civil society and the democratic opposition in the context of the 19 March 2006 presidential elections and those natural or legal persons, entities or bodies associated with them, as listed in the annex (8818/06)**. The common position also specifies that no funds or economic resources shall be made available, directly or indirectly, to or for the benefit of the persons concerned.

The Common position establishes a list of 36 persons concerned, including President Lukashenko. These measures are adopted in addition to travel restrictions against President Lukashenko, members of the leadership and certain officials of Belarus imposed by common position 2003/276/CFSP adopted by the Council on 10 April. At that time, the Council had indicated that further targeted measures could be decided (See 10 April Council conclusions on Belarus in External relations press release 7939/06).

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

Montenegro

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union regarding the referendum in Montenegro (23-05-06)

The European Union welcomes the successful organisation of the referendum on the independence of Montenegro. The EU notes the ODIHR assessment that the referendum was conducted overall in line with OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and other international standards for democratic electoral processes. The conduct of the referendum was a sign of maturity of the political forces and people of Montenegro. The EU calls on all sides concerned to accept the result. For its part, it will fully respect the decision of the people of Montenegro. **The European Union calls on Belgrade and Podgorica to take up, as rapidly as possible, a direct dialogue on the way ahead. The European Union stands ready to support this dialogue. The European Union reconfirms the European perspective of the Western Balkans on the basis of the Stabilisation and Association Process.**

http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/2305montenegro1.html

MAGHREB, MASHREK, GULF STATES AND MIDDLE EAST

Iraq

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the formation of the government in Iraq (22-05-06)

The European Union warmly welcomes the formation of an Iraqi government of national unity following the elections of 15 December 2005. This completes the political transition process in Iraq, as foreseen in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1546 and 1637. The European Union firmly believes that the formation of this government of national unity and a swift subsequent confirmation of the ministers of interior and defence will contribute significantly to the political and economic reconstruction of Iraq in a spirit of reconciliation by promoting inclusiveness and anti-sectarian policies. **This will represent another important step towards national consensus and will contribute to the stabilisation of the country and its further integration into the international community.** The European Union conveys to the newly formed government its best wishes for success in view of the challenges ahead. The European Union reaffirms its commitment to assist in building an independent, secure, stable, unified, democratic and prosperous Iraq.

http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/CFSP_Statements/May/1905irak.html

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