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- July, 9, 2007 Strasbourg

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REGIONS:

AFRICA

Darfur

- ▶ **EP resolution on Darfur: send an international force to Darfur** (28/06/2007)

In a resolution adopted on developments in Darfur, the parliamentarians consider that the **deployment of a hybrid UN/African Union force “must take place as soon as possible”**. They call on the Sudanese government to “disarm all the rebels including the janjaweed, and to end the bombing of the Darfur region”.

“We must avoid what happened in ex-Yugoslavia, where we were late taking action and late in intervening and we all know the consequences that followed,” said Josep Borell (PES, ES) Chair of the European Parliament Development Committee.

Mr Borrell will lead a delegation of five MEPs to Darfur from 30 June to 6 July

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/028-8340-174-06-25-903-20070625IPR08339-23-06-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

Zimbabwe

- ▶ **EP resolution on Zimbabwe** (28/06/2007)

Zimbabwe, a country suffering from serious famine and huge violations of human rights, was the subject of lively debates at the 13th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, which completed its work in Wiesbaden on Thursday.

In the absence of a delegation from Zimbabwe, it was decided in advance that there would not be a vote on a resolution on the situation in that country during this meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA). Clear positions on the regime of Robert Mugabe were nevertheless expressed during the debates.

Certain ACP delegations criticised the holding of a debate in Wiesbaden given the absence of Zimbabwean delegation. JPA Co-President Glenys Kinnock (PES, UK) said she did not understand the reluctance to discuss the issue of Zimbabwe: “People are suffering in the country.” She pointed out that Nelson Chamisa, an MP from the opposition and spokesperson for the Movement of Democratic Change was attacked and suffered a head injury at Harare airport on his way to a meeting of JPA in Brussels in March. “Our Assembly has the responsibility to address this issue because Zimbabwe has signed the Cotonou Agreement”, she concluded.

Peya Mushelenga (Namibia) expressed his disagreement with “all those who took sides on the issue of Zimbabwe” and said that other topics should be addressed like the situation in Palestine, the blockade on Cuba and Iraq.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/028-8340-174-06-25-903-20070625IPR08339-23-06-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

AMERICAS

ASIA

Hong Kong

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the 10th anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (28/06/2007)**

The European Union expresses its sincere congratulations to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of its establishment. The principle of one country, two systems has generally worked well in practice and Hong Kong today remains a success.

The relationship between the European Union and the HKSAR has continued to develop positively in all fields since Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. People-to-people contacts were supported by granting visa-free access to the EU for Hong Kong residents. Moreover, the EU-HKSAR Customs Co-operation Agreement of 1999 also helped to underpin the independent functioning of the HKSAR economy.

In the view of the European Union, applying the principle of "one country, two systems", as set out in the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984, has ensured the continued stability and prosperity of Hong Kong.

Furthermore, the European Union supports the respect for human rights and individual freedoms set out in the Joint Declaration and enshrined in the Basic Law of the HKSAR, particularly in relation to the autonomy and independence of the executive, legislature and judiciary of the HKSAR

The European Union also expresses confidence that the high degree of autonomy, guaranteed to Hong Kong in the Joint Declaration and enacted by the Basic Law, will be maintained in the future, and that substantial progress will be made soon towards universal suffrage.

In order to contribute further to Hong Kong's political, economic and social development, the European Union will continue to develop and deepen its cooperation and dialogue with the HKSAR.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0628HongKong.html

Central Asia

- ▶ **Federal Minister Steinmeier presents EU Central Asia Strategy (27/06/2007)**

On Saturday (30 June) Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier will invite his counterparts from the five Central Asian states to meet with him in Berlin. Following the first event of this kind in March in Astana this is the second meeting between the EU and representatives of all five Central Asian countries.

During that meeting Federal Minister Steinmeier will present the EU strategy for a new partnership with Central Asia developed during Germany's EU Council Presidency and adopted during the Brussels European Council on 21 and 22 June. This strategy for the first time sets out political guidelines for a considerably enhanced EU commitment in Central Asia.

With its Central Asia concept the EU underlines the region's growing strategic significance due to its location between Europe, Asia, Russia and South Asia. The EU shares a broad spectrum of interests with Central Asia, ranging from efforts to achieve peace in Afghanistan, via the fight against drugs transit and extremism, improved regional cooperation, to the diversification of energy supplies.

The EU's strategy on Central Asia favours a balanced bilateral and regional approach which takes due account of the specific requirements and performance of each individual country. Regular political dialogue with the countries of the region will aim not only to increase cooperation in the various fields such as economics, transport, energy, the environment and education, but also to create a broader foundation of shared values based among other things on the rule of law and **human rights**.

The European Council will evaluate the implementation of the Central Asia strategy for the first time in June 2008 and at least every two years thereafter.

At Saturday's meeting the EU will be represented by the current EU President, Federal Minister Steinmeier, his successor in office, Portuguese foreign minister Dr Luis Amado, and the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, Pierre Morell. The Central Asian states are expected to send their foreign ministers - Kyrgyz Republic, Prof Ednan Karabayev; Kazakhstan, Marat Tashin; Tajikistan, Hamrokhon Zarifi, as well as the deputy foreign minister of Uzbekistan, Dr Ilkhom Nematov, and a representative from Turkmenistan.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/June/0627AAZAS.html

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Kyrgyzstan

- ▶ **EU Presidency statement on the reform of criminal law and the abolition of the death penalty in Kyrgyzstan** (29/06/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union welcomes the decisions taken by the Kyrgyz Government on 27 June 2007 concerning the reform of criminal law and the execution of criminal sentences. The introduction of suspended sentences and the strengthening of the courts are major contributions towards enhancing human rights in Kyrgyzstan. The country is thereby underlining its determination to respect international human rights standards and live up to its commitments in the framework of the OSCE.

In this context the Presidency of the European Union welcomes in particular the decision of the Kyrgyz President Bakijev to abolish the death penalty in Kyrgyzstan. This is an important step, also with a view to the EU's goal of a worldwide abolition of the death penalty.

As part of its Central Asia Strategy adopted on 22 June 2007, the European Union will continue to actively cooperate with all states in the region with a view to improving the human rights situation.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0629Kirgisistan.html

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Middle East

- ▶ **Quartet Representative- Quartet Statement 27 June 2007** (27/06/2007).

Quartet Principals noted that recent events in Gaza and the West Bank make it more urgent than ever that we advance the search for peace in the Middle East. The Quartet reaffirms its objective to promote an end to the conflict in conformity with the Roadmap and expresses its intention to redouble its efforts in that regard. The urgency of recent events has reinforced the need for the international community, bearing in mind the obligations of the parties, to help Palestinians as they build the institutions and economy of a viable state in Gaza and the West Bank, able to take its place as a peaceful and prosperous partner to Israel and its other neighbours.

To facilitate efforts to these ends, following discussions among the Principals, today the Quartet announced the appointment of Tony Blair as the Quartet Representative. Mr. Blair, who is stepping down from office this week, has long demonstrated his commitment on these issues.

As Quartet Representative, he will:

- Mobilize international assistance to the Palestinians, working closely with donors and existing coordination bodies;
- Help to identify, and secure appropriate international support in addressing, the institutional governance needs of the Palestinian state, focusing as a matter of urgency on the rule of law;
- Develop plans to promote Palestinian economic development, including private sector partnerships, building on previously agreed frameworks, especially concerning access and movement; and
- Liaise with other countries as appropriate in support of the agreed Quartet objectives.

As Representative, Tony Blair will bring continuity and intensity of focus to the work of the Quartet in support of the Palestinians, within the broader framework of the Quartet's efforts to promote an end to the conflict in conformity with the Roadmap. He will spend significant time in the region working with the parties and others to help create viable and lasting government institutions representing all Palestinians, a robust economy, and a climate of law and order for the Palestinian people.

Tony Blair will be supported in this work by a small team of experts, based in Jerusalem, to be seconded by partner countries and institutions.

The Quartet representative will report to and consult regularly with the Quartet and be guided by it as necessary.

The Quartet looks forward to welcoming Mr. Blair at its next meeting.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/June/0627Quartet.html

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MISCELLANEOUS

International Day in support of the victims of torture

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June 2007 (26.06.2007)

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the International Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) and the tenth United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (26 June), **the EU underlines the priority it attaches to the global eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and to the full rehabilitation of torture victims.**

The EU firmly believes that the absolute ban on torture is one of the cornerstones of the universal human rights framework and recalls that no exceptional circumstances whatsoever, be they a state of war, acts of terrorism, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification for torture or any other form of ill-treatment. All States have a duty to ensure that individuals are not exposed to the risk of such treatment. States must undertake independent and effective investigations into all allegations of torture and ill-treatment, provide redress to the victims, prosecute the perpetrators and ensure that such crimes do not take place. **The EU reiterates its condemnation of any action aimed at legalising or authorising torture and ill-treatment and calls on all States consistently to uphold the fundamental right to freedom from torture.**

The EU urges all States which are not yet parties to accede without further delay to the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It is an instrument which provides the international community with global measures for the protection of freedom from torture. States parties are inter alia obliged to incorporate the crime of torture into their domestic law and to punish torture where it occurs appropriately. Moreover, UNCAT establishes a regime under which reports have to be submitted by States parties in a timely and complete manner and where individual as well as inter-State communications can be examined to monitor implementation at the national level. The EU welcomes the ratification of UNCAT over the past year by Andorra, Montenegro, and San Marino.

The EU has furthermore warmly welcomed the entry into force in 2006 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention (OPCAT). By providing for a mechanism for independent, international visits, the Protocol strengthens the international anti-torture framework. Openness and transparency are essential factors in combating torture. As the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has repeatedly stated, the inspection of places of detention constitutes one of the most effective preventive measures against torture. The establishment of independent national and international monitoring mechanisms under OPCAT should have a decisive effect in eliminating the barbaric practice of torture. The EU therefore

strongly encourages all States to consider signing and ratifying OPCAT as a matter of priority. The EU welcomes the ratification of OPCAT over the past year by Armenia, Benin, Brazil, Cambodia, Liechtenstein, Moldova, New Zealand, Peru, Senegal, Serbia and Ukraine.

The EU strongly supports the primary role of the United Nations in fighting torture and supporting torture victims worldwide, in particular the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, the UN Committee against Torture, the newly established Sub-Committee on Prevention of Torture, the UN Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture and the OHCHR. The EU also commends the regional monitoring bodies, including the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), for their valuable contributions. It is essential that all states cooperate in good faith with the UNSR on torture and the other international monitoring mechanisms.

The daily work of these institutions is complemented by a multitude of civil society actors, working tirelessly to raise public awareness of torture, including prevention of torture and rehabilitation of torture victims. The EU takes this opportunity to pay tribute to the unrelenting efforts by the many NGOs and individuals working determinedly and diligently for the prevention of torture and to alleviate the suffering of victims. The EU also welcomes the pivotal role played by torture rehabilitation centres worldwide. **The EU is determined to maintain its leading role in supporting civil society activities against torture worldwide and recalls that the prevention of torture and the rehabilitation of torture victims remain priorities for funding under the new European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).**

The EU is determined to intensify its efforts, particularly its political, diplomatic and financial initiatives undertaken in the framework of its Guidelines against Torture. The EU stands ready to work with all interested partners towards the objective of securing a world free from torture.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/June/0626Folteropfer.html

Carla del Ponte at the EP and the issue of Kosovo

- ▶ **“Serbia must deliver war criminals before signing stabilisation agreement with the EU”** (26/06/2007)

Serbia must deliver indicted war criminals to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) before it can sign any Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU. ICTY Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte told the EP's Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday. Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic assured MEPs that "Serbia stands ready to fulfil its obligations," while warning that his government is not willing to accept an independent Kosovo.

On the EU's role in ensuring cooperation with the ICTY, MEPs and guests broadly agreed. "EU conditionality is a crucial tool for encouraging cooperation with the ICTY. 90% of those in custody now are there as a direct result of EU conditionality," said Ms Del Ponte. She also said the EU should not sign an SAA with Serbia until the four fugitives still at large are arrested and extradited. "We need to make clear that [Radovan] Karadzic and [Ratko] Mladic shouldn't be under the illusion that they can just wait out the ICTY," she said, adding that "Serbia has the political will now to hand over the four remaining fugitives. Co-operation has not been full or consistent, but recent signs are positive."

Speaking later in the afternoon, the Serbian Foreign Minister echoed this sentiment, noting that "all fugitives must be located, arrested and extradited." He assured MEPs that his government had won the elections on a platform of co-operation with the ICTY and regards this as a political priority. The minister said that his government's fundamental priority was to work towards full membership in the European Union, and expressed his hope that the SAA could be signed by the end of this year.

Kosovo

On Kosovo, views were much less harmonious. Mr Jeremic declared that "an imposed solution is not sustainable, for it would sow the seeds of future conflicts in the region." He said that the Serbian government was "ready to talk, but not if the outcome of the talks is pre-determined." He called for a common, compromise solution to be found under the auspices of the UN, which would "reflect the wishes of the stakeholders: the people of the Western Balkans."

Hannes Swoboda (PES, AT) admitted that "we may have to agree to disagree on the Kosovo issue," but warned the minister that "it is your responsibility to prepare for the eventuality of an 'internationally imposed' status settlement, and ensure that it does not cause turbulence in the region." Mr Jeremic replied that "no country in the world would accept the taking away of a part of its sovereign territory," and warned that Serbia would have to reconsider its relations with any country that unilaterally recognised Kosovo's independence.

Responding to criticism from Angelika Beer (Greens/EFA, DE), who claimed the prosecutor had "overstepped [her] role by calling for the final status talks on Kosovo to be delayed," Ms Del Ponte replied that "politics always tries to interfere with my work, so I must sometimes fight back. I toed the line, but I did not overstep my competences." She said she only called on the UN Security Council to act in a way as to avoid negative consequences for the apprehension of fugitives still at large.

Jelko Kacin (ALDE, SL), the EP's rapporteur on Serbia, argued that whatever the disagreements, the Parliament should take care to keep Serbia's accession prospects and the final status question of Kosovo separate. This view was supported by most of the political groups in the committee, who will be voting on a report on EU-Serbian relations in September.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-8248-177-06-26-903-20070625IPR08228-26-06-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

EU Summit, Germany Presidency

► **Debate on the EU summit and Germany Presidency** (27/06/2007)

In a debate on the EU summit of 21-23 June and the achievements of the German presidency, most speakers broadly welcomed the summit's success in agreeing at last on the content of a reformed EU treaty, even if the result was not ideal.

Introducing the debate, **Parliament's President Hans-Gert Pöttering** welcomed Council President-in-Office Angela Merkel on what was her fourth appearance before the EP in six months, saying this should set an example to future Council presidencies. He thanked her warmly for her good will, her patience and above all her determination, without which the summit's result could not have been achieved.

Mrs Merkel, on behalf of the Council, *opened the debate by telling* the House that following the summit "Europe can once again look forward to a period of strength and confidence". The summit had been a success not just for Europe but especially for the European Parliament, which had always "defended the substance" of the constitutional treaty.

She believed the "fears of a European super-state and a dilution of national sovereignty" had been met, partly by dropping the reference to EU symbols, while real success had been achieved on several fronts.

The EU's internal rules and policies had been overhauled. She listed all the key changes, including a "European political quantum leap" on foreign policy: the High Representative will be a Commission vice-president, with a European diplomatic service. Majority voting in Council will make it easier to tackle cross-border crime. And the transfer of powers is "no longer a one-way street", since some powers may be returned to Member States.

Steps had been taken to bring Europe closer to its citizens and a solution had been found on the Charter of Fundamental Rights. "We know", she said, "that the United Kingdom has its own legal traditions and we must respect this" but she was glad the other Member States had agreed to accept the charter as legally binding

Lastly, the European Parliament would have more rights under the new treaty. For example, as a rule the EP will be "on an equal footing in legislation" with the Council and will now elect the President of the Commission.

The EU states were now in a position to focus on the big issues and move forward together. She cited an African proverb: "If you want to move fast, go alone. If you want to go further, move together".

She saw the summit agreement as closing the circle of the German presidency and said she hoped that in 2057 people would be able to look back and say "they did something right in 2007"

Commission President José Manuel Barroso recalled his institution's declared "twin-track" aim, first to deliver results for citizens and second to get treaty reform under way. As successes on the first point, he cited measures on energy and climate change, innovation, red tape and the mobile roaming regulation. On the second - treaty reform - he referred to the Berlin Declaration as a key step in the run-up to the European Council

Before the summit the EU had been divided between 18 Member States that had ratified the constitutional treaty and 9 that had not, including two that had rejected it in referendums, noted Mr Barroso. Now, "all the 27 Member States are united (...) and we should be grateful for the willingness of all governments to compromise". The ratification process should be seen "as a great moment of solidarity and unity in Europe and as an historic opportunity to consolidate EU enlargement".

The reformed treaty "will probably not be an example of the finest poetry, but I have no doubt that it will be a very good example of excellent prose if it is concentrated precisely on the capacity to act of the European institutions".

Like Mrs Merkel, he listed the benefits of the new treaty, including a legal personality for the EU, 40 new areas of qualified majority voting and the fact that energy policy and climate change are now "core priorities of the Union". The boost to the EU's external affairs role was welcome, as "It is only by combining the forces of our Member States and of our institutions that we can compete with other leading powers". And accountability and democratic legitimacy will be enhanced, because "the vast majority of European laws will be adopted jointly by the European Parliament and by the Council in full respect of the Commission's right of initiative".

National parliaments, too, will be more involved in the workings of the EU, as the Treaty will amend the protocol on subsidiarity and proportionality. Mr Barroso welcomed the greater role for national parliaments, provided that the Commission's right of initiative is respected and "involving national parliaments in the control of subsidiarity" does "not undermine the essentials of how the European Union works".

Welcoming the fact that the Charter of Fundamental Rights will be binding, Mr Barroso noted "We cannot promote fundamental rights all over the world and not say that we consider them binding at home", adding that "The Charter is for European citizens and the rights of the citizens against any power that could limit those rights". As such, it will be a "central part of the system of checks and balances in our Union of law".

He concluded by warning against "a perverse alliance between those who resist a political Europe and those who oppose the single market", adding that we cannot defend the European project by attacking the single market and trying to fragment what has been one of the greatest achievements of our integration in Europe".

Political group speakers

For some months, the German Presidency has been "the tiger in Europe's motor" said **EPP-ED group leader Joseph Daul (FR)**, paying tribute to Chancellor Merkel.

The atmosphere has changed from gloom to hope, and even optimism, in policy areas from globalisation through energy security and renewable energies to CO2 emissions and climate change.

The G8 meeting in Heiligendamm showed our partners that when we are united, we can exert influence, he continued, citing as further examples progress in opening up the transatlantic market and the "open skies" agreement with the US and Chancellor Merkel's laying down of Europe's "red lines" at her meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Samara.

The EPP regrets the removal of symbols from the treaty, but understands that "politics proceeds by compromise" concluded Mr Daul

For the **Socialist group, Martin Schulz (DE)** said the EU summit gave us "less than we needed but it did achieve a great deal" in that "many significant steps forward were made." Although this is "a good sign", Mr Schulz went on to remark that "a lot happened behind closed doors, whereas we here in the Parliament meet in public." Mr Schulz added that "we have transparency in Europe, in the Commission, the Parliament, but the Council does NOT have transparency."

Mr Schulz stated that "some governments of the EU...didn't play the game", in particular "the Polish government...not the Polish people, and I make the distinction quite clearly", who "wanted something different." He added that "we will not permit the EU to go down a road that it must not be forced down", and, furthermore, that "we will not permit the few to...destroy the idea of Europe."

Concluding, he said "in 2050 people will remember the pro-Europeans and not the [those] that tried to stop the idea of Europe.

Speaking for the **ALDE group, Graham Watson (UK)** said that "agreement came at a price", and that "the real casualty was idealism", for "losing the symbols of our union is a pity." On the reformed treaty, Mr Watson remarked that it "reads like the instructions for building a Japanese pagoda translated into English by a Chinese middle-man", but that "only time will tell whether the changes to the text are cosmetic, or a wholesale attack on Europe's fundamental civic and market values."

On the Charter of Fundamental Rights, Mr Watson added that "for liberals and democrats it beggars belief that a British Prime Minister is depriving UK citizens of the rights which made his country respected – and which are now guaranteed to other citizens – to pander to the popular press."

Mr Watson concluded by saying that "while the result is not flawless, the edifice you have built is sturdy: the roof should not leak, so long as the building blocks of progress are cemented by the mortar of determination."

On behalf of the **UEN group, Cristiana Muscardini (IT)** said it was "thanks to the efforts of Mrs Merkel [that] we have a success." There were, Mrs Muscardini continued, some regrets, that "the Commission will be smaller, the charter of rights is lacking some family and child rights, the lack of reference to our roots, the lack of symbolic recognition for the EU." She added that "Europe shouldn't be a state, but as a union of states it does need symbols that represent and unite us."

She did, however, "applaud the extra relations with Africa which will help us to defeat poverty and terrorism." Concluding, Mrs Muscardini said that "along with the charter of rights, we need a charter of duties."

Daniel Cohn-Bendit (DE), who spoke for the Greens/EFA group, described the agreement reached as overall a "good result" but said that the "music was lousy and it was difficult to hear the melody" at times. He said that citizens felt reassured that the EU was "making progress" but felt "they had been kept out of the loop". He described the present predicament of the Union as one of "mid-life crisis".

Turning to the Charter on Fundamental Rights he said the Greens could not accept its partial inclusion "we can't say it applies here and not there". He said it would undermine the EU's position vis-a-vis Russia and China. Turning on those countries that had not been in favour of the original Constitutional text he warned the House that the "tyranny of a minority with a veto is undemocratic". Finally he criticised former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair for signing up to the Charter and then apparently moving away from it. "British people and Polish people have rights too," he said. He pledged a Green campaign for the Charter called "we want our rights".

For his group, **Francis Wurtz (GUE/NGL, FR)** picked up on the pledge by EU leaders to drop their commitment to "free and fair competition". Mr Wurtz sought clarification on the impact this would have and asked whether this was just a "propaganda exercise" or a "serious issue". He said that if indeed there was nothing new on this from EU leaders then it would amount to "an undignified sleight of hand". Mr Wurtz went on to say that people wanted progress and a referendum on the new text. He also addressed himself to European leaders saying that if indeed they wanted the end of competition then in July they should reject a new directive aimed at the liberalisation of postal services.

Speaking on behalf of the **Independence and Democracy group, Jens-Peter Bonde (DK)** saw the new voting system in Council as unfair and impenetrable. He told Chancellor Merkel that "the losers will be the small and medium-sized countries" and "from 2017 you will govern the EU with Turkey". He added "the double majority sounds easy but is difficult to use" and it "adds to the democratic deficit". Moreover, the "constitution has another name but it has the same content", so there should be a referendum, something which 77% of Europeans were in favour of. Lastly, turning to a different subject, he congratulated Mrs Merkel on her work on climate change.

Philip Claeys (BE), for the Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty group, also saw new the treaty as "a camouflaged version" of the constitution, or as "old wine in new bottles". It was also "unreadable, unintelligible" he said. And it was not true that the role of national parliaments had been enhanced, given the high threshold required for this to happen. He predicted that "the people's suspicions will increase" and that "this triumphalism will be short-lived".

Jana Bobosikova, representing the non-attached MEPs, criticised the summit outcome, comparing the EU to Fidel Castro and the Bolsheviks. She particularly criticised what she saw as the shift away from free markets, saying "the erosion of the freedom to do business comes close to a violation of fundamental rights".

Council and Commission responses

Replying to the debate, **Chancellor Merkel** addressed the question of whether competition was an "objective" of the EU. Her answer was No, it was simply "a means to an end" or "an instrument", which is why it was removed from the preamble. However, she stressed that since it was included in a protocol to the treaty, this shows that "the instrument must be unalloyed".

On the question of weighted voting, one could argue about the details but she believed a way had been found to solve the problem - and it was a fair one too.

In her view, the Commission had come out of the process strengthened. She also paid tribute to the European Parliament for its input, saying it was "good to feel the wind of idealism in our sails". Without idealism there would only be a dogged fight for national self-interest.

Commission President Barroso also spoke about the question of free competition. He said the key

point was that competition was "one of the essential components" of the internal market and a way of achieving prosperity.

Overall, he stressed that the summit had been a success and he highlighted the fact that this was the first time such an agreement had been reached between 27 Member States.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/008-8364-178-06-26-901-20070626IPR08363-27-06-2007-2007-true/default_en.htm