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- July, 9, 2007 Strasbourg

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- July, 17, 2007

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- July, 9, 2007 Strasbourg

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REGIONS:

AFRICA

African Union Summit

- ▶ **Speech by the Prime Minister José Sócrates at the closing session of the Summit of the African Union in Accra, Ghana (03/07/2007)**

Mr. President

Distinguished Heads of State and Governments

Ladies and Gentlemen, honourable members

I would like to thank you for inviting me to speak at this closing session of the African Union Summit in the very week that Portugal assumes the Presidency of the European Union.

This is the first time that a President of the European Council of the European Union has addressed the African Union Summit. I see this invitation as a sign of the political relationship that the African Union and the European Union wish to renew and strengthen. Our political relationship needs new impetus and new ambition. This is what is demanded by the world we live in.

I would like to salute all the leaders here today and express my admiration for the renewed commitment of all the African countries in the African Union construction process.

Lastly, a special word for the President of Ghana; on his recent visit to Lisbon I had the opportunity to learn more of his vision for Africa and for the world, with which I identify strongly.

There is broad consensus between Europe and Africa on the mutual benefits and advantages of these regional integration processes; although they are complex and time consuming, the added value they will bring to the populations is undeniable.

I would therefore like to praise the work of the African Union towards the unity, stability and progress of this vast continent.

The Portuguese Presidency of the European Union also has an ambitious external agenda and this is what I wish to talk about.

The EU has maintained close relations with almost all the regional blocs and with the main emerging powers and has held annual meetings at the highest level with most of the world's leaders.

However, it is seven years since Europe last had structured institutional and broad dialogue with the African continent – which is an incomprehensible omission in European foreign policy and one that is prejudicial to both Europeans and Africans.

You will appreciate that if there is one country that cannot allow this situation to prevail and that will do everything to overcome it, it is Portugal.

But I also know that I can count on the good will and commitment of all the European and African leaders to our objective, which is imperative to the history of our two continents.

Our commitment and dedication is nothing new because we were already central to the first and only Summit in Cairo in 2000 when Portugal last held the EU Presidency.

Africa must be a priority for Europe, because Africa and Europe are part of each other's future.

Portugal has pledged to hold the second EU-Africa Summit on 8th and 9th December. It will be an honour for me and for my country to welcome you in Lisbon. We want this Summit to mark a turning point in the relations between the two continents.

It is our wish that the Lisbon Summit will launch a new strategic partnership between Europe and Africa. This partnership involves dialogue on:

The objectives of sustainable development.

Peace and security

Greater respect for human rights

The fight against poverty and endemic disease

A balanced and mutually advantageous management of migratory flows.

These are the key points that we have defined and that structure the joint strategy we have worked on. However, in addition to a strategic vision, we also need a concrete action plan that addresses global issues such as climate change, migrations, development and others.

In fact, Europe and Africa today have a common vision on the various global problems. A truly committed political partnership is therefore required to address these questions together.

But it is necessary to assure that the strategic vision and the action plan translate into concrete results. This is why the EU-Africa Summit should result in a leading structure that is politically binding, comprehensive and which provides the guidelines for the relations between Europe and Africa in the future. Our ambition is to build a mechanism of global dialogue at the highest level that allows greater meaning to be given to Euro-African relations.

It is my belief that these instruments – strategy, action plan and application mechanisms – can be approved at the highest level. This is how a year which commemorates both the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome which instituted the European Union and the 50th anniversary of the independence of Ghana, the first Sub-Saharan country, where we are today, will be closed with a golden key.

The success of this Summit is important to Africa and to Europe but also to the world. We count on the contribution, commitment and presence of all, so that we can achieve what we all hold as the greatest goal.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/20070703KAD.htm

AMERICAS

Colombia

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency, on behalf of the European Union, on the killing of eleven Colombian parliamentarians held hostage by Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)** (03/07/2007)

The EU deplures and strongly condemns the killing of eleven members of parliament from Valle del Cauca department who had been held hostage by FARC since 2002 and supports a comprehensive and impartial investigation of the facts.

The EU extends its sincere condolences and solidarity to the victims' families.

Stressing that the taking of hostages is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, the EU once again calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by FARC and other illegal groups in Colombia.

The EU reiterates the need for a humanitarian agreement and believes that efforts leading to the conclusion of such an agreement must be urgently pursued. The EU recalls its support for the initiatives that have been promoted by France, Spain and Switzerland to that effect.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20070703PESC1.htm

ASIA

Pakistan

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the recent flooding in Pakistan** (02/07/2007)

The Presidency would like to convey the European Union's heartfelt sympathy after the tragic torrential rains and flooding that have stricken the people in the Pakistani provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan. We particularly share the grief of the Pakistani people at the loss of so many human lives. Our sympathies are with the people who have for a long time endured the harsh consequences of natural calamities, which have a devastating impact on people's lives and livelihoods and will be felt for a long time to come.

<http://www.eu2007.pt/NR/exeres/9EA0B8B5-EA87-43F9-ABDA-1E116984A889.htm>

Pakistan

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the Lal Masjid Crisis** (06/07/2007)

The EU follows closely the crisis caused by armed extremist militants in the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) complex, in the heart of Islamabad.

The EU supports the Government of Pakistan in the defense of the rule of law and the wrist of the State against the threat posed by such armed radical groups in the context of fight against extremism.

Whilst underlining the restraint and moderation showed by the Pakistani authorities in dealing with this crisis, the EU expresses its solidarity with the people of Pakistan and the citizens of Islamabad in particular, who are victims of the violence created by the armed extremists entrenched in the Lal Masjid complex.

The EU hopes that the outcome of this violent situation does not carry more innocent victims, especially the children being used as human shields, and that the responsible will be brought to justice.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/cfdp.htm

Timor-Leste

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the legislative elections in Timor-Leste** (05/07/2007)

The legislative elections of 30th June in Timor-Leste are an important milestone on the road to nation-building and establishing stable and accountable democratic structures and institutions. The EU congratulates the Timorese people for having shown, once again, their commitment to democracy and peace by participating in high numbers in a peaceful way in the parliamentary elections.

The EU commends the Timorese authorities, in particular the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration and the National Election Commission, for having organized the polling in a smooth and efficient way despite the logistics involved and the difficult terrain.

The EU further acknowledges that collective international efforts in East Timor, in particular those of UNMIT, have contributed decisively for securing the electoral environment which led to the success of the elections. The importance that the EU attaches to the democratic process in Timor-Leste is underlined by the fact that the EU has again dispatched an Election Observation Mission, composed of 36 observers from 19 EU Member States.

The EU Member States and the European Commission remain fully committed to support Timor-Leste to address the difficult challenges ahead; to rebuild the security sector, to re-establish the rule of law and to guarantee the socio-economic development of the population of Timor-Leste in a peaceful and stable environment.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20070705PESC2.htm

Burma/Myanmar

- ▶ **The European Commission supports ICRC's demand for the respect of International Humanitarian Law** (04/07/2007)

On 29 June 2007, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) publicly denounced the government of Burma/Myanmar for violations of international humanitarian law affecting civilians and detainees and for imposing increasingly severe restrictions on ICRC's work.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood policy, and Louis Michel, Commissioner in charge of Humanitarian Aid, have both voiced their concerns about ICRC's work in Burma/Myanmar being subject to increasing pressure and restrictions. They called on the Burma/Myanmar authorities to re-start the dialogue with ICRC as soon as possible.

Commissioner Michel said: *"I am concerned about the seriousness of the violations denounced by the ICRC. The Commission is a long-time supporter of ICRC. Its activities to help civilians in conflict and detainees are recognised worldwide and the provisions of the international humanitarian law should also be fully applied in Burma/Myanmar."*

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner added: *"It is indeed essential that the organisation can resume its activities in Burma/Myanmar according to its international mandate. The Commission stands ready to facilitate the dialogue between the government and the ICRC."*

The European Commission, under its humanitarian aid (ECHO) programmes and under other aid programmes, continues to provide substantial assistance to civilian population of Burma/Myanmar through International NGOs, United Nations agencies and the Red Cross family. Since 2003, ECHO has supported the ICRC with €3.5 million.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1012&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- **EU Presidency Statement on the new High Representative and EU Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Miroslav Lajčák (02/07/2007)**

The EU Presidency welcomes the new High Representative and EU Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Miroslav Lajčák, who is taking up his office today, July 2nd.

The EU Presidency is confident that Ambassador Miroslav Lajčák's wide experience and great knowledge of the Western Balkans region give him the qualifications necessary for carrying out his new tasks with success.

The EU Presidency gives its full support to Ambassador Miroslav Lajčák in his efforts to engage strongly with the local political forces with a view to an improvement of the political climate in order to unblock the reform agenda, in particular police reform. In this respect, concrete and irreversible progress is required to advance towards the conclusion of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, bringing Bosnia and Herzegovina closer to the European Union. Those efforts will also be needed to achieve progress on constitutional reform to develop stable, efficient and self-sustainable state structures that are better able to meet European Standards.

The EU Presidency looks forward to a close cooperation with Ambassador Miroslav Lajčák and wishes him every success in accomplishing his demanding assignment, given the important challenges that are still ahead in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20070702PESC1.htm

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Yemen

- **EU Presidency statement on the terrorist attack in Eastern Yemen (02/07/2007).**

The EU Presidency strongly condemns the terrorist attacks on July 2 at the ancient temple complex in Marib, eastern Yemen.

The Presidency conveys its deepest sympathy, condolences and solidarity to the families of the victims, both Yemeni and Spanish, and wishes a speedy recovery to those who have been injured in these atrocities.

We reaffirm that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and that any acts of terrorism are unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20070702PESC2.htm

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

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MISCELLANEOUS

Alan Johnston release

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the release of Alan Johnston** (04/07/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union welcomes the release of BBC journalist Alan Johnston, kidnapped in the Gaza Strip on 12 March 2007.

The European Union condemned the kidnapping of Alan Johnston and demanded his unconditional and immediate release. The Presidency of the European Union expresses its total rejection of this kind of actions and reiterates its call and expectation that they will not happen again.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20070704PESC33.htm

Rome Conference on Afghanistan

- ▶ **Rome Conference on Afghanistan** (04/07/2007)

Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner is attending the Conference on the Rule of law in Afghanistan in Rome on 3rd July. The Conference aims to get high level political commitment by the Government of Afghanistan and the International community to the rule of law sector. An action plan will be adopted for the justice sector, identifying gaps and issues to be addressed by different donors and a future funding mechanism for the sector will be agreed upon. The Commissioner will take the opportunity to present her plans for the next four years, with a package worth €200 million for the rule of law sector for 2007-2010. The package will focus on three key priority areas: institutional reform in the justice sector, focusing on recruitment and pay and grading systems; support to judicial sector salaries; and funding of the Law and Order Trust Fund (LOTFA) which pays for police salaries. The European Commission remains one of the top donors in Afghanistan and one of the very few giving a multi-year commitment. In all, the European Commission has announced €610 million for Afghanistan for the period 2007-10.

On the eve of the Conference, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner said: *"Afghanistan's problems cannot be solved without stronger governance and respect for the rule of law. All our efforts to date will come to nothing unless we can establish a functioning rule of law in Afghanistan. People have to have the confidence and trust that the justice and police services serve them. With this new package we are demonstrating our continuing commitment to help Afghanistan build a more secure and prosperous future. The key challenges are to extend the Government's authority into the provinces, and to stamp out narcotics production which destabilizes the country politically and economically. That is why our new package will put a special focus on strengthening the rule of law and in particular on reform of the justice sector. Boosting the professionalism of the key legal institutions will complement the EU's work with the Afghan police – helping to improve law enforcement at all levels".*

As the largest donor to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (€135 million since 2002), the European Commission has already made a major contribution to supporting the salaries and training needs of the Afghan police, and this work will continue under the new package. A further €75 million for LOTFA is planned for the next two years.

The European Commission now intends to launch a new programme of support to the justice sector. The European Commission will place experts in key justice institutions (Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court and the Attorney General's office) to draw up a major programme of reforms in the judiciary and legal services in Afghanistan. The aim will be to improve the qualifications, recruitment, and career structure for judges and prosecutors and to introduce a code of ethics.

European Commission initiatives in this field complement the ESDP mission on policing, which is now on the ground in Afghanistan.

In addition to these activities in the justice sector, the European Commission's new package will also support capacity building in local and regional administration, with a view to increasing the focus on the rule of law in the provinces.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/990&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>