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REGIONS:

AFRICA

Comoros

► **Declaration by the presidency on behalf of the EU on the Comoros (23/10/2007)**

The EU has already voiced its concern on a number of occasions at the crisis threatening the unity of the Comoros. Today it wishes to give its full support to the decisions taken by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at its meeting on 10 October 2007, in particular the measures adopted with respect to the illegal authorities of Anjouan.

The EU recalls its support for the preservation of the integrity and the unity of the Union of the Comoros, on the basis of the Fomboni (2001) and Moroni (2003) agreements. It again states the need for new elections to be organised on Anjouan, under the supervision of the AU, in accordance with the recommendations adopted at the meetings in Cape Town on 19 June and 18 September 2007

The EU declares its readiness to consider what assistance it could give the AU for the purposes of implementing the decisions taken by the PSC on 10 October last.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071023Comores.htm

Darfur

► **EP resolution on the killing of AU peacekeepers in Darfur (25/10/2007)**

On the day the EP's Sakharov Prize was awarded to the Sudanese human rights lawyer Salih Mahmoud Osman for his work in Darfur, **MEPs also adopted a resolution (by 65 votes to 0, with 0 abstentions) condemning the killing of 10 African Union peacekeepers in that region and calling on the Sudanese government to shoulder responsibility for the country's internal security, notably by allowing the UNAMID peacekeeping force to be deployed.**

On 30 September 2007 unidentified forces attacked an African Union base in Haskanita, South Darfur, killing 10 AU peacekeepers and civilian police, at least eight other personnel from the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) were seriously injured and approximately 40 remain went missing. Attacks on AMIS personnel have increased lately and, since the force was deployed in 2004, more than 25 soldiers and staff have been killed.

The resolution strongly condemns the killing of the 10 AU peacekeepers and considers it "a war crime to be promptly investigated by the African Union and the United Nations". It stresses that "customary laws of war prohibit directing attacks against personnel and objects involved in international peacekeeping missions".

MEPs demand an immediate cessation of hostilities and attacks not only on AMIS but also on civilians and humanitarian agencies, their staff and assets and relief convoys. They call on "the Sudanese Government and the rebel groups to cooperate fully with an independent investigation into the dreadful attack in Haskanita and to bring all those responsible to justice". They add that the fate of those peacekeepers still missing must be established.

Sudanese Government urged to allow deployment of UNAMID force

The AMIS force in Darfur comprises approximately 7000 troops and civilian police at the present moment, and is virtually the only force on the ground in Darfur providing civilian protection. A 26,000 member AU-UN hybrid operation, UNAMID, was authorised by the UN Security Council in July 2007 but has yet to be deployed, owing to unwillingness by the Sudanese Government.

The resolution points out that "the Sudanese Government has made previous unfulfilled commitments to allow the hybrid force into Sudan". It calls for "rapid deployment of the UNAMID force with a mandate which enables it to efficiently protect civilians" and calls on the UN "to fulfil its commitment and provide the troops that have been promised".

In addition, the resolution "reminds the Sudanese Government that it bears the prime responsibility for internal security and that it should not abdicate this responsibility in favour of the international community".

Lastly, the EU, the UN and the African Union are called upon to show a united front in efforts to resolve the conflict in Darfur and "to prioritise a comprehensive peace process through a political dialogue with all parties concerned"

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-12363-295-10-43-902-20071024IPR12341-22-10-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

AMERICAS

ASIA

Pakistan

► EP resolution on Pakistan (25/10/2007)

In a resolution on Pakistan adopted in the wake of the suicide bombing attack against Benazir Bhutto, Parliament voices concern at the unstable political situation in the country and calls on the authorities to restore democratic standards ahead of the parliamentary elections.

MEPs condemn the attack against Benazir Bhutto and call on the Pakistan government to conduct a "thorough and independent investigation". Parliament extends its deepest sympathy, especially to the families of those killed and injured, and reaffirms its solidarity with the people of Pakistan who want "democratic governance and transparent, accountable rule and who act with courage and determination in the face of terrorist and criminal violence".

Military dictatorship must be replaced through free and fair election

The EP urges Pakistan to uphold all the principles enshrined in the Cooperation Agreement with the EU, in particular the democracy and human rights clause and, alluding to the forced departure of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia, asks the government "to allow the return of all political leaders to counter the extremist forces in the country and contribute to establishing a legitimate government through free and fair elections, replacing the current military dictatorship".

The lack of independence or neutrality of Pakistan's institutions and judiciary is a major worry: the caretaker government is chosen by President Musharraf, the government interferes with the courts and the

president failed to relinquish his post of army chief before being elected president. Against this background, the resolution calls for "immediate action to restrict the influence of the military in society as a whole". It also **"urges that Pakistan returns to democratic government by holding free, fair and transparent elections in January 2008"**, warns against **"the imposition of emergency rule"** and urges the government **"to provide all parties with equal access to the media"**.

The fact that EU will monitor the parliamentary elections and the European Parliament will participate in the observer mission is welcomed.

Religious issues, women's rights

MEPs note the reports of "ongoing oppression of religious minorities such as Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and Ahmadis" and **call for "immediate action to cease such religious-based repression"**. They also stress the importance of "effective monitoring of the madrassas to prevent control by extremists".

Parliament urges the repeal of the Hudood Ordinances, which have led to the imprisonment of hundreds of women, **as well as the removal of a restriction on women's participation in the parliamentary elections** (an academic qualification is currently required as a condition for standing for election, thus excluding 70% of women).

Lastly, EU Member States are urged "fully to respect the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-12363-295-10-43-902-20071024IPR12341-22-10-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Kyrgyz Republic

► EU Presidency Statement on the Referendum on the Kyrgyz Constitution and the New Election Law on 21 October 2007 (24/10/2007)

The EU Presidency takes note of the preliminary results of the referendum on the Kyrgyz Constitution and a new Election Law on 21 October 2007. The EU Presidency welcomes the referendum as a step towards a solution to the protracted constitutional conflict. It hopes that the recent promulgation of the new constitution will provide an opportunity for progress on structural reforms and economic growth.

At the same time, the EU Presidency takes note of the concerns expressed by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and a number of civil society organisations and political parties on violations reported during the referendum. The Presidency recalls Article 2 of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Kyrgyz Republic and the European Communities and their Member States, according to which respect for democracy and principles of international law and human rights underpin the internal and external policies of the Parties and constitute an essential element of partnership between the Kyrgyz Republic and the European Union.

The EU Presidency also takes note of the dissolution of Parliament by the President of the Republic and welcomes the call for Parliamentary elections due to take place on the 16th of December. The EU Presidency acknowledges the significance of the forthcoming elections for the further development of democracy and the rule of law in the Kyrgyz Republic and trusts that OSCE standards and commitments will be respected, including a timely invitation to ODIHR for election observation.

The EU reiterates its willingness to support and assist the Kyrgyz Republic in this process, in particular within the framework of the OSCE.

Serbia

► **Political reforms welcome, but full ICTY cooperation needed from Serbia, say MEPs** (25/10/2007)

Parliament welcomes recent political events in Serbia, such as a new constitution, the formation of a new government, and the signing of a visa facilitation agreement with the EU. Nevertheless, MEPs underline that full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and the arrest of the four remaining indicted war criminals, is a pre-condition for the signing of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA).

The Parliament notes that "the future of Serbia lies in the European Union," and that it "deserves special commendation for the peaceful resolution of a series of difficult challenges over the past year," including the independence of Montenegro, parliamentary elections and the formation of a new, pro-European government. It also "welcomes the completion of technical negotiations on an SAA," and the signing of the visa facilitation and readmission agreements on 18 September 2007.

Nevertheless, Members note that "corruption, particularly in the police and the judiciary, remains a serious problem," and that the Constitutional Court is not functioning, which is "not conducive to the development of democracy" in the country. The report also says that "a resolution to the status of Kosovo will both consolidate stability in the Western Balkans and facilitate the integration of the region into the European Union."

The ICTY and the legacy of the war

The report "welcomes the Serbian Government's desire to cooperate with the ICTY, which opens the way to further cooperation with the EU, but stresses that this cooperation must rapidly lead to further results." **It reminds Serbia that "signature of the SAA is conditional upon full cooperation with the ICTY," and notes that in case arrests are made after this year (at the end of which the ICTY is currently envisaged to close), "it would be necessary to consider extending the mandate" of the court.** Parliament also calls on the Commission to "initial the SAA without further delay," once the ICTY criteria have been met.

In addition, MEPs say "Serbia must honestly confront its recent past in order to progress," and call on the Serbian Parliament to "adopt a declaration denouncing the genocide in Srebrenica." The report also calls on Serbia to "pursue its efforts to implement the Sarajevo Declaration, including by adopting a clear legal framework covering, inter alia, the right to return to the place of origin and the right to property compensation."

Minority rights

The House underlines the need to find durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). MEPs also emphasise "the importance of ensuring that EU assistance is delivered both in a manner which takes into account the current territorial and administrative structure of Serbia and the ethnic composition and traditional economic and cultural relations within the territories concerned, with the full involvement of local and regional authorities."

Both of these points are especially relevant to the areas of Vojvodina and Sandzak, which have large ethnic Hungarian and Bosnian populations, respectively. On the former, the report commends Serbia on improved inter-ethnic relations, and calls on it to "promote peaceful coexistence" amongst the different ethnicities there. On the latter, the House notes with pleasure that minorities are now represented in both the executive

and the legislative bodies, but insists that more needs to be done to curb further radicalisation in the region. **In general, the Parliament says that "the legal framework for the protection of minorities needs to be improved further" and is concerned by "persisting discrimination against the Roma community."**

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-12345-295-10-43-903-20071024IPR12331-22-10-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

Russia

► **EU- Russia Summit** (26/10/2007)

The twentieth EU-Russia Summit took place today in Mafra. It was a friendly and open meeting during which the leaders welcomed the ongoing work on the practical implementation of the Road Maps for the Four Common Spaces and discussed future perspectives for our relations.

Notwithstanding all the progress achieved in EU-Russia relations in the last ten years (the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement has been in force since 1997) it is clear for both Parties that further deepening of our strategic partnership would be mutually beneficial.

The EU noted that this was the first Summit taking place after agreement on the Reform Treaty was reached in the Intergovernmental Conference that recently took place in Lisbon.

In the Common Economic Space, the EU and Russia noted the wide range of areas where progress has been made and the areas where greater efforts are needed. In particular, they stressed the importance of the investment dialogue and of the energy early warning mechanism for strengthening mutual cooperation and increasing understanding between both Parties.

The EU encouraged Russia to undertake the necessary steps to solve the remaining obstacles to WTO accession.

The EU stressed the importance of climate change and the need to give continuity to cooperation in this area.

In the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice, the leaders welcomed the entry into force of the visa facilitation and readmission agreements and underlined the importance of their full implementation. In this regard, they also welcomed the recent start of the visa dialogue. The Permanent Partnership Council on Justice and Home Affairs, in November, will be an occasion for further discussion of the issues covered by this Common Space.

The EU also noted the results of the sixth round of EU-Russia Human Rights consultations, held in Brussels on 3 October, and looked forward to further regular rounds of consultations in the future.

In the Common Space on External Security, the leaders stressed the cooperation in the common neighbourhood. They reiterated the importance both the EU and the Russian Federation attach to effective multilateralism.

The leaders took note of progress in the Common Space on Research, Education and Culture, and welcomed in particular the holding of the first Permanent Partnership Council on Culture on the eve the Summit.

They also discussed a wide range of international issues of strategic importance: the situation in Burma, Kosovo, Iran, Afghanistan and the Middle East Peace Process.

The leaders witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Monitoring Centre of Drugs and Drug Addiction and Russia as well as the signing of an Agreement on Trade in certain Steel Products.

The leaders noted the outcome of the Industrialists' Round Table held on the eve of the summit.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/20071026RUSSIACOM.htm

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Iran

- **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on freedom of expression in the Islamic Republic of Iran (23/10/2007).**

The EU remains deeply concerned at the growing repression against all groups which exercise their right to freely express their opinions, and at the escalation of restrictions on freedom of the press and freedom of expression in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The EU condemns the closure of newspapers, magazines and of the Iranian Labour News Agency, as well as the arrest and persecution of journalists, web bloggers, and Human Rights Defenders for exercising their right to freedom of expression, and recalls UNGA Resolution 59/I.

The EU is particularly concerned about the situation of Human Rights defender and journalist Emmadin Baghi for the successive prison sentences imposed upon him for his academic work and urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately release Mr Baghi.

The EU is deeply troubled by the fact that **three students from the Amir Kabir University, Ehsan Masoori, Ahmad Ghassaban and Majid Tavakkoli, have been sentenced to two, two and a half and three years of prison respectively for a crime that, according to Ayatollah Sharoudi's declarations, they did not commit, and considers that these sentences constitute a serious violation of Iran's international human rights obligations. The EU appeals to the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure the physical and psychological integrity of these students.**

The EU also reiterates its concerns about the situation of Mohammad Sadeg Kabovand, Said Matinpou, Mohammad Hassan Fallahieh, Adnan Hassanpour, Kaveh Javanmard, Ejlal Ghavami, Ako Kurdnasab, Farshad Ghorbanpour, Sohey! Asefi, Ali Farahbakhsh and Abdolvahed Boutimar and calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to refrain from punishing individuals for peacefully exercising their rights

The EU urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply both with its international human rights commitments, namely Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on the right to freedom of expression and with Iranian domestic law, specifically with Constitution's Articles 24 and 168 of the Constitution, on freedom of expression, and Article 26 on freedom of association. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which the Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified, also guarantees the right to form and join trade unions.

The EU calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with international standards previously agreed regarding trade unions, as provided for by ILO, and to consider reviewing its labour code, namely articles 130-138.

The EU also calls on the Iranian authorities to review the announced restrictions for the next Majlis election campaign in order to ensure free and democratic elections.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071023pescirao.htm

Iran

► EP resolution on Iran (25/10/2007)

Iran is the focus of the first resolution adopted today. Here **the EP expresses deep concern at "the deterioration of the human rights situation", notably the "dramatic increase in the repression of civil-society movements in Iran over the past year". It urges the authorities "to honour their obligations in accordance with international human rights standards and instruments ratified by Iran".**

Sharp increase in executions

Among other things, MEPs are "appalled at the spiralling numbers of executions recorded, many of those executed facing unfair trials". The number of executions in Iran, including those of minors and homosexuals, often public by hanging or stoning, has dramatically increased, bringing the number recorded since the start of 2007 to at least 244. **The EP "calls on the Iranian authorities to implement their declared moratorium on stoning" and "demands that the Islamic Penal Code of Iran be reformed in order to abolish stoning".**

Iran is also urged "to fully respect its Code of Criminal Procedure and to grant the right to a fair trial to all individuals", including access to a lawyer from the start of the judicial process. **The EP calls for "legislation outlawing the execution of juvenile offenders and the application of the death penalty for homosexual acts or adultery". Lastly, the authorities are asked to release all prisoners of conscience unconditionally, notably several journalists named in the resolution.**

International bodies urged to keep up the pressure

Pressure should be kept up on Iran from outside the country, MEPs believe. They urge the UN General Assembly, for example, "to vote on a resolution explicitly and decisively condemning the violation of fundamental human rights in Iran and to adopt urgent measures to halt the recent wave of executions in Iran".

As to the European Union, the resolution calls on the Council and Commission "to closely monitor developments in Iran and also to raise concrete cases of human rights abuses". It also suggests "restarting the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue, which has been interrupted since June 2004, and which could possibly be accompanied by a joint initiative of the Majlis [the Iranian Parliament] and the European Parliament".

In conclusion, the resolution calls on the Commission to support civil society in Iran, notably through the new Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, and on the EU Member States to refrain from expulsions of Iranian asylum-seekers.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-12363-295-10-43-902-20071024IPR12341-22-10-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

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MISCELLANEOUS

Towards a global treaty to ban all cluster munitions

► EP resolution (25/10/2007)

In adopting a joint resolution entitled "Towards a global treaty to ban all cluster munitions", MEPs reaffirm the need to strengthen international humanitarian law (IHL) as it applies to cluster munitions and speedily to adopt at international level a comprehensive ban on the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions, and therefore strongly supports the Oslo Process launched in February 2007.

The House calls for an immediate moratorium on using, investing in, stockpiling, producing, transferring or exporting cluster munitions, including air-dropped cluster munitions and submunitions delivered by missiles, rockets, and artillery projectiles, until a binding international treaty has been negotiated to ban the production, stockpiling, export and use of these weapons.

MEPs call on all EU Member States to adopt national measures that fully ban the use, production, export and stockpiling of cluster bombs.

The House calls on all States which have used cluster munitions and comparable weapons that produce explosive remnants of war to accept responsibility for clearance of these munitions and, in particular, to keep accurate records of where such munitions have been used, in order to help clearance efforts following conflict.

The European Parliament calls on all Member States which have used cluster munitions to provide assistance to the populations affected.

Finally, the House calls on the Commission urgently to increase financial assistance to communities and individuals affected by unexploded cluster munitions through all available instruments.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/028-12353-295-10-43-903-20071024IPR12335-22-10-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

Sakharov Prize 2007

► **Sakharov Prize awarded to Salih Mahmoud Osman** (25/10/2007)

Sudanese human rights lawyer Salih Mahmoud Osman is the winner of this year's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Thursday's unanimous decision by the European Parliament's political group leaders was announced to Parliament's plenary sitting in Strasbourg by President Hans-Gert Pöttering. Mr Osman, who works with the Sudan Organisation Against Torture, has for over two decades provided free legal aid to victims of human rights abuses in his country.

The prize will be formally awarded to Mr Osman in Strasbourg on 11 December, the day after the 59th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The prize comes with a certificate and a cheque for €50 000.

Since 1988 the European Parliament has awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to exceptional individuals or organisations fighting injustice and oppression throughout the globe, from South Africa to Belarus, from Cuba to Bangladesh.

Addressing the plenary in Strasbourg, President Pöttering said: "In the face of violence and arbitrary power, Mr Osman stands up for dialogue and justice. And there can be no democracy without justice. By granting the Sakharov Prize to Salih Mahmoud Osman, the European Parliament shows its support for the action of this courageous man who has become the voice of Darfur, and through him, for the establishment of the rule of law in Sudan".

Salih Mahmoud Osman

Over two decades during Sudan's various civil wars Salih Mahmoud Osman (b.1957) has risked his own life to provide legal and medical aid to the countless victims of the conflict. Working with the Sudan Organisation Against Torture ("SOAT") he has given legal protection and representation to the victims of human rights abuses.

In its work SOAT has been successful in overturning judgements of death or amputation and they are engaged in a campaign to have rape established as a war crime

As well as dealing with the victims of abuses, Mr Osman and SOAT have also been active in cataloguing crimes that have taken place - particularly in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Persecuted for his actions

Mr Osman's fight against injustice in Sudan has had a personal cost. Members of his own family have been killed, tortured, or burned out of their homes by the militias. He himself was imprisoned by the Sudanese government for over seven months in 2004 without charge or trial. On 8 November 2005, he was awarded Human Rights Watch's highest honour for his work in Sudan.

Mr Osman currently serves as a Member of the Sudanese National Parliament. In that new role, he is focused on promoting the rule of law through the implementation of the provisions of the interim constitution.

Anna Politkovskaya

The group leaders also decided to find an appropriate way to honour Anna **Politkovskaya**, the Russian journalist who was killed last year and was also on this year's Sakharov shortlist. They will decide at their next meeting how this should be done.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-12343-298-10-43-902-20071024IPR12329-25-10-2007-2007-true/default_en.htm

