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◆ Subcommittee on security and defence

➤ November, 27, 2006

◆ Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

➤ October, 23, 2006

◆ Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

➤ October, 26, 2006

◆ Committee on budgetary control

➤ October, 23, 2006

CONFERENCES / EVENTS

◆ Subcommittee on Human Rights & Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

Conference on serious international crimes

➤ November, 20, 2006

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REGIONS:

AFRICA

♦ **Tunisia**

- ▶ **Cancellation by the Tunisian authorities of the "International Conference on Employment and the Right to Work in the Euro-Mediterranean Area"** (17/10/06)

The Tunisian Chargé d'Affaires in Brussels refused to receive the following demarche: "The EU regrets the cancellation at a very short notice by the Tunisian authorities of the "International Conference on Employment and the Right to Work in the Euro-Mediterranean Area" which was to have taken place in Tunis on 8-9 September.

The EU appreciates its relations with Tunisia, an important Mediterranean partner over many years, with an excellent record on many issues. **However, the EU is disappointed at a series of negative signals which have been given by Tunisia in the area of human rights and governance over the last few years.** The Tunisian authorities are no doubt aware that these incidents have a significant impact on the international image of Tunisia.

The EU very much hopes to be able to enhance and further develop our longstanding partnership in the framework of the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy. **In this regard, we would welcome an early meeting of the Association Committee and of the "Human Rights and democracy" Subcommittee.**

In order to address the concerns expressed by the European Parliament and civil society, and to be transparent, this demarche will be made public by a press release."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=102&LANG=1&cmsid=360

AMERICAS

ASIA

♦ **China**

- ▶ **EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights** (20/10/06)

The European Union and China held the 22nd round of the EU-China dialogue on human rights in Beijing on 19 October 2006. The dialogue was preceded by a legal seminar on 16-17 October, where labour rights and freedom of access to information were the main topics. At this seminar, Chinese and European academics agreed on joint recommendations that were addressed in the official dialogue.

During the dialogue meeting, senior officials from both sides discussed a wide range of human rights issues. **Special attention was given to questions related to combating racism, freedom of expression and reform of the criminal justice system in China.**

The European Union took note of the **commitment of China to ratify the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as soon as possible and, in that context, to reform its criminal justice system.** The EU urged China to continue the cooperation with and implementation of the recommendations of,

the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, including the rapid abolishment of the re-education through labour system.

The EU expressed its deep concern over the continuing restrictions on freedom of expression in China, including on the use of the internet. The EU further expressed concern on the high number of human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists in prison and urged China not to harass or punish individuals exercising their right to freedom of expression in a peaceful manner. Other subjects discussed included the recent incident on China's border with Nepal, where Chinese soldiers opened fire towards a group of Tibetans attempting to cross the border. The EU asked for clarification and urged China to investigate the incident thoroughly.

The next round of the dialogue will take place under the German EU Presidency in spring 2007.

http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/press_releases/vko42/en_GB/171920/

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

♦ Russia

► Russia credibility at stake' over murder, Barroso says (16/10/06)

The credibility of the Russian government rests on catching the killers of journalist Anna Politkovskaya
European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso has said, ahead of an informal EU-Russia summit in Finland this week.

"It's a question of the credibility of the Russian government and the Russian authorities to show that they are able to bring to justice those who make those hideous crimes," he said in an interview with the BBC on Sunday (15 October). "We want those who have assassinated Ms Politkovskaya - a great fighter for freedom of expression...to be brought to justice."

The commission president promised that the EU was "going to be frank with Russia" over the killing, adding "We have an interest in having good relations with Russia, but I believe Russia also has an interest in having good relations with the European Union." With the addition of Bulgaria and Romania next year, the bloc's population is set to increase to half a billion making it "the biggest trade bloc in the world" Mr Barroso explained. "Size matters," he quipped.

Ms Politkovskaya, a prominent critic of the Kremlin's actions in Chechnya and Russian army corruption in general, was murdered in Moscow on 7 October, prompting the Finnish EU presidency to immediately call for "a thorough investigation of this heinous crime."

Her death overshadowed Mr Putin's visit to Germany last week, with Chancellor Angela Merkel also calling for a probe and with small groups of protestors greeting the Russian leader with placards saying "murderer" as theories on who ordered the killing circulate in the media.

The Lahti meeting this week has been criticised by some EU diplomats as a mistake. Sources told the Financial Times it will give Mr Putin a prestigious platform where he is likely to speak about internal EU divisions on how to handle Russian oil and gas imports.

But a Russian diplomat told EUobserver the behind closed doors atmosphere between EU leaders and the Russian president is "good" in the run up to the Lahti meeting on 20 October, no matter what kind of human rights criticism they might voice to the media.

<http://euobserver.com/9/22649>

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

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EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

◆ EP/Delegations visits

▶ North Korean / Iranian delegates meet MEPs (19/10/06)

It is not every day that a group of MPs from North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly and Iran's Majlis visits the European Parliament. Last week in Brussels they met separately with MEPs from the delegations for relations with each country. It marked the first meeting with Iranian MPs. Neither encounter could be described as a "meeting of minds". North Korea tested a nuclear bomb days before, while Iran's nuclear programme puts it at odds with the international community.

Interparliamentary delegations are an important part of the Parliament's work. They provide a parliamentary angle to any negotiations the EU may be conducting. Their role is also one of fact-finding, asking questions, keeping open political dialogue and monitoring elections. All nationalities and shades of political opinion in the EP are represented.

North Koreans defend nuclear test

The North Korean delegation from the 687-member Supreme People's Assembly was met with politeness by the 15-member delegation, though MEPs didn't mince their words: "Deliberate provocation", "international pariah" and "completely irresponsible" were just some of the descriptions members used.

Ri Jong Hyok of North Korea - a veteran diplomat, who has served in East Germany and Algeria, chose his (few) words carefully. He said that his country "needed a nuclear deterrent against the US" and that it was "a matter of life and death". He also said human rights dialogue with the West was being used to exert pressure on the regime. He did however thank the EU for humanitarian assistance.

All in all it was a bad few days for North Korea in the EP. In the plenary session, members from all 7 political groups lined up to denounce the nuclear test. Javier Solana - high representative for EU foreign and security policy - told the house that North Korea is a "threat to world peace" and said that the UN Security Council "had to act". In June Parliament passed a resolution strongly critical of the human rights situation there.

Iranian delegation defends uranium enrichment programme

The intentions of Iran and its nuclear programme dominated proceedings in the first ever meeting of MEPs and their counterparts from the 290-seat Iranian Majlis.

The head of the Iranian delegation, Ali Ahmadi, spoke of the "inalienable" rights of the Iranian people to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. While MEPs conceded their rights to use the technologies for "peaceful purposes" they said there were no guarantees that Iran's ambitions were peaceful. An EP resolution in February conceded the same point but also criticised Iran for its decision to cease all voluntary cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The UK, France and Germany have been at the forefront of seeking a diplomatic solution to the crisis over Iran's nuclear ambitions. Mr Solana has been coordinating the EU's position during the negotiations. A UN-imposed 31 August deadline for Iran to stop uranium enrichment came and went and the UN is now considering its response.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/030-11800-282-10-41-903-20061019STO11799-2006-09-10-2006/default_en.htm

♦ **European Parliament**

▶ **Egyptian journalist wins journalism prize for article on immigration** (16/10/06)

Last month Egyptian journalist Samia Nkrumah won the 2006 "Napoli-European Parliament" international prize for journalism. This prize, celebrating its 13th year, was awarded by a jury of the Napoli Award foundation, the European Parliament and several European and international newspapers. It forms part of the "Napoli Prize", a 52 year old competition which awards Italian and international narrative literature, poetry and literary criticism.

This year, the subject chosen was "Immigration and friendship among populations" and Samia Nkrumah's prize winning article was entitled "The changing face of Italy". In the article she approaches the problem of immigration of different immigrant communities in Italy.

From Ghana to Europe

Samia Nkrumah, born in 1960 in Accra, capital of Ghana, is the daughter of Kwame Nkrumah, the man who triumphantly led Ghana to independence in 1957 before being deposed in 1966, and of an Egyptian mother of Christian Coptic religion. This background has allowed Ms Nkrumah an appreciation of different cultures. She graduated from London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, where she obtained a Masters on Middle East studies. Nowadays, she is the representative of the African movement in Italy, and works with the University of Arkansas and the Rome Study Centre, among others.

Articles findings

The article was published by the Egyptian weekly magazine, "Al-Ahram" and says "Italians are generally tolerant of their country's ethnic and religious minorities" even if this is not reflected by the Italian law, which for Ms Nkrumah, "does not contribute to a better and deeper integration of the newcomers." Her article highlighted the following, "Romanians represent the largest legal immigrant population at 239,781. In second and third place are Moroccans and Albanians at 227,055 and 224,001 respectively. From Sub-Saharan Africa, immigrants from Senegal, followed by Nigeria and Ghana represent the highest legally resident immigrant populations".

"I believe that the jury have chosen my article for the spirit that I have written it in, for the tolerance that shows and the never-ending research to understand others. I never try to give judgments; first I prefer to understand the circumstances, the facts..." she said.

The European Parliament and immigration

According to Ms Nkrumah, Europeans are generally in favour of integrating immigrants into their societies, and in this Parliament can play a role. "The European Parliament, with its direct representation of the European population, has to comply with the public feeling of welcome and tolerance." Ms Nkrumah goes on to say "today, the phenomenon of immigration, although with a different intensity, represents a very important subject for all of Europe...I am sure that most of the leading politicians have a wish to get an in depth understanding of this new situation, starting with a constructive dialogue."

How does she think we should help immigrants? "Certainly a common asylum policy, but also facing the issue of treatment of immigrants, and also tackling the problem of the illegal immigration...that needs a real common policy," she said. "The European Parliament has a solid structure (a relatively long term between elections)...compared to the fragility and the discontinuity of the national governments...we have to exploit this advantage in order to have a constructive and successful action."

The 2007 award will have a special resonance as it will mark the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome (1957), which founded the European Community.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/037-11665-289-10-42-906-20061016STO11664-2006-16-10-2006/default_en.htm

◆ European Parliament

▶ **Belarus opposition leader gets Sakharov nomination** (17/10/06)

Alexander Milinkevich, 59 year old physicist and leader of Belarus's political opposition has been shortlisted as one of 3 finalists for the European Parliament's 2006 Sakharov prize for freedom of thought. The others are those who campaign for freedom of hostages in Colombia and Ghassan Tueni, who represents assassinated figures in Lebanon. In March Mr Milinkevich stood in Presidential elections against Alexander Lukashenko - the results of which was condemned by the EU and the US.

Mr Milinkevich was later jailed for 15 days protesting the result. President Lukashenko's supporters say the election this year gave him 82% of the vote with Mr Milinkevich getting just 6%. However, in the wake of the March poll monitors Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) condemned it as "severely flawed", whilst a delegation of MEPs were barred from entering Belarus prior to the poll. After the election Parliament's President Josep Borrell said that persistent violations of the fundamental rights of the Belarusian people would not be without consequences. Following the elections, Mr Lukashenko and several leading ministers were banned from entering the EU.

Belarusian journalist honoured

In February this year Alexander Milinkevich came to meet MEPs and ask for their support - although he stressed that it was up to the Belarus people to change things themselves.

In September 2005 a resolution by the Parliament condemned the Belarus government for the closure in recent years of "several political parties, 22 newspapers and more than 50 pro-democracy NGOs...for criticising the President and his policies". This was the background to the awarding of the 2004 Sakharov prize to the Belarus Association of journalists.

Alexander Milinkevich in brief

Born in 1947 in Hrodna, Belarus.

Education: studied physics and mathematics in Hrodna, France, USA, and Germany.

Professional life: headed the Physics department at the University of Setif in Algeria (1980-1984); associate professor at Hrodna State University in Belarus (1978-1980 and 1984-1990)

Political career: deputy mayor of Hrodna 1990-1996 responsible for education, culture, health care, youth, sports, mass media, religion, international contacts, and historical preservation.

2001: campaign manager for Presidential candidate Siamion Domas.

2006: Presidential candidate against President Lukashenko.

Sakharov award

There are two other finalists for the 2006 Sakharov prize. They are: "Colombia: for all those fighting for the hostages kidnapped" - (profile published on 10 October) and Ghassan Tueni - whose profile will be published on 24 October.

The winner will be announced in October and the award made in December's Plenary Session.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/015-11688-268-09-39-902-20061016STO11687-2006-25-09-2006/default_en.htm

♦ **European Parliament**

➤ **EP Committee urges further investigation of illegal CIA activities in Romania** (19/10/06)

Following three days of meetings in Bucharest with Romanian officials, journalists and NGO representatives, members of the European Parliament's Temporary Committee on allegations of illegal CIA activity in Europe said on Thursday that more investigation of the CIA's possible actions in Romania was needed. The issue of oversight of the activities of national intelligence services was also raised.

Noting that the Romanian Senate is the only national parliament other than the German Bundestag to have set up a committee of inquiry into CIA activities in Europe, Committee chair Carlos Coelho (EPP-ED, PT) said he was grateful for the way in which the MEPs were received by the Romanian authorities, appreciating "the willingness to cooperate they all showed towards our delegation".

Summarising the delegation's exchanges with Romanian authorities – talks which covered, among other things, the case of a December 2004 flight allegedly operated by the CIA, which involved an accident at Baneasa airport in Bucharest – Mr Coelho did note, however, that "there are questions which have still not been answered". Investigations into alleged CIA activities in Romania, he added, "should continue and go deeper than was the case up to now".

Welcoming the statements made by Senator Norica Nicolai, chair of the Romanian Senate's inquiry committee – who did not rule out that CIA flights carrying detainees could have landed in Romania on stopovers – Mr Coelho noted that he understood that the June 2006 conclusions reached by that committee (which do not acknowledge such a possibility) were "only provisional".

Though otherwise grateful for the cooperation of the Romanian authorities, rapporteur Claudio Fava (PES, IT) noted that "there seems to have been a lack of willingness on their part to try to clarify what happened". It was necessary to remedy what he called "the lack of necessary oversight of the activities of foreign intelligence services in this country – just as in a number of other countries investigated by our Committee". It is precisely because of insufficient oversight, he added, that "one still cannot exclude" that US secret services operated in Romania on a clandestine basis. As he and other MEPs observed, Romania and other EU Member States should cooperate in developing such oversight, particularly at the parliamentary level.

On the question of alleged CIA detention centres in Romania, Mr Fava remarked: "We have found no further proof, either to confirm or to deny, the original allegations".

The EP delegation, in addition to Mr Coelho and Mr Fava, included Committee Vice-Chair Sarah Ludford (ALDE, UK), Frieda Brepoels (EPP-ED, BE), Ana Gomes (PES, PT), Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL, ES), Ryszard Czarnecki (NA, PL), plus two Romanian observers: Marian-Jean Marinescu (EPP-ED) and Karoly Ferenc Szabo (EPP-ED).

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/documents_par_theme/902/default_en.htm

♦ **Sondage (Fr)**

▶ **Selon un sondage, près d'un tiers de la population mondiale accepte l'usage de la torture** (19/10/06)

Pour 59 % des gens dans le monde, "le terrorisme n'est pas une excuse pour contourner la législation contre la torture". **Mais pour près d'un tiers des sondés, le danger est tel que les gouvernements devraient être autorisés à utiliser la torture si cela permet de sauver des vies innocentes.** Tel est le résultat d'un vaste sondage, rendu public jeudi 19 octobre, mené dans 25 pays parmi les plus exposés au risque terroriste, comme la Grande-Bretagne, les Etats-Unis ou Israël.

L'enquête, effectuée pour BBC World par l'institut de sondage Globescan, dans le cadre du programme sur la politique internationale PIPA (Programme on International Policy Attitudes) lancé par l'Université du Maryland aux Etats-Unis, a été réalisée sur 27 407 personnes dans 25 pays, entre mai et juillet 2006.

ISRAËL, RUSSIE, CHINE, TRES DIVISÉS SUR LA QUESTION

Les Italiens sont les plus opposés à l'usage de la torture (81 %), suivis des Australiens et des Français (75 %), des Canadiens (74 %), des Britanniques (72 %) et des Allemands (71 %). Aux Etats-Unis, une importante majorité (58 %) des personnes interrogées se disent également opposées à l'usage de la torture. Toutefois, 36 % d'Américains justifient ces actes, un des pourcentages parmi les plus élevés dans le monde.

Les autres pays où la population tolère la torture sont l'Irak (42 %), les Philippines (40 %), la Russie (37 %) et la Chine (37 %). L'exemple israélien est particulièrement intéressant : 43 % des Israéliens soutiennent l'idée qu'elle peut être un recours nécessaire, contre une majorité à peine plus importante qui réfute cette idée (48 %). Mais ce pourcentage cache une réalité un peu différente : la population israélienne est divisée entre Juifs, largement majoritaires, et Arabes israéliens, qui représentent près d'un citoyen sur cinq. Alors que seuls 19 % des Arabes israéliens sont favorables à l'usage de la torture, ils sont 53 % à l'accepter parmi les Juifs.

<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3210,36-825128@51-825237,0.html>