

SUMMARY

REGIONS:

AFRICA

Mauritania

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the elections in Mauritania (28/11/06)

AMERICAS

ASIA

Sri Lanka

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation of children affected by armed conflict in Sri Lanka (1/12/06)

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Belarus

- ▶ Le chef de l'opposition biélorusse arrêté à Minsk (30/11/06) [FR]

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

EU / UN REFORM

Finland's EU Presidency

- ▶ UN: Explanation of vote on behalf of EU on situation of democracy and human rights in USA (4/12/06)

Finland's EU Presidency

- ▶ UN: Re-introduction statement on behalf of EU on situation of human rights in Myanmar (4/12/06)

MISCELLANEOUS

CIA report

- ▶ MEPs to shame 11 EU states in final CIA report (28/11/06)

CIA secret flights

- ▶ Les vols secrets de la CIA ont commencé avant le 11-Septembre 2001, selon un journal allemand (1/12/06) [FR]

Domestic violence

- ▶ Human rights watchdog campaigns to end violence against women (28/11/06)

Germany 2007 – Presidency of the European Union

- ▶ Preliminary version of the German EU Presidency website now online (30/11/06)

IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

EU - THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

Committee on Foreign Affairs

- **December, 11, 2006** (Preparatory meeting for the Sakharov Price Ceremony) Strasbourg

Subcommittee on Human Rights

- **December, 18, 2006**
- **December, 19, 2006**

Subcommittee on Security and Defence

- **December, 19, 2006**
- **January, 22, 2007**
- **January, 23, 2007**

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

- **December, 18, 2006**

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- **November, 28, 2006**

Committee on budgetary control

- **December, 20, 2006**

Committee on Development

- **November, 30, 2006**

Temporary Committee on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the ...

- **November, 28, 2006**
- **November, 30, 2006**

CONFERENCES / EVENTS

REGIONS:

AFRICA

Mauritania

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the elections in Mauritania (28/11/06)

The European Union welcomes the smooth and peaceful conduct of the municipal elections and of the first round of the parliamentary elections held in Mauritania on 19 November 2006. This has been confirmed by the European Union Election Observation Mission.

The European Union congratulates the government on giving Mauritanian voters the opportunity to express their political will for the first time in completely free and transparent elections. The high turnout attests to the Mauritanian people's profound desire to begin a new chapter in the history of their country and to create the conditions for the establishment of a new democracy. **The active participation of women as voters and electoral candidates is a further reason for satisfaction.**

The European Union is pleased to note that the government honoured its commitment to remain neutral during the electoral campaign and while voting was taking place. Given the difficult conditions in Mauritania and the lack of experience and training, the technical organisation of the elections proved to be satisfactory. The transparency of the elections was ensured by the presence for the first time of the long-term European Union Election Observation Mission.

(...)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/91887.pdf

AMERICAS

ASIA

Sri Lanka

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation of children affected by armed conflict in Sri Lanka (1/12/06)

The European Union remains deeply concerned about the situation of children affected by armed conflict in Sri Lanka.

The EU stresses the need to protect children in all circumstances. It is especially important during armed conflicts where children, as the most vulnerable group of all, often fall victims of grave human rights violations.

The deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka has left children in a growingly insecure situation. The recruitment of children to hostilities has continued as have abductions of children from their families in order to recruit them, both of which are in violation of applicable international law.

The European Union urges the LTTE to immediately cease the deplorable and inhumane practice of recruiting child soldiers, and release any children recruited in that manner without delay. The European Union is also deeply concerned that the Karuna group is also abducting children, that this is taking place in areas under the government's control, and reports that government security forces are involved. It urges the Government of Sri Lanka to take immediate steps to release all children being held by the Karuna group, and immediately commence credible investigations of the alleged involvements of certain elements of government security forces, and bring to justice those responsible for these crimes.

(...)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/91949.pdf

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Belarus

► Le chef de l'opposition biélorusse arrêté à Minsk (30/11/06)

Le chef de l'opposition biélorusse, Alexandre Milinkevitch, a été interpellé, mercredi 29 novembre, à l'aéroport de Minsk par des gardes-frontières et des agents en civil, a indiqué son porte-parole, Pavel Majeïka. Selon lui, les gardes-frontières ont déclaré à l'opposant que ses papiers d'identité "pouvaient être des faux" et lui ont confisqué son téléphone portable. Interrogés, les services des gardes-frontières ont indiqué n'avoir aucune information sur cette interpellation, selon le porte-parole.

M. Milinkevitch revenait de Riga en Lettonie, où il s'était rendu à l'occasion du sommet de l'OTAN, et y avait rencontré le président américain, George W. Bush. *"Alors que les nouvelles démocraties d'Europe rejoignent les institutions de l'UE, nous ne devons pas oublier ceux qui languissent encore dans la tyrannie"*, avait dénoncé, mardi, le président américain. Il avait également décrit la Biélorussie, comme *"un endroit où des manifestants pacifiques sont battus et des leaders d'opposition sont enlevés par des agents d'une régime cruel"*.

M. MILINKEVITCH A REÇU LE PRIX EN FAVEUR DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Selon le porte-parole de l'opposant biélorusse, M. Milinkevitch *"avait obtenu légalement, il y a trois ans, un passeport avec lequel il s'est rendu légalement à Riga"*. ***"Je considère que c'est une énième tentative de pression psychologique liée au fait que, le 12 décembre, il doit aller à Strasbourg à une session du Parlement européen pour recevoir le prix Sakharov"***, a affirmé M. Majeïka. Fin octobre, le Parlement européen a décerné à Alexandre Milinkevitch ce prix remis chaque année à une personnalité qui s'est distinguée en faveur des droits de l'homme. Ex-candidat à l'élection présidentielle de mars 2006 face au président Loukachenko, M. Milinkevitch avait été emprisonné pendant quinze jours au printemps pour avoir participé à une manifestation non autorisée qui avait rassemblé des milliers de personnes.

Un autre candidat malheureux d'opposition à la présidentielle biélorusse, Alexandre Kozouline, condamné en juillet pour avoir pris la tête d'une manifestation contre la réélection du président Loukachenko, est en grève de la faim depuis le 20 octobre dans une prison biélorusse.

<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3214,36-840135@51-840138,0.html>

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

EU / UN REFORM

Finland's EU Presidency

- ▶ **UN: Explanation of vote on behalf of EU on situation of democracy and human rights in USA (4/12/06)**

United Nations, General Assembly, 61st Session; III Committee, Agenda Item 67(c): Situation of Democracy and Human Rights in the United States of America (A/C.3/61/L.42)

Explanation of Vote on behalf of the European Union by Ms. Satu Suikkari, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN

22 November 2006

(...)

“There are a number of very important and very serious human rights resolutions, including on human rights situations in specific countries that have to be considered by this year’s 61st session of the UN General Assembly Third Committee. This draft, however, tabled by Belarus on the situation of democracy and human rights in the United States of America, is not one of those resolutions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The EU firmly believes in the principle that it is the gravity of the human rights situation on the ground that should determine whether the General Assembly considers a draft resolution on any country. We also believe, Mr. Chairperson that the country's willingness and its demonstrated efforts to address these issues and to engage in constructive dialogue must be taken into account. Belarus has, so far, failed to either cooperate fully or to enter into any meaningful dialogue with the UN's human rights machinery. **That is why we fully support the resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus that has been tabled by the USA, and that is also why we reject the text that is before you.**

Mr. Chairperson,

The resolution on Belarus, which all EU Member States have cosponsored, is a critical yet balanced text, highlighting a series of well documented and serious human rights violations and urging the Government of Belarus to finally adhere to its international obligations and commitments. For this General Assembly, the resolution on Belarus is just the latest expression of the international community's growing concern about the situation in that country, following the resolutions on Belarus adopted by the Commission of Human Rights in 2004 and 2005.

By contrast, however, this Belarus-sponsored resolution on the situation of democracy and human rights in the USA clearly does not reflect the principle that the gravity of the situation on the ground is determinative. It is well known that the EU has concerns about some of the issues that are covered by this text. In the ongoing dialogue between the EU and the USA on human rights issues, we regularly raise these concerns and we work together to address them. We also welcome the United States' readiness to listen to criticism from the UN's treaty bodies and human rights mechanisms, not to mention from its own vibrant civil society. As with all countries, we encourage the USA to enhance its cooperation with these important UN human rights mechanisms, as EU countries seek to do themselves.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is very obvious that this resolution is a reaction to the USA's resolution on the human rights situation in Belarus itself, and is clearly intended to divert attention from Belarus' own concerning human rights record.

If these were not reasons enough against this draft resolution, Mr. Chairperson, we would like to recall as a final point that the author of this text has also jointly tabled another resolution in this Committee that purports to advocate dialogue on human rights issues and is highly critical of country-specific resolutions. The inherent contradiction in presenting these two proposals is glaring, and makes the draft before you even more untenable. We firmly believe that Belarus itself should live up to the standards expressed in its own documents.

For all of these reasons, Mr. Chairperson, the EU will vote against this resolution.”

http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko49/en_GB/1165220958157/

Finland's EU Presidency

- ▶ **UN: Re-introduction statement on behalf of EU on situation of human rights in Myanmar**
(4/12/06)

United Nations, General Assembly, 61st Session, III Committee, Agenda Item 67(c): Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar (A/C.3/61/L.38/Rev.1)

*Re-Introduction Statement on behalf of the European Union by H.E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations
New York, 22 November 2006*

“Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the European Union and the co-sponsors listed in L.38/Rev.1, I have the honour to introduce under agenda item 67(c) the draft resolution entitled “Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar,” contained in document A/61/C.3/L.38/Rev.1.

Mr. Chairperson, until last week the European Union was closely engaged with the delegation of Myanmar on this draft resolution. Our consultations were conducted in a constructive atmosphere. In addition to several bilateral meetings, the European Union had also organised consultations with other interested delegations, in particular the ASEAN countries. The co-sponsors had already reflected some of the comments of the delegation of Myanmar in the text, and expressed their willingness to work further on it in order to find a consensus. The co-sponsors were also hoping that the very recent visit of Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Gambari, to Myanmar, would have given an impetus for further positive elements for this resolution.

Myanmar's decision to break off the negotiations last week therefore came as a surprise and disappointment to us. We nevertheless went ahead, though, and tabled this revised version of the resolution

to reflect some of Myanmar's comments. We are truly committed, Mr. Chairperson, to dialogue and cooperation, as this gesture amply demonstrates.

It is important to recall, however, the reasons why it is necessary for the General Assembly to address the situation of human rights in Myanmar.

It is 14 years since the UN special rapporteurs first began reporting on the situation in Myanmar, and we have seen no substantive improvements on the areas of fundamental concern to the international community. Impunity continues to prevail for serious violations of human rights, including extrajudicial killings, rape and forced labour.

Moreover, developments during the course of this year have given even more reason for alarm. As the Secretary-General, the Special Rapporteur and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs have reported, **the intensive military campaigns in eastern Myanmar and the associated human rights violations against persons belonging to ethnic nationalities, have led to extensive displacement both internally and across the border during this year.** Independent observers have described the situation as the worst offensive and worst humanitarian situation in a decade. It is incumbent upon the General Assembly to call for an immediate end to the targeting of civilians in the ethnic areas.

But, Mr. Chairperson, this resolution is not just an exercise in expressing our concerns. This resolution is also a very important tool for assisting Myanmar itself in getting on course towards addressing the human rights violations covered by this text and achieving an inclusive restoration of democracy, as well as building the foundations for sustainable development and national reconciliation. Engagement with the UN, particularly through the Secretary-General's good offices, as well as through cooperation with the Special Rapporteur, will be crucial for Myanmar in that regard. Adoption of this resolution is essential for paving the way for that to happen.

Mr. Chairperson, this resolution has been adopted by consensus in the past, a demonstration of the commitment of the whole of the UN membership to work with the Government of Myanmar to improve the situation of human rights in that country. We urge members of the General Assembly again to adopt this draft resolution without a vote.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. ”

http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko49/en_GB/1165220683585/

MISCELLANEOUS

CIA report

► MEPs to shame 11 EU states in final CIA report (28/11/06)

The European Parliament in its final report on alleged CIA kidnappings and prisons in Europe is set to name and shame 11 EU member states with Poland coming in for some of the heaviest criticism, Polish press agency PAP reveals ahead of the study's Wednesday (29 November) publication date. Italy, the UK, Germany, Sweden and Austria saw terrorism suspects snatched on their territory the report by Italian socialist MEP Claudio Fava will say, while the UK, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Romania and Poland hosted hundreds of secret CIA flights.

The density of the flights - suspected of being used for "extraordinary renditions" or transfer of prisoners without trial or legal redress to sites such as Guantanamo Bay or Uzbekistan - was the greatest in Germany (336), the UK (170) and Ireland (147).

But Poland, which saw just 11 recorded CIA flights, remains under suspicion as a place where there "may have been a temporary, secret holding facility" for terror suspects near the Szymanow airport in the northeast of the country, Mr Fava is planning to say.

The allegation is based on eyewitness testimony that a Boeing 737 plane from Kabul landed in Szymanow airport on 22 September 2003 with seven people on board and picked up another five people before flying on to Guantanamo Bay.

Further testimonies suggest that six other flights to Szymanow in 2002 and 2003 landed and took off with no customs or immigration controls, were approached by Polish military vehicles and paid inflated airport fees in cash.

Mr Fava's study will also take Poland to task for "failure to cooperate" properly with the parliament's CIA committee, after Warsaw declined to field any government ministers or MPs to answer MEPs' questions and the Polish parliament opted not to hold any enquiry into the affair.

Italy, the UK, Austria, Romania and Macedonia are to be named as uncooperative states as well, while Macedonia and Bosnia are to be accused of seeing suspects snatched by US intelligence on their soil. The news comes as Polish daily Gazeta Wyborcza on Tuesday wrote that a suspicious Gulfstream jet also made six landings at Warsaw's Okecie airport in 2003 from places such as Afghanistan and Morocco, citing "international flight records."

EU justice commissioner Franco Frattini has in the past clarified that any EU member states caught violating "fundamental human rights" could face suspension of EU voting privileges under articles six and seven of the EU Treaty.

But the MEP's year-long hunt for hard evidence - sparked by initial reports from NGO Human Rights Watch and a leak to the Washington Post - has so far failed to uncover anything strong enough to warrant the move, experts say.

<http://euobserver.com/9/22965>

CIA secret flights

- ▶ **Les vols secrets de la CIA ont commencé avant le 11-Septembre 2001, selon un journal allemand** (1/12/06)

La CIA n'a pas attendu le 11-Septembre et la déclaration de guerre de George W. Bush contre le terrorisme pour employer des méthodes de lutte antiterroriste qui ont, depuis, suscité la polémique. C'est ce qu'affirme le quotidien allemand *Tageszeitung* du jeudi 30 novembre, qui affirme que les transfèrements et détentions secrètes de membres de réseaux islamistes par la CIA hors des Etats-Unis avaient débuté avant les attentats du 11-Septembre 2001.

Des islamistes auraient notamment été enlevés pendant la guerre de Bosnie, entre 1992 et 1995, indique le journal, qui cite comme sources des compte-rendus de discussions entre des hauts représentants de l'Union européenne, d'anciens membres de la CIA et le conseiller américain pour les questions juridiques du département d'Etat, John Bellinger. Le *Taz* relève dans ces discussions la trace de nombreux islamistes présumés enlevés pendant le conflit en ex-Yougoslavie.

Mais, précise toutefois le journal, les agents de la CIA n'auraient utilisé la torture dans des prisons à l'étranger qu'après les attentats du 11 septembre.

COMPTE-RENDUS DE DISCUSSIONS

Mardi, le rapporteur de la commission d'enquête du Parlement européen, Claudio Fava, avait rendu publiques une partie des conclusions de l'enquête qu'il a menées sur l'utilisation présumée de pays européens par la CIA pour le transport et la détention illégale de prisonniers. "*Ils savaient*", y dénonçait M. Fava, pointant la collaboration active ou passive de douze Etats européens dans les 1 245 escales européennes d'avions opérées par la CIA et recensées par la commission. Mais l'enquête menée par les

fonctionnaires européens ne s'intéresse qu'à des faits postérieurs à 2001 et les révélations du *Tageszeitung* ne figurent donc pas dans le rapport final, mais dans les comptes-rendus des discussions qu'ont eues les enquêteurs de l'UE.

Les services secrets des pays concernés auraient été mis au courant de ces enlèvements : *"Il y a une tradition de coopération étroite entre la CIA et les services secrets européens. Cela vaut particulièrement pour l'Allemagne, la France, l'Italie et les pays de l'est de l'UE"*, expliquait en mai 2006 un ancien membre de l'agence américaine cité par le *Taz*.

<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3214,36-840610@51-839736,0.html>

Domestic violence

► Human rights watchdog campaigns to end violence against women (28/11/06)

One fifth to one quarter of all women in Europe have experienced physical violence at least once during their lives while more than one tenth have suffered sexual violence, according to a new report by Europe's main human rights watchdog.

In a campaign launched on Monday (27 November) called "stop domestic violence", the Council of Europe calls for domestic violence to be criminalised, victims to be protected and perpetrators to be punished across Europe.

In some of the organisation's 46 member states, as much as 45 percent of women experience some form of violence, including stalking, with most violent acts being carried out by men in their immediate social environment such as partners and ex-partners, the Strasbourg-based body said.

The campaign "is a message to ... all of us to stop looking the other way and to stop minimising the scale and the gravity of this problem," said Terry Davis, head of the Council of Europe.

Reminding the organisation's member states that they have a responsibility to protect all their inhabitants, he stressed that **governments "must therefore take all reasonable measures to prevent, investigate and punish all forms of violence against women, including violence within the family."**

"Most importantly, the message of the campaign must reach the victims and tell them that they are not alone," he added when speaking at the launch of the campaign in Madrid.

Figures gathered by the organisation show that violence happens in every European country and the cost to society of domestic violence is enormous with studies in individual countries indicating it costs from €2.4 billion per year in Spain to €34 billion in the UK in social, judicial, police and health bills.

The Council of Europe chose Spain to launch the campaign in recognition of the Spanish government's efforts to crack down on domestic violence, including a 2004 law that toughens penalties against men who commit domestic violence and the appointment of special judges to investigate suspected cases.

Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero, who has described domestic violence as his country's "greatest national disgrace," said 40 courts dealing specifically with domestic violence had been set up and the number of police agents who work with abused women boosted by nearly 90 percent to some 1,400, according to the Associated Press.

The council also positively highlighted efforts in Austria, where police have been trained to expel perpetrators from the home and where special outreach services for victims with information and advice have been set up. Slovenia was also praised for training nursing staff in all hospitals to screen for domestic violence.

The campaign will run until 2008 and work through governments, parliaments and regional and local authorities, creating partnerships with leading NGOs to ensure wide-ranging action.

<http://euobserver.com/851/22966>

Germany 2007 – Presidency of the European Union

- ▶ **Preliminary version of the German EU Presidency website now online** (30/11/06)

<http://www.eu2007.de>

A preliminary version of the website can be accessed online under the above address. Here you can already find a meeting calendar offering information on the most important events in January and February, as well as advice on travelling to Germany and useful contact addresses. The pre-site also allows registration to the newsletter and news alerts.

<http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2006/061201-Pre-site-EU-P.html>