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- 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

- December, 19, 2006

Committee on budgetary control

- December, 20, 2006

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REGIONS:

AFRICA

DRC

► **Council extends the mandate of the EU Police Mission in Kinshasa (EUPOL "KINSHASA")**

The Council adopted - by written procedure - a Joint Action amending and extending Joint Action 2004/847/C SP on the European Union Police Mission in Kinshasa (DRC) regarding the Integrated Police Unit (EUPOL "KINSHASA").

The new Joint Action amends and extends the mandate of EUPOL "KINSHASA" until 30 June 2007. EUPOL "KINSHASA" will continue to monitor, mentor and advise on the development of the Integrated Police Unit (IPU), and will help ensure the proper integration of the IPU in the National Congolese Police (PNC). The mission will also strengthen its advising capacity to the Congolese police with a view to facilitating the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process in the DRC together with the EU's EUSEC RD CONGO mission which advises the DRC authorities on SSR.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/92067.pdf

AMERICAS

Venezuela

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Presidential Elections in Venezuela (07/12/06)

The European Union congratulates Mr. Hugo Chávez Frías on his re-election as President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as the people and the political forces of the country for their mature electoral action.

The EU notes with satisfaction that the elections of 3 December 2006 took place in a peaceful and transparent atmosphere, thus providing a good basis for the further development of democratic institutions and political dialogue in Venezuela. The EU also appreciates the courtesies extended by the National Electoral Council to the EU Electoral Observation Mission.

The EU reiterates its determination to support consolidation of democracy and good governance in Venezuela, as well as alleviation of poverty, inequality and exclusion.

The EU also supports the fight by the Government against corruption, and for the promotion of tolerance. These are all essential for the well-being of Venezuela and its citizens.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/92058.pdf

Ecuador

► **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Presidential Elections in Ecuador** (05/12/06)

The European Union congratulates Mr. Rafael Correa Delgado for his election as the President of the Republic of Ecuador.

The EU notes with satisfaction that the elections of 26 November 2006 took place in a peaceful and transparent atmosphere, thereby further consolidating democracy and political culture in Ecuador. The EU reiterates its determination to continue supporting Ecuador in its effort to strengthen democratic institutions and to alleviate poverty, inequality and social exclusion in the framework of the national unity of the country. The EU trusts that the new administration will continue emphasizing the importance of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights, good governance and the fight against corruption, all of which are essential for the future prosperity of Ecuador and the well-being of its citizens.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/92015.pdf

ASIA

Myanmar

► **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on ICRC field offices in Burma/Myanmar** (5/12/06)

The EU has learnt with dismay that the government of Burma/Myanmar has ordered the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to close its five field offices in the country.

The EU is very concerned about the impact of this decision on the humanitarian situation in the country, in particular on the most vulnerable people. For many years, the ICRC has provided important humanitarian assistance and protection to the people in Burma/Myanmar including people living in remote border areas.

The EU strongly encourages the government of Burma/Myanmar to reconsider its decision concerning the ICRC field offices and allow the full resumption by the ICRC of its humanitarian operations in line with its mandate and mission. The EU is convinced that continued cooperation of the government of Burma/Myanmar with international organisations, which are working for the benefit of the people in the country, is essential.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/92008.pdf

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Belarus

► **Belarus faces fresh EU trade sanctions threat** (5/12/06)

The European Commission has renewed a push to impose mini-trade sanctions against Belarus for violation of trade union norms, with Belarus opposition leader Aleksander Milinkevich "cautiously" welcoming the move.

EU member states on Tuesday (5 December) held initial talks on Brussels' recommendation, with Belarus' trading neighbours Latvia, Lithuania and Poland still opposed but with Italy now in favour of the move.

Italy's approval means EU agriculture ministers will be able to rubber stamp the decision on 20 December, with due process seeing Belarus being kicked out of the EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) on trade in mid-2007. "Belarus' trade union reforms have not been sufficient to merit the withdrawal of our

proposal," a commission spokesman said. "We feel strongly confident that this will go through with the necessary support."

The commission already submitted the recommendation once in August this year, but it unravelled when Italy blocked the move in an attempt to push pro-Belarus sanction states, such as UK and Sweden, to yield to Italian needs in a separate shoe trade dispute. "The shoe issue is over, so Poland does not have a blocking minority any more," an EU diplomat stated. "The Belarusians have done nothing - the smart move would have been to implement temporary trade union reforms and then take them away once the GSP threat had passed." Belarus still has a chance to turn things around before the mid-2007 implementation deadline however, with El Salvador already setting a precedent for last-minute reforms that led to the EU halting a GSP expulsion process.

Jobs would go

The sanctions would see tariffs worth some €400 million a year imposed on Belarus textile and wood exports - but not energy exports - to the EU, and could cost up to 100,000 jobs especially among small traders in the border regions.

Reacting to the news Mr Milinkevich told EUobserver "I have always been cautious about trade sanctions because they impact ordinary people" and warned that Minsk could spin GSP against Brussels if the EU does not follow-up with a "broad information campaign." "But of course it's the Belarus government that has brought this about," he added. "If there are sanctions, they would be fully justified in terms of what Belarus has signed up to [in the conventions of the International Labour Organisation]."

Strasbourg trip planned

Mr Milinkevich confirmed he will come to Strasbourg next week to pick up a human rights award, the European Parliament's Sakharov prize, but said recent events - which have seen him briefly arrested and released three times - do not bode well.

"I plan to come and I hope they [the authorities] let me go. These arrests seem like they are looking for a pretext to stop me. But I am hopeful it will go well," he said.

<http://euobserver.com/24/23032>

Kazakhstan

► **EU states unsure how to handle Kazakhstan** (5/12/06)

EU member states have blocked until late 2007 a decision on letting Kazakhstan in 2009 chair Europe's pro-democracy club, the OSCE, with gas and uranium-rich Astana exposing foreign policy divisions in the European Union.

"There was no consensus, so the logical step was to make the decision next year. Among the EU states, some were opposed and others were more inclined to award the presidency now," a spokesman for Belgian foreign minister Karel De Gucht - who currently heads the OSCE - told EUobserver.

"We will say **Kazakhstan must live up to human rights commitments** and that the decision on the presidency will be made no later than the Madrid conference in December next year," he added, on the final statement to be approved by 56 OSCE foreign ministers meeting in Brussels on Tuesday (5 December).

Standing for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe - the Vienna-based OSCE was set up in 1975 and currently does election monitoring across the ex-Soviet region, as well as border monitoring and conflict resolution work.

EU member states vote in the OSCE on the basis of a "common position" with a consensus of OSCE members needed to award the presidency, which - like the Olympic games - cannot be taken away once it is given two or more years in advance.

Germany, France, the Netherlands and Poland originally supported Kazakhstan's 2009 bid as a potential incentive for pro-democracy reform as well as a pragmatic way to improve relations and pave the way for future new gas pipelines under the Caspian Sea. But the UK pushed for a 2011 date instead saying any earlier award would be premature, while the Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia had even deeper misgivings about Kazakhstan's impact on the credibility of the OSCE.

"The energy supply possibility is a big pull for Germany, which will also make this region a major topic of its EU presidency next year," an EU diplomat said, with Berlin, EU top diplomat Javier Solana and the European Commission all currently preparing new policy blueprints for Central Asia.

"On the one hand, Kazakhstan could really help the OSCE get involved in institution building in this region," Kyrgyzstan-based International Crisis Group analyst Michael Hall explained. "But on the other hand it could make the OSCE a platform for repression."

First Borat, now this

The OSCE snub on human rights comes at the end of Kazakhstan president Nursultan Nazarbayev's personal visit to London and Brussels in the past few days, where the austere leader already had to face the indignity of press questions about the US film "Borat," which ridicules his country.

"Kazakhstan enjoys the peaceful co-existence of diverse people of over 130 nationalities and 46 religions. This is a very valuable experience that might be used by the OSCE," Mr Nazarbayev said in Brussels on Monday, adding that his "open" economy has tripled in size since 1999.

"These are the main reasons why Kazakhstan has the right to claim the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2009 and we still hold to that position," he stated. "And for us it's very important the European Union provides its support for Kazakhstan's candidature."

"I'm sorry, but the European Commission has absolutely no position on this, that's not our need to solve," European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso replied, washing his hands of the OSCE issue after signing a modest "memorandum of understanding" on energy cooperation with Astana.

Energy giant has poor record

Kazakhstan - almost the size of the EU but home to just 15 million people - will supply 20 percent of EU gas and oil "in future," predicted Mr Nazarbayev, who sees himself as a regional leader in terms of human rights and stability, next to regimes such as Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

But the Kazakh president's re-election in 2005 was deemed illegitimate by the OSCE itself and saw the murders of two high-profile opposition campaigners - Zamanbek Nurkadilov and Altynbek Sarsanbayev - which are still unsolved today. When Uzbek soldiers machine-gunned at least 180 civilians in Andijan in May 2005, Mr Nazarbayev praised Tashkent's handling of events and called for military cooperation against "international terrorism" in contrast to then Slovenian-led OSCE's call for an international probe.

<http://euobserver.com/24/23030>

Turkey

- ▶ **Council of Europe Anti-Torture Committee visits Turkey (7/12/06)**

Strasbourg - 07.12.2006 - A delegation of the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) has just completed a two-week visit to Turkey (22 November to 4 December 2006).

The main objective of the visit was **to examine the situation of patients held in psychiatric hospitals, in particular as regards living conditions and treatment (including electroconvulsive therapy - ECT).** The delegation also looked into the legal safeguards related to involuntary placement procedures and their implementation in practice. For the first time in Turkey, the delegation also visited two social welfare institutions.

The visit was carried out by the following members of the CPT:

- Aleš BUTALA, Head of delegation (Slovenian)
- Pétur HAUKSSON (Icelander)
- Veronica PIMENOFF (Finnish).

They were supported by Michael NEURAUTER (Head of Division) and Elvin ALIYEV of the CPT's Secretariat, and assisted by two experts: Gavin GARMAN, Head of Forensic Mental Health Nursing, Thames Valley Forensic Mental Health Service (Oxford, United Kingdom), and Catherine PAULET, psychiatrist, Head of the Regional Medical and Psychological Service, Baumettes Prison (Marseilles, France).

The delegation visited the following places of deprivation of liberty:

Psychiatric hospitals

- Bakırköy Mental Health Hospital, İstanbul
- Elazığ Mental Health Hospital
- Samsun Mental Health Hospital

Social welfare institutions

- Elazığ Home for Persons in Need
- Gaziantep Care and Rehabilitation Centre.

The delegation also **visited the temporary detention facilities** at İstanbul-Zeytinburnu District Police Headquarters, **in order to review the conditions under which foreign nationals were being held there.** At the outset of the visit, the delegation had fruitful discussions with Recep AKDAĞ, Minister of Health, and İsmail BARIŞ, Director General for Social Services and Child Protection. In the course of the visit, the delegation met with judges of the civil courts in Elazığ and Samsun which are competent for involuntary placement and guardianship procedures. Meetings were also held with representatives of the Psychiatric Association of Turkey, the Turkish Neuropsychiatric Society, the Psychiatric Nurses Association and the NGO "Human Rights in Mental Health". At the end of the visit, during talks in Ankara, with senior officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health, the Interior, Justice and National Defence, as well as with the Deputy Director General for Social Services and Child Protection, the delegation provided the Turkish authorities with its preliminary observations.

<http://www.cpt.coe.int/documents/tur/2006-12-07-eng.htm>

Azerbaijan

Council of Europe Anti-Torture Committee visits Azerbaijan (6/12/06)

Strasbourg, 06.12.2006 - **A delegation of the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) recently carried out an eleven-day visit to Azerbaijan.** The visit, which began on 20 November 2006, was the CPT's second periodic visit to Azerbaijan.

During the visit, **the delegation assessed progress made since the first periodic visit in 2002 towards implementing the CPT's recommendations.** It examined the treatment of persons detained by the police and conditions in temporary detention centres. Particular attention was paid to the treatment and regime of life-sentenced and other long-term prisoners. The visit also provided an opportunity to examine the situation in psychiatric establishments and to assess the legal safeguards applicable to involuntary psychiatric patients under the Law on Psychiatric Assistance.

In the course of the visit, the CPT's delegation held consultations with Fikrat MAMMADOV, Minister of Justice, Nazim ALAKBAROV, Deputy Minister of Justice and Director of the Penitentiary Service, Senan KERIMOV, Deputy Minister of Health, Rustam USUBOV, First Deputy Prosecutor General, as well as other senior Government officials. It also met with Elmira SULEYMANOVA, Human Rights Commissioner. Further, discussions were held with members of non-governmental and international organisations active in areas of concern to the CPT.

At the end of the visit, the delegation presented its preliminary observations to the Azerbaijani authorities.

The visit was carried out by the following members of the CPT:

- Renate KICKER, Head of delegation (Austrian)
- Celso DAS NEVES MANATA (Portuguese)
- Zdeněk HÁJEK (Czech)
- Jean-Pierre RESTELLINI (Swiss)
- Vitolds ZAHARS (Latvian).

They were supported by Petya NESTOROVA (Head of Division), Borys WODZ and Isabelle SERVOZ-GALLUCCI of the CPT's Secretariat, and assisted by two experts: James McMANUS, Professor of Criminal Justice at Glasgow Caledonian University (United Kingdom), and Clive MEUX, consultant forensic psychiatrist, Oxford (United Kingdom).

The delegation visited the following places:

Establishments under the Ministry of Internal Affairs

- Temporary detention centre of the Main Department for Combating Organised Crime, Baku
- Temporary detention centre of Narimanov District Police Department, Baku
- Reception and distribution centre for minors of the Main City Police Department, Baku
- Bilajari unit of the Main Transport Police Department, Baku
- Sabayil District Police Department, Baku
- Police station No. 15, Baku
- Police station No. 30, Baku
- Temporary detention centre of Gakh District Police Department
- Temporary detention centre of Shamakhi District Police Department
- Temporary detention centre of Sumgayit District Police Department
- Temporary detention centre of Zagatala District Police Department

Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic

- Temporary detention centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Boyuk Duz
- Sadarak District Police Division
- Sharur District Police Division

Establishments under the Ministry of Justice

- Gobustan Prison
- Investigative Isolator No. 3, Shuvalan
- Strict-regime penitentiary establishment No. 11, Binagadi District, Baku

In addition, the delegation interviewed prisoners at the Central penitentiary hospital in Baku who had recently been transferred from Gobustan Prison, and examined the construction site of the new mixed-regime penitentiary establishment in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

Establishments under the Ministry of Health

- City Psychiatric Hospital No. 1, Baku
- Regional Psycho-Neurological Dispensary, Sheki

Establishments under the Ministry of Defence

- "Hauptvacht"(disciplinary unit) of Nakhchivan Garrison

Establishments under the State Border Service

- Temporary detention centre for persons who have violated the border regime, State Border Service military unit, Nakhchivan City.

<http://www.cpt.coe.int/documents/aze/2006-12-06-eng.htm>

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

EU / UN REFORM

UN Reform

► **Council Conclusions on UN Reform** (11/12/06)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

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1. The Council recalls its conclusions adopted on 10 April 2006 on the UN World Summit follow-up and reaffirms its commitment to ensure that the reforms agreed at the Summit are fully and urgently implemented.

2. During the sixtieth session, the UN General Assembly agreed on a number of measures to reinforce the Organisation. The follow-up of the implementation of those decisions needs to be assured and carefully monitored. In particular, the Council stresses the EU's commitment to the work of the newly established Peacebuilding Commission and Human Rights Council, and to implement the development commitments of the Summit. Progress in these areas will enable the UN to continue to make a genuine contribution to the achievement of lasting peace, the protection and promotion of human rights as well as sustainable development.

3. The Council recognises the need to reform the main UN bodies, among them the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council, with a view to enhancing the representativeness, transparency and efficiency of the system. For its part the EU will engage actively in constructive dialogue to advance all the reforms agreed at the UN World Summit. The Council furthermore welcomes the adoption of GA resolution on the reform of ECOSOC and encourages all Members of the United Nations to make full use of the new opportunities offered by a strengthened ECOSOC to discharge its redefined functions

4. The Council welcomes the report by the UN Panel on System-wide Coherence and looks forward to the Secretary-General's comments and proposals on the implementation of the Panel's recommendations. The EU considers it important to engage all UN Member States and other stakeholders in active discussion of the Report's recommendations and to agree on measures that will strengthen the UN's capacity to deliver as one in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance, the environment and the achievement of the MDG's. The Council also welcomes the progress towards the establishment of the "One UN" country pilots.

5. The Council also stresses the importance of the full implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and reiterates its commitment to reaching an agreement on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) as soon as possible.

6. Management reform is crucial to achieving a more efficient and more effective UN. The Council supports the steps already taken to improve the management of the Organisation, including the creation of an Ethics Office in the Secretariat. The Council underlines the need for Member States to continue to engage constructively to secure further results in the equally important areas of human resources management, procurement reform and governance and oversight.

7. The Council underlines the importance of the Mandate Review as necessary in order to ensure that the UN's resources are matched to its priorities. The Council emphasizes that Mandate Review is neither a cost-cutting exercise nor intended to reduce the activity of the UN or to put into question the priorities set by the General Assembly. The Council invites all Member States to contribute positively and flexibly to the process underway to secure agreement on the way forward on Mandate review, and to engage actively in the review process itself.

8. The Council pays tribute to the outstanding efforts of the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in successfully managing a difficult and complex reform phase. The Council has highly valued Mr Annan's leadership and vision during the past ten years and would like to thank him for his ceaseless work for the principles of the UN Charter as well as his courage in the much needed transformation of the World Organisation. The Council also thanks the successive Presidents of the General Assembly for their vital role in support of reform during this period.

9. The Council warmly welcomes the appointment of Mr Ban Ki-Moon as the next Secretary- General of the United Nations and commits its full support to him in his new challenging task of leading an effective and efficient World Organisation towards its objectives of peace and security, development and human rights, including by pursuing UN reform."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/92089.pdf

MISCELLANEOUS

European Parliament

► **MEPs set to back more funding for democracy and human rights** (7/12/06)

With over 1000 projects in 32 countries worldwide, the "European initiative for democracy and human rights" is one of the ways the European Union tries to "export" its key values. However, with funding due to dry up at the end of the year - MEPs have pushed for the initiative to receive € 1.1 billion over the next seven years. This is crucial as the initiative funds projects in some of the toughest places on earth - helping reconciliation in Sudan's 22 year civil war being just one case.

The European initiative for democracy and human rights was created in 1994 at the behest of the European Parliament. As well as it's stated aims it also plays a significant role in conflict prevention and reconciliation. Funding observers during recent elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo is one recent example of attempts at reconciliation after a long civil war.

In Colombia it supports NGOs who protect the rights of children whilst in five African countries it supports the "Forest Peoples Project" which protects the rights of indigenous people.

On Tuesday during their plenary session - MEPs are expected to vote to approve a text that will ensure the initiative is ready for 2007. The report which recommended the Parliament's continue support was co-written by H el ene Flautre, a French Green MEP and chair of Parliament's Human Rights Committee, and Edward McMillan-Scott, a British Conservative MEP and Vice-President of the Parliament.

Projects will not require government consent

Mrs Flautre explained the significance of the funding; "this instrument provides the only financing of projects by non-state civil society actors in the promotion of democracy and human rights". Mr McMillan-Scott echoed this saying "while most of the money will go to civil society actors, in many countries democratic

political groups are in permanent opposition and they also deserve support". He went on to say that that "the EU should become more active in "difficult" countries and he has recently visited China, Cuba and Russia to examine the scope of NGO reform there.

A crucial aspect of the democracy and human rights initiative is that projects do not require the consent of the government where they are taking place. Funding can also be made available to individuals - this is an important principle for the Parliament as through its "Sakharov prize" for freedom of thought it often honours individuals. On Tuesday MEPs will award this year's prize to Belarus opposition leader Aliaksandr Milinkevich.

EU should uphold "universality" of human rights

The initiative is consistent with the position that Parliament has long held over the promotion of these values. In 2002 it adopted a resolution saying that "one of the main objectives of the EU to uphold the universality and the indivisibility of human rights". It went on to say that the EU has "an extraordinary capacity to extend and improve democratisation and respect for human rights among its partners worldwide".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/015-1079-338-12-49-902-20061207ST001078-2006-04-12-2006/default_en.htm

Racism and discrimination

► **Report to Parliament tells of persistent racism and discrimination** (5/12/06)

Migrant and ethnic minorities are suffering unchanged levels of discrimination in housing, education and jobs across the EU. That was the stark conclusion of a report presented to Parliament's Civil Liberties committee last week. Drawn up by the EU's anti-racism watchdog the "Centre on Racism and Xenophobia", it says policies are hampered by a lack of data collected by EU countries. Vice-Chair of the committee Stefano Zappalà MEP said racism was "widespread" and called for action.

In particular the annual report singles out Europe's 7-9 million Roma as being especially vulnerable. The report also says that asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants are at risk while Jews and Muslims remain vulnerable to racist attacks.

In the 11 countries that record racist violence and crime, 8 of them - Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Slovakia and the UK - have recorded increases in the last five years.

Not only violence

While violence against minorities may grab news headlines and lead to police action - there remains an almost "hidden" discrimination in jobs, housing, and education. The report found that unemployment remains high among immigrants and migrants - well above the national average in the countries concerned.

This is made worse by de-facto segregation in many schools across the EU - with pupils from minority groups often attending poorer schools. This makes their chances of higher education and a good job in the future even harder to achieve. The picture is repeated in public housing allocation - minorities, asylum seekers and Roma live in poorer and more insecure accommodation, the report found.

"Data gaps can result in ongoing discrimination"

Beate Winkler, head of the monitoring agency told Parliament's Civil Liberties committee that most EU members "lack the necessary data to monitor how social and economic policies affect their ethnic

communities". This is a serious issue as without data the scale of the problem cannot be determined. The Report says that only 2 of the 25 EU members (Finland and the UK) have what it calls "comprehensive data collection" on racist violence and crime. The rest have varying degrees of this but five countries - Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain have none. Ms Winkler called on Parliament to put pressure on all EU members to ensure data is collected as "data gaps can result in ongoing discrimination".

From Racism to Rights

Next month the Centre that drafted the report will be enlarged to become the European Agency for Fundamental Rights - a move strongly supported by Parliament. MEPs had wanted the Agency to cover police and criminal justice cooperation, for example air passenger data protection. However, in a meeting on 4-5 December, justice ministers decided to limit the focus of the Agency to the EU's Community law, for example, discrimination in the workplace. To read more of the report mentioned in this article see the link below.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/015-946-254-09-37-902-20061205STO00945-2006-11-09-2006/default_en.htm

EU policy on human rights and democratization in third countries

- ▶ **Council Conclusions on the implementation of the EU policy on human rights and democratisation in third countries** (11/12/06)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The Council has continued to implement the EU policy on human rights and democratisation in third countries. Human rights remain a priority field in the Council's actions and human rights and democratisation will be kept on the agenda of the Council.

2. The Council commends the crucial work of **human rights defenders** worldwide. This year, the EU has emphasised the essential role of women human rights defenders, and has actively supported their work. As underscored by the Council in June, the EU is committed to continuing its actions in support of all human rights activists who - often at the risk of their own lives - take action to defend others. In this respect, the EU has noted with concern some negative developments and a visible trend in some countries aimed at limiting free civil society activities.

3. The Council remains deeply committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of children affected by armed conflicts. The implementation of the EU Guidelines and Strategy on Children and Armed Conflict as well as of the checklist for the integration of the protection of children affected by armed conflict into all ESDP operations will be continued and strengthened.

4. The Council reiterates its firm opposition to the **death penalty** in all cases. It welcomes the fact that in 2006 several states decided to abolish the death penalty, but at the same time deplores the wide use of it in some other countries. The EU will continue its efforts to encourage retentionist countries to abolish capital punishment. The EU will continue to raise this issue in all relevant fora. In this regard, the EU supports the organisation of the third World Congress against the Death Penalty in February 2007.

5. The Council reaffirms its commitment to the **prevention and eradication of all forms of torture and ill-treatment** within the EU and world-wide. The EU is campaigning to **promote the global instruments for the prevention of torture**, and encouraging full participation and cooperation of states with the relevant mechanisms. The EU will continue to address both specific cases and more structural aspects with a view to preventing and eradicating torture.

6. The **EU remains firmly committed to the absolute prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment.** It guides our own actions and we raise our concerns with third countries. In this context, the Council reiterates that human rights, refugee law and international humanitarian law have to be respected and maintained when combating terrorism. The Council will continue to follow closely developments with regard to human rights in combating terrorism and take adequate measures for their protection. The existence of secret detention facilities where detained persons are kept in a legal vacuum is not in conformity with international humanitarian and human rights law.

7. The Council welcomes the progress made in mainstreaming of human rights into all EU policies. The Council underlines the importance of taking human rights aspects into consideration in all relevant geographical and thematic policies of the EU and stresses the continuing character of this work. The Council commends in this regard the work done by the Personal Representative of the SG/HR for Human Rights. The EU will actively and regularly convey its position on this issue in a coherent manner in relevant contacts with third countries. In this context, the Council welcomes the adoption of best practises for the interpretation of the human rights criteria of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and underlines the need for practical implementation of the criteria.

8. The Council emphasizes the need to take practical measures to strengthen the human rights perspective in the ESDP and welcomes efforts made in this direction. Those include developing a standard field manual on human rights for ESDP missions and ensuring the inclusion of human rights expertise both in the planning and in the implementation of ESDP operations. The Council underlines the need to continue the active implementation in the EU of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security and reiterates its commitment expressed in November on promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in crisis management.

9. The Council reaffirms its commitment to improving the coherence and consistency of the EU's human rights policy in its internal matters as well as in external affairs. The EU's Fundamental Rights Charter as well as the establishment of a Fundamental Rights Agency are to be seen as important steps in this context. The importance of the EU's cooperation with regional and international organisations, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the OHCHR, is underlined.

10. The Council reaffirms the importance it attaches to dialogue as a key tool in promoting human rights worldwide. Apart from the specific human rights dialogues and consultations, the various agreement-based, ad hoc and local human rights dialogues that the EU has with third countries are an important channel to promote the EU's objectives in the area of human rights, rule of law and democracy. The Council welcomes the efforts made to include all relevant human rights issues on the agendas of the Article 8 dialogue meetings. The Council, however, underlines that bilateral human rights dialogues do not exclude other action in the field of human rights such as raising human rights concerns through public declarations or in multilateral forums.

11. The Council continues to be deeply concerned about **the deteriorating human rights situation in Iran.** The Council reiterates its serious concern over the on-going harassment of human rights defenders and the treatment of religious minorities in Iran. During the past year the EU has on several occasions expressed its concerns over the freedom of association and expression, including its concern over the closure of reformist newspapers. The Council deplores the fact that, despite Iran's obligations under the UN human rights conventions, the use of the death penalty in Iran is rising, and that Iran is one of the few countries where minors are still being sentenced to death and executed. The Council welcomes the adoption of a resolution on human rights in Iran at the 61st session of the UNGA Third Committee, and expresses its hope that Iran will move swiftly to address the concerns of the international community contained in that resolution. The Council regrets that, in spite of the mutual agreement to hold a meeting of the EU-Iran Human Rights

Dialogue in Helsinki on 18-19 December 2006, Iran finally decided not to engage in the dialogue with the EU. The EU remains willing to take up the dialogue with Iran.

12. The Council reaffirmed the high importance the EU attaches to its exchanges with China on human rights, including through the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue and the legal seminars. The Council welcomes progress made by China in giving effect to the economic rights of its citizens and the commitment made to reform its criminal justice system. It also appreciates the commitment made by China to fulfil its international human rights obligations and to co-operate with UN human rights mechanisms, in particular the Human Rights Council. However, the Council continues to have serious concerns about the human rights situation in China and deplores the fact that there has been very little progress in a number of areas of concern, which include freedom of expression, religion and association as well as the rights of persons belonging to minorities and the continued and extensive use of the death penalty. The EU will continue to monitor the human rights situation in China and to work for positive change through continued and improved dialogue and cooperation. The EU urges China to announce a timetable for the ratification of the ICCPR and work towards a timely ratification. A swift accession to the Rome Statute should be considered.

13. The Council welcomes the continuation of the human rights consultations with the Russian Federation. The EU, however, remains concerned about certain developments in Russia during the past year, notably in relation to the situation of **human rights defenders, torture, media freedom, NGOs, impunity, respect for the rule of law** as well as **racism, xenophobia and intolerance.** The Council deplores the recent assassinations of high-profile journalists and urges Russia to do its utmost to bring the perpetrators to justice. The Council remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Chechnya and will continue to pay close attention to it.

14. The Council reiterates its strong support to the mandate of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), which was established in the context of the broader UN reform and began its work this year. The EU remains committed to working for an efficient body able to timely address the full range of human rights issues, including urgent human rights issues and situations.. In this regard, the EU reaffirms the essential role of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. The EU looks forward to the HRC's work to strengthen international human rights law and its implementation. The Council underlines the need for constructive cooperation between states in order to secure a meaningful dialogue and practical and effective results and reiterates its commitment to work towards this. The EU will continue to engage actively in the development of tools and mechanisms that are needed to make the HRC an effective and constructive body. Transparency, predictability and inclusiveness allowing for the participation of all stakeholders, including NGOs and national human rights institutions, should remain the guiding principles of this institution building process.

15. The Council welcomes the convocation of a special session on Sudan/Darfur by the HRC thus proving the HRC's ability to effectively address urgent human rights situations. The Council expresses its continuing deep concern at the appalling humanitarian and human rights situation in Darfur, and calls for an immediate end to the **ongoing violations of humanitarian law and human rights law by all sides**, with special focus on vulnerable groups, including **women and children.** The Government of Sudan has a responsibility to protect its citizens against violence and guarantee respect for human rights. The Council calls on all parties to put an end to impunity by implementing relevant UN resolutions. The Council also expresses its deep concern about the recent escalation of the conflict in Sri Lanka which has led to increasing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

16. The Council welcomes the adoption of resolutions on several pressing issues and country situations, including the DPRK, Burma/Myanmar, Iran and Belarus at the 61st session of the UNGA Third Committee. Action on Uzbekistan was prevented by a "no action motion". The Council reiterates its strong opposition to the increasing use of no action motions and finds it of utmost importance that UN Member States be given

the possibility to debate the substance of all initiatives presented. The EU also welcomes the adoption of several resolutions on important thematic issues such as the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, religious intolerance and the rights of the child. The EU further welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of the International Convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance, thus opening this new instrument for ratification.

17. The Council welcomes the efforts to complete the negotiations on the regulation of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and underlines the need for the EU's continuous support for human rights and democracy work worldwide.

18. The Council further welcomes the continuation during the past year of its ongoing close cooperation with the European Parliament and civil society. The Council takes note of the recommendations of the Annual EU Human Rights Forum, held in Helsinki on 7-8 December 2006, and underlines the need to continue the existing active cooperation among the European human rights community."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/92093.pdf

Arms Trade Treaty

► Council Conclusions on Arms Trade Treaty (11/12/06)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council welcomed the formal start of the process towards the elaboration of a legally binding international Arms Trade Treaty through the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the resolution "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms" on 6 December 2006. The Council noted with appreciation that a clear majority of UN Member States supported the resolution, including all EU Member States. The Council remained convinced that the United Nations is the only forum that could deliver a truly universal instrument.

The Council welcomed in particular the fact that the operational paragraphs of the resolution request the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument, and to establish a group of governmental experts, commencing in 2008, to examine these matters. The Council reaffirmed that the EU and its individual Member States would play an active role in this process, and called upon them, as well as all other UN Member States, to actively support the ATT process, to submit their views to the Secretary-General and participate in the work of the group of governmental experts.

The Council underlined the importance of co-operation in this process with other States and regional organizations and expressed its firm belief that a comprehensive, legally binding instrument, consistent with existing responsibilities of States under relevant international law, establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, would be a major contribution to tackling the undesirable and irresponsible proliferation of conventional arms which undermines peace, security, development and full respect for human rights."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/92080.pdf

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture

► **Council of Europe Anti-Torture Committee: visits in 2007** (7/12/06)

Strasbourg, 07.12.2006 - In 2007, as part of its programme of regular "periodic" visits, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) intends to examine the treatment of people deprived of their liberty in the following eleven countries:

[Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

[Croatia](#)

[Estonia](#)

[Georgia](#)

[Latvia](#)

[Liechtenstein](#)

[Moldova](#)

[Netherlands](#)

[Serbia](#)

[Spain](#)

[Switzerland](#)

Other visits that appear to the CPT to be required in the circumstances will also be organised during the year.

The CPT's field of operations encompasses all 46 member States of the Council of Europe as well as Montenegro.

The Committee has the right to visit, at any time, any place where persons are deprived of their liberty by a public authority. It also has the right to interview in private detained persons, and to enter into contact with anyone else who may be able to provide relevant information. After each visit, the CPT sends a confidential report containing its conclusions and recommendations to the State concerned. This constitutes the basis for a dialogue between the CPT and the national authorities in order to strengthen the protection of detained persons from ill-treatment.

<http://www.cpt.coe.int/en/visits/2006-12-07-eng.htm>

La "frustration" des organisations de défense des droits humains

► **Washington salue les "victimes" de l'ancien dictateur, "frustration" des organisations de défense des droits humains** (11/12/06) [FR]

Pinochet est *"malheureusement mort trop tôt, avant d'avoir été jugé"*, a déclaré dimanche le président de la Ligue des droits de l'homme (LDH), Jean-Pierre Dubois. *"Il n'a pas été jugé parce que la justice britannique s'est à l'époque laissée prendre aux informations sur son mauvais état de santé et, de cette façon, il a réussi à échapper à la justice. C'est la victoire de l'impunité"*, a-t-il estimé.

"Son cas me fait penser à celui d'un autre vieillard, condamné en France pour avoir envoyé des enfants au four crématoire et qui est sorti de prison pour raisons de santé. Et finalement M. Papon se porte à merveille", a ajouté M. Dubois.

Le vice-président de la Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme (FIDH), Luis Guillermo Perez, a lui aussi regretté que l'ancien dictateur soit mort sans avoir été jugé, estimant toutefois que sa "condamnation morale" a déjà été faite. "Pinochet restera comme un criminel contre l'humanité, son nom sera préservé à travers les siècles comme cela", a-t-il estimé. "La lutte n'est pas perdue."

De son côté, l'organisation de défense des droits humains Amnesty International a estimé que la mort de Pinochet devait "rappeler l'importance de la célérité de la justice pour les crimes contre les droits de l'homme". Pour Amnesty, elle ne doit pas être un point final pour les procédures lancées contre "tous ceux qui sont impliqués dans les milliers de cas de disparition, torture et exécution durant sa période de pouvoir".

<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/articleinteractif/0,41-0@2-3222,49-844078@45-2683@51-841382,0.html>

UNICEF Report

- ▶ Le bien-être des femmes va de pair avec celui des enfants, souligne l'ONU (11/12/06)
[FR]

L'amélioration du sort des enfants dans le monde et l'élimination des discriminations envers les femmes "sont inextricablement liés", souligne l'Unicef (Fonds des Nations unies pour l'enfance) dans son rapport annuel, publié lundi 11 décembre. Ce document est cette année entièrement consacré à la place des femmes au sein de la famille, dans la vie économique ou en politique, et à son incidence sur les enfants.

Aujourd'hui, "malgré des avancées", "la vie de millions de filles et de femmes est encore dominée par la discrimination, la dépendance et la pauvreté", souligne le rapport publié à l'occasion du 60^e anniversaire de l'organisation. Pourtant, à travers des données portant sur trente pays en voie de développement, il établit un lien étroit entre le degré de responsabilité des femmes sur les dépenses familiales, leur propre santé, leurs sorties et le bien-être des enfants.

POUVOIR DE DÉCISION ET MALNUTRITION

Le document de l'Unicef souligne que dans les familles où les femmes ont le pouvoir de décision, la proportion des ressources consacrées aux enfants est de loin supérieur à celles où les femmes ont un rôle moindre. Or dans un tiers des pays seulement, plus de la moitié des femmes participent aux décisions. Si l'égalité régnait dans le couple, 13,4 millions d'enfants de moins de trois ans seraient mieux nourris en Asie du Sud. De même en Afrique subsaharienne, où un tiers des enfants de moins de cinq ans souffrent de malnutrition : l'égalité des sexes bénéficierait à 1,7 million d'enfants.

Les enfants gagneraient aussi à une meilleure égalité dans le travail. Aujourd'hui, si les femmes ont plus largement accès à l'emploi, elles n'ont pas acquis les droits qui l'accompagnent. Elles ont des journées plus longues que les hommes, et cette activité rémunératrice n'a pas fait baisser leur part de travail domestique. Leurs salaires sont inférieurs de 20 % en moyenne par rapport à ceux des hommes.

Enfin, alors que l'engagement politique des femmes a un impact positif sur la situation des enfants, elles représentent un peu moins de 17 % de toutes les assemblées parlementaires dans le monde.

RECOMMANDATIONS CONTRE LE SEXISME

Le rapport fait plusieurs recommandations pour lutter contre les discriminations sexistes. Il plaide notamment pour la gratuité de l'école. Alors que près d'une fille sur cinq entrant à l'école primaire dans les

pays en voie de développement ne finit pas ce cycle, les études montrent que les femmes éduquées meurent moins en couches et envoient plus souvent leurs enfants à l'école.

Il recommande également de réformer le droit de propriété et d'héritage, et se prononce, en politique, en faveur des quotas. Selon le document, 17 des 20 pays qui ont le plus grand nombre de femmes députées ont adopté un tel dispositif.

Enfin, l'Unicef souligne que lutter contre l'inégalité homme femme, le troisième des *"objectifs du Millénaire"* fixés par l'ONU, permettra d'atteindre d'autres buts : faire disparaître l'extrême pauvreté, développer l'éducation, combattre les grandes épidémies et défendre l'environnement.

<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3226,36-844134@51-844147,0.html>