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Moldova

► Council Common Position 2007/121/CFSP of 19 February 2007 extending and amending Common Position 2004/179/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against the leadership of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova - was published on 20 February 2007 in the Official Journal of the European Union N° L 51/31, p.31 (26/02/2007) (at the moment the text is not available on the Council website)

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► Quartet Statement (21/2/2007).

THEMATIC:

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IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

EU - THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

Committee on Development

- February, 27,28, 2007

Committee on Foreign Affairs

- February, 26,28, 2007

Subcommittee on Human Rights

- February, 28, 2007

Subcommittee on security and defence

- February, 28, 2007 ; 1March 2007

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

- February, 27, 28, 2007

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- February, 27, 28, 2007

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- February, 27, 28, 2007

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REGIONS:

AFRICA

Comoros

► **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation in the Comoros** (19/02/2007)

The European Union is concerned by the recent political tensions between the Union of the Comoros and its member autonomous islands, arising from disagreement over the application of the institutional laws on the distribution of powers between Union and islands. These tensions disrupt the operation of the state and undermine the new institutions put in place by the Fomboni process.

The European Union supports the steps taken by the members of the international community present in the Comoros to help the authorities of the Union and the autonomous islands to resume their discussions and to find agreement in a spirit of dialogue and concern for national unity.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/92838.pdf

Africa

► **EU-Africa Joint Strategy EU-African Union Dialogue 9-23 February 2007 Troika Experts Meeting** (26/02/2007)

The African Union and the European Union met this week (19-23 February) to start discussions on a new joint EU-Africa Strategy to be adopted at the second EU-Africa Summit, which is foreseen to be held in the end of the second semester in Lisbon. Both sides reiterated their will to develop a new Strategic Partnership between both continents in the framework of the positive development on the African continent since the first EU-Africa summit was held in Cairo in 2000 and in particular following the establishment of the African Union in 2002.

The aim of the meeting was to identify the challenges the new joint EU-Africa Strategy needs to address as well as to establish a shared vision between both parties that should guide these negotiations. The discussions were organised on a thematic basis (Shared Vision; Peace and Security; Governance and Human Rights; Regional Integration and Trade; Key Development issues) and allowed for a frank and constructive exchange of ideas between both sides.

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

Marocco

► **Moroccan delegation outlines autonomy plan for Western Sahara** (26/02/2007)

Within the framework of Germany's EU Presidency, Federal Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier received a high-ranking Moroccan delegation headed by Interior Minister Chakib Benmoussa. The delegation is currently visiting selected capitals at the request of the Moroccan King in order to hold consultations on the Moroccan autonomy plan for Western Sahara, which is in the process of being drafted, before it is submitted shortly to the UN Security Council.

Federal Minister Steinmeier praised the initiative to bring about progress in a conflict which has been deadlocked for many years and to inform the European Union of Morocco's intentions. Federal Minister

Steinmeier said that the European Union will study the plan with great interest and discuss it. The Minister went on to stress that Europe supports the course of political, economic and social reforms in Morocco embarked upon under King Mohammed VI.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/February/0226AAMarokko.html

AMERICAS

Colombia

► Declaration by the Presidency, on behalf of the European Union, on the fifth anniversary of the kidnapping of Ingrid Betancourt in Colombia (23/02/2007)

The fifth anniversary of the kidnapping, on 23 February 2002, of Ms Ingrid Betancourt and her campaign director once again brings home to the international community the tragedy suffered every day by the hostages held in Colombia. Some have been held for nine years.

The European Union reiterates in the strongest possible terms its condemnation of hostage-taking, wherever it occurs. It calls on the illegal groups in Colombia to release all the hostages without delay and to abandon kidnapping and hostage-taking.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/February/0223Kolumbien.html

ASIA

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Albania

► Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP, comments on the local elections in Albania (19/02/2007)

Javier Solana, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CF P), today made the following comments concerning the municipal elections in Albania:

"I welcome the preliminary report by the International Election Observation Mission on the local elections in Albania and the assessment that they provided for a competitive contest and were calm over all. Regrettably, there was some tension and a number of shortcomings were identified. These must be addressed in order not be repeated in the future.

The electoral process, in particular the period before 12 January, clearly points to the need for a more responsible and constructive political climate in Albania. Both the government and the opposition must do more in this regard. The parties should now constructively unify their efforts on electoral reform and tackle the challenges ahead in the EU integration process."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/92843.pdf

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Middle East

► **Quartet Statement** (21/2/2007).

The Quartet Principals – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, High Representative for European Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Walner – met today in Berlin to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

Secretary Rice reported on her recent February 18 meetings with PM Olmert and President Abbas, the February 19 trilateral and U.S. efforts to facilitate discussions between the parties. The Quartet welcomed these efforts and expressed the hope that the result-oriented dialogue initiated between Israeli and Palestinian leaders will continue in the framework of a renewed political process, with the aim of defining more clearly the political horizon and launching meaningful negotiations. The Quartet reaffirmed its determination to promote such a process, in cooperation with the parties and other regional partners. The Quartet urges the parties to refrain from measures that prejudice issues to be resolved in negotiations.

The Quartet reaffirmed its statements regarding its support for a Palestinian government committed to non violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road map, and encourage progress in this direction.

The Quartet discussed efforts underway for a Palestinian national unity government, pursuant to the agreement reached in Mecca on February 8. The Quartet expressed its appreciation for the role of King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia and the cessation of violence among Palestinians.

The Quartet concluded with a discussion of possible further steps by the international community in the context of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

It welcomes preliminary ideas put forward by the European Commission to meet the need to better coordinate and mobilize international assistance in support of the political process and to meet the needs of the Palestinian people.

The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to meet regularly and asked envoys to monitor developments and actions taken by the parties and to discuss the way ahead. It was agreed to schedule a meeting in the region soon.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/92893.pdf

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International Court of Justice

- **Remarks by Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, on the verdict of the International Court of Justice in The Hague concerning the direct responsibility of the Serbian Government for genocide in Bosnia during the 1992-95 war (26/2/2007).**

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), made today the following comments on the judgement of the International Court of Justice concerning the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro):

"Today's verdict of The Hague Tribunal is to be welcomed. We accept it, and we think that it will contribute to close the debates of a dramatic history that was very painful and very damaging for many people. I expect that the parties concerned in the region will accept, fully respect and implement all aspects of the judgement.

I have not yet studied the verdict in detail, but there is one thing that I would like to underline: There is no collective punishment. It is good that, in the end, the highest tribunal in the world has closed that page and I hope that this will help the final reconciliation of the peoples of the Balkans."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?lang=EN&cmsid=358

International Court of Justice

- **EU Presidency statement on the International Court of Justice's judgment (26/2/2007)**

On 26 February 2007 the International Court of Justice delivered its judgment in the case concerning the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro).

On this occasion the Presidency calls upon Belgrade to use today's judgment as a further opportunity to distance itself from the crimes committed by the Milosevic regime in the name of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Presidency urges all sides to respect the judgment, and hopes that it will help close a painful chapter in the history of the region.

The Presidency hopes that the democratic forces in Serbia, which gained an impressive majority in the parliamentary elections, form a reform-oriented government, which overcomes the past, at the earliest opportunity.

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/February/0226Serbien.html