

SUMMARY

**REGIONS:**

**AFRICA**

**Guinee**

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation in the Republic of Guinea (02/03/2007)

**AMERICAS**

**ASIA**

**Sri Lanka**

- ▶ EU Presidency statement on the shelling of a diplomatic delegation in Sri Lanka (27/02/2007)

**East Timor**

- ▶ European Commission allocates €1.5 million to victims of internal crisis in East Timor (01/03/2007)

**EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE ) AND CIS**

**Bosnia**

- ▶ Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, met Nikola ŠPIRIĆ, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (28/2/2007)
- ▶ Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina: EU confirms decision on transition (28/2/2007)

**Belaruss**

- ▶ The 10-minute interview: Aliaksandr Milinkevich, Belarus opposition leader (01/3/2007)

**Uzbekistan**

- ▶ EU sanctions against Uzbekistan lack bite, say MEPs (01/3/2007)

## MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

### Lebanon

- ▶ EU High Representative for the CFSP, met Saad HARIRI, leader of the parliamentary majority in Lebanon (01/3/2007)

### Marocco

- ▶ European Commission proposes more than €650 million in support of reforms (02/3/2007)

**THEMATIC :**

## FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

## JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

## EU / UN REFORM

### EU Constitutional treaty

- ▶ EU constitution: strong support for the "Treaty +" solution (01/03/2007)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### International Criminal Court

- ▶ Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP, welcomes the International Criminal Court's initiative to present evidence on alleged crimes in Sudan/Darfur (27/02/2007).
- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the International Criminal Court's investigation into Darfur (01/03/2007)

### Operations and Civilian Missions

- ▶ Talks on EU Operations and Civilian Missions (01/03/2007)

### EU Fundamental Rights Agency

- ▶ European Commission welcomes the opening of the EU Fundamental Agency (01/03/2007)

## IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

**EU - THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS**

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS**

**Committee on Development**

- March, 26, 27, 2007

**Committee on Foreign Affairs**

- March , 12, 2007

**Subcommittee on Human Rights**

- March , 12, 2007

**Subcommittee on security and defence**

- March , 19,20, 2007

**Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs**

- March , 19, 20, 21, 2007

**Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality**

- March , 8, 2007

**Committee on budgetary control**

- March , 26, 27, 2007

**CONFERENCES / EVENTS**

## **REGIONS:**

### **AFRICA**

#### **Guinee**

##### **► Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation in the Republic of Guinea (02/03/2007)**

The European Union welcomes the appointment of Mr Lansana Kouyaté as Prime Minister on 26 February 2007. This appointment constitutes an important step towards a government based on broad consensus and in implementing the agreement signed between the government and the trade unions. The European Union expects the Prime Minister to be vested with the executive powers provided for in that agreement and necessary to the accomplishment of his task. It also welcomes the unanimous vote by parliament not to extend the state of siege.

The progress made towards the easing of tension is largely attributable to the mediation efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The European Union pays tribute in particular to the commitment of the former Head of State of Nigeria, Mr Babangida, and of Dr Ibn Chambas, President of the ECOWAS Commission.

The European Union also commends the whole of Guinean civil society and the trade unions, whose constructive attitude has made a consensual resolution of the crisis possible.

The European Union would encourage all parties in Guinea to continue the dialogue and to support the actions of the new Prime Minister aimed at the economic and social recovery of their country.

As it has already said, the European Union greatly regrets the loss of human life in recent weeks and calls on the new government to bring the truth about the violence to light to ensure that the culprits do not go unpunished. It also asks the new government to undertake urgent economic and social reforms and to give priority to improving the human rights situation and the rule of law in the country.

The European Union hopes to resume constructive dialogue, particularly on these last points, with the new Guinean authorities, in the framework of the consultations begun in 2004 pursuant to the Cotonou Agreement.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/March/0302Guinea.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/March/0302Guinea.html)

### **AMERICAS**

### **ASIA**

#### **Sri Lanka**

► **EU Presidency statement on the shelling of a diplomatic delegation in Sri Lanka**  
(27/02/2007)

"The EU Council Presidency condemns today's shell attack by the LTTE on a diplomatic delegation visiting the Batticaloa region in the east of the country by invitation of the Sri Lankan Government. We wish the ambassador of the Italian Republic and other delegation members who have suffered injury a swift and complete recovery.

This serious incident renews the European Union's concerns about the current developments in Sri Lanka. The European Union urges both sides to stop the violence immediately and to return to the negotiating table without delay in order to find a viable solution to the conflict on the basis of constructive proposals.

The Presidency reiterates the EU's readiness to continue to support the peace process in Sri Lanka within the framework of the so-called "Tokyo Co-Chairs".

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/February/0227Srilanka.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/February/0227Srilanka.html)

### **East Timor**

► **European Commission allocates €1.5 million to victims of internal crisis in East Timor** (01/03/2007)

**The European Commission has allocated a further €1.5 million in humanitarian aid to help around 100,000 people displaced or affected by ongoing instability in East Timor. The funds will be used to meet basic needs and facilitate return or resettlement, over a period of 15 months. All funds are channelled through the Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), under the responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel.**

In March 2006 Dili, the capital of East Timor, was rocked by violence. An estimated 100,000 people fled their homes, taking refuge in makeshift camps in Dili or in rural districts where they found shelter with relatives, friends or host communities, often in very poor conditions.

East Timor continues to be marred by insecurity. The complex historical and political divisions in the country are exacerbated by poverty, widespread malnutrition and poor access to basic social services. The humanitarian needs remain in the absence of a solution to the underlying conditions that prompted the crisis.

Food, safe water, emergency shelter, water and sanitation facilities and basic healthcare will continue to be provided to those who have been displaced. Support for nutritional recovery and livelihoods, essential for alleviating the suffering of the displaced and their host communities, is another component of ECHO support that will be maintained under the new decision.

The Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) has been addressing humanitarian needs in East Timor since 1999. Since then, it has provided relief funding of around €43 million to support the most vulnerable East Timorese.

ECHO also now manages a significant humanitarian food aid budget that aims to improve and safeguard the nutritional status of vulnerable people suffering in humanitarian crises across the world. High levels of acute malnutrition have been recorded throughout East Timor with the situation expected to worsen due to the continuing political and security crisis. East Timor has therefore been included in a €135 million food aid decision recently adopted by the Commission.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/268&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

## Bosnia

### ► Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, met Nikola ŠPIRIĆ, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (28/2/2007)

Javier SOLANA, European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), today met Nikol ŠPIRIĆ, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina .Their meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the latest developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and relations between the EU and BiH.

Mr Solana congratulated Mr Špirić on his appointment as Prime Minister and welcomed the formation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's new Council of Ministers. He said that whilst the decision of the Peace Implementation Council on the future of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina is important, what really mattered was the future of the country. It was now up to the new government to focus on the reforms that were linked to the conclusion of Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Union. Police reform according to the three EU principles continued to be precondition for an SAA, Mr Solana said, and lack of progress with this could lead to significant delays.

Mr Solana told Mr Špirić that the background for the decision to reconfigure EUFOR Althea ,the EU military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina ,was that lack of political progress no longer had an immediate impact on the security situation. He said BiH had developed to the stage when we could separate the two. EUFOR would always able to respond immediately should the security situation require and considerable reinforcements would always be available through over the horizon troops.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?lang=EN&cmsid=358](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?lang=EN&cmsid=358)

## Bosnia

### ► Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina: EU confirms decision on transition (28/2/2007)

The European Union decided yesterday to confirm its decision to implement a transition of the military Operation EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in the light of the security situation in the country.

The security situation in BiH has evolved enough to permit the EU to decide on a transition of operation ALTHEA. The EU will reduce EUFOR's size but keep an appropriate robust military presence as part of its overall engagement in BiH, contributing to the maintenance of the safe and secure environment. EU OR will reconfigure progressively, but will also maintain the capacity to reverse the effects of the force reduction for an initial period of 6 months and to re-establish a more robust military presence if needed.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=80&LANG=1&cmsid=985](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=80&LANG=1&cmsid=985)

## Belaruss

### ► The 10-minute interview: Aliaksandr Milinkevich, Belarus opposition leader (01/3/2007)

In March last year Aliaksandr Milinkevich and his followers were jailed after protesting the result of the Belarus Presidential election in which he stood against President Alexander Lukashenko. Amid

apparent manipulation of the media and electoral system by the incumbent, the EU and the US condemned the result. Mr Milinkevich later received Parliament's Sakharov prize for freedom of thought for his non-violent opposition.

#### **1. How did the authorities in Belarus react when you won the Sakharov prize?**

The authorities were irritated. The chief of KGB commented that "we have many people deserving awards, why Milinkevich?" The uneasiness of the authorities is a good sign. The award is a sign that Europe is not going to leave Belarus until democracy gains victory there and that it considers it a serious and responsible mission. The European Parliament is immersed in Belarusian affairs so deeply, that sometimes it even seems that we take too much spotlight from other problems. I am very grateful for the support shown, as we are not in a very simple situation. This support charges us with positive energy.

#### **2. Does the recent row over gas prices indicate the Minsk-Moscow friendship has ended?**

Moscow is offended like a lady that was promised marriage and leaves when it does not happen. Belarus has changed its mind on the marriage. As an owner of the product, Russia is punishing Belarus and has a right to sell it according to the price it wants. Mr Lukashenko failed to undertake serious reforms when he had incredibly cheap oil and gas. What was needed was restructuring, privatisation, attracting investment and new technologies. Everything was wasted on empty projects. Economic crisis is imminent, so Mr Lukashenko must conduct free elections and set the media and people free.

#### **3. What problems does the Belarus opposition face and are you united? How were recent local elections?**

It is hard to attain unity, which is much easier to achieve during presidential elections when you have a clear objective. During the current period we are having big discussions as to whether a single leader is needed. I would say yes (that we need one leader, headquarters and work programme), but time after time he must go through legitimate elections (in a Congress). Some call me a dictator masked under a pro-democracy flag, but I think we are at war, therefore we need a general, headquarters, officers and soldiers. We must all work for the person we would have elected.

While going from door to door during the campaign, people kept asking me: "do you yourself believe that something can be changed with these elections?" People are pragmatic. In reality there are no elections in Belarus - representatives are appointed by authorities. We can say this and either lose hope or continue working, and our duty is to go out to people, as there is no independent television and only a few newspapers

#### **4. What is your message to our readers in 27 European countries?**

I want Europe not to forget that there is a country living in difficult conditions of dictatorship, a European neighbour with European history, traditions and mentality. Second, I would like to see as many politicians as possible that cherish morals more than economic interests. In the European Parliament I see very many politicians like this, and I am thankful for that. There are discussions on what is more important: security, stability or fight for human rights, and sometimes a choice must be made. I see that in the Parliament morality takes priority, and I am proud of such a European Parliament.

#### **5. Is there any hope for change before 2011 Belarus Presidential elections?**

Free information and the defeat of fear would mean less dictatorship. Yes, economic crisis can accelerate reforms, but I would not like us to come to power due to the collapse of the economy. I am for evolution. One must think about the lives of people and not the seat of the president.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story\\_page/015-3545-057-02-09-902-20070222STO03536-2007-26-02-2007/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/015-3545-057-02-09-902-20070222STO03536-2007-26-02-2007/default_en.htm)

## **Uzbekistan**

### **► EU sanctions against Uzbekistan lack bite, say MEPs (01/3/2007)**

**EU sanctions against Uzbekistan need to be made to bite, said MEPs from the EP Subcommittee on human rights at a public hearing of experts on 28 February.** These sanctions, imposed in October 2005 after government forces killed hundreds of people in the city of Andijon in May that year, are to be reviewed by the Council next week.



**Human rights advocates in Uzbekistan are still subject to persecution, defamation and compulsory hospitalisation, and their are relatives "harassed and intimidated",** reported Aaron Rhodes of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights.

The EU sanctions include an arms sales embargo and a visa ban on a dozen high-ranking Uzbek officials. Back in October 2006, the European Parliament said that these sanctions should be maintained and proposed that President Islam Karimov be included in the visa ban.

**"The human rights community cannot function" in Uzbekistan said Mr Rhodes.** As a result, information on the state of affairs in Uzbekistan remains incomplete, thus ensuring "impunity for grave human rights abuses". That said, concluded Mr Rhodes, "we don't think the EU should drop the sanctions; they should toughen [them]."

Mr Rhodes dismissed the impact of sanctions on Uzbekistan's arms imports as "ridiculous" (the Uzbeks, he said, get all the guns they want from Russia). However, the sanctions "are a symbol for the Uzbek people" of Europe's response to their government's misdeeds. And that is their "most important contribution", he added.

"The sanctions are not really working", but that "does not mean we should withdraw them", said MEP Marios Matsakis (ALDE, CY). In fact, "we need more stick" in the EU's stick-and-carrot policy towards Uzbekistan. We should look at sanctions "which are more effective -- which bite", he said.

Head of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan Talib Yakubov argued that the sanctions regime had in fact proved "extremely successful" - President Karimov's international image has plummeted, while his popularity at home "is virtually zero", he said.

**Ms Riina Kionka, Javier Solana's Personal Representative on Human Rights told MEPs that the Tashkent government had "let us know", on 27 February, that another EU exploratory mission to Uzbekistan (like that sent late in 2006) "will not be welcome". This development, she said, makes it "highly unlikely" that sanctions will be lifted when the Council meets next week to discuss Uzbekistan next week.**

Given the possibility of lifting sanctions and launching a human rights dialogue with Uzbekistan, said Richard Howitt (PES, UK), "it is important that we make our contribution felt on this issue".

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/015-3725-059-02-09-902-20070301IPR03724-28-02-2007-2007-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-3725-059-02-09-902-20070301IPR03724-28-02-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm)

## MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

### Lebanon

- ▶ EU High Representative for the CFSP, met Saad HARIRI, leader of the parliamentary majority in Lebanon (01/3/2007)

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), on Wednesday held a meeting with Saad HARIRI, leader of the parliamentary majority in Lebanon. The High Representative and Mr HARIRI had the opportunity to discuss relations between the European Union and Lebanon in a very delicate situation.

In remarks to journalists after the meeting, Mr SOLANA underlined the importance of Mr HARIRI'S visit, whom, as well as his family, Mr SOLANA assured of "the affection and the full support of the European Union". "We will continue our efforts for a stable and united Lebanon", Mr SOLANA said.

"We have proven our support very clearly", Mr SOLANA said, mentioning the forces deployed by the European Union member states in the southern part of Lebanon support of UNIFIL as well as the third international Donors' conference in Paris at the end of January: "We work every day in order to support the reconstruction and stability of Lebanon ." Stressing the fact that "Lebanon needs stability and unity to achieve prosperity", Mr SOLANA expressed his hopes that the country would one day be able to "set example for the Middle East".

For his part, Mr HARIRI thanked "the European Union for the support that Lebanon has been receiving in the past years". Acknowledging the EU's role "in making UN resolution 1701 possible", Mr HARIRI stressed the importance of "unifying the Lebanese people, especially with regard to the international tribunal" and acknowledged his "constructive discussion "with Mr SOLANA of possible ways to solve "the ongoing crisis in Lebanon ".

In response to questions of the establishment of the international tribunal under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, Mr SOLANA stressed the European Union 's determination "to work on a solution together" with the international community and Lebanese government.

Mr HARIRI stated his belief in the international community's commitment to seek justice and expressed his hopes for successful ratification process in Lebanon : "Hopefully, we will be able to pass the issue of the international tribunal through our constitution and our parliament. This is what we hope for, but I have no doubt that the international community voted for the tribunal to seek justice." Even if the ratification process in Lebanon was blocked, Mr HARIRI said: "I believe the international community will still be wanting justice."

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?lang=EN&cmsid=358](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?lang=EN&cmsid=358)

## **Marocco**

- ▶ European Commission proposes more than €650 million in support of reforms (02/3/2007)

On 2 March, European Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner will participate in the seminar "Morocco and the EU: Towards an Advanced Statute in the Euro-Mediterranean Association" organised by the IEMed (European Institute of the Mediterranean) with the collaboration of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Barcelona, 1-2 March). The seminar will examine the possibilities for reinforcing partnership in areas such as political co-operation, security issues, economic relations and civil society.

The Commissioner will present a proposed €654 million assistance package for Morocco to support implementation of the EU-Morocco Action Plan, prepared in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy. This bilateral aid will be topped up by loans from the European Investment Bank (FEMIP) and other financial programmes. The package represents an increase of close to 20% compared to the annual average during 1995-2006. In Barcelona Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner will also meet with the Deputy Moroccan Minister responsible for External Relations and Cooperation, Taïb Fassi Fihri, with whom she will discuss EU-Morocco relations, the European Neighbourhood Policy and the new assistance package.

*"Morocco is engaged in a process of very ambitious reform stemming from its own vision of modernisation and development. The benefits of reform in Morocco are already emerging: stronger growth, greater foreign direct investment, and higher employment. But we are aware that reform is difficult and costly, and we fully appreciate the scope of the remaining challenges. For this reason, the EU will scale up its efforts to assist Morocco in its ongoing reform, and we intend to provide increased financial resources to support Morocco's implementation of our joint ENP Action Plan, concentrating on common priorities like education, health, energy, environment and the development of the private sector"* stated Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner.

The financial support package for Morocco for 2007-2010 will focus on five key areas:

Social development: the main areas of support will be education and health reform, development of the health insurance system, literacy, and the National Initiative of Human Development. About 45% of funds should be allocated to this priority area, demonstrating the importance that the Commission attaches to social development as a basis of political and economic modernisation.

Economic development: the Commission will continue to support private sector development as part of the preparation for a free trade area with the EU. It will also support regional development through key infrastructure projects (including the Mediterranean main road) and important reform in key sectors, such as energy, agriculture.

**Human rights and governance**: the good co-operation in this field will be continued, in particular support for modernisation of the judicial system and for strengthening human rights culture.

Environment: the main priority will be water sanitation issues, as well as support to anti-pollution strategies in some regions.

Institutional support: the Commission will continue the successful twinning instrument, with new funds available to support co-operation between public administrations in Morocco and EU member States. The Commission will also support further implementation of public sector reform.

Morocco will also be eligible for loans from the Euro-Mediterranean Facility for Investment and Partnership (FEMIP). FEMIP's priority is to finance private sector projects. In order to establish the adequate environment for business development, FEMIP also supports infrastructure projects, investment in human capital and projects to support environmental protection.

In addition to this bilateral assistance, the European Commission has proposed other new opportunities under the ENP which will be available to Morocco:

Neighbourhood Investment Fund, which will allow access to considerably increased funds for Moroccan industry and infrastructure by providing support to lending from international financial organisations.

Governance Facility for those countries moving ahead with implementation of agreed Action Plan reforms.

Cross-border co-operation programme which will aim at bringing together border regions in EU Member States and partner countries and fostering their co-operation.

People to people exchange and reinforced co-operation on education such as participation in the Erasmus Mundus programme and its scholarships, and the Tempus programme for co-operation on higher education,

Scientific and technological co-operation. Morocco will have an opportunity to participate in the EU's Seven Framework Programme for Research and Development (RTD).

Participation in Community programmes and agencies, such as the *Invest in People* and the *Migration and Asylum* programmes.

Background: During 1995-2006, Morocco benefited from €1.64 billion from the MEDA programme. Since January 2007, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) has replaced the MEDA Programme.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/274&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

**THEMATIC :**

**FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES**

**JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

### EU Constitutional treaty

► **EU constitution: strong support for the "Treaty +" solution** (01/03/2007)

The essence of the EU's draft constitutional treaty should be preserved when EU governments seek to agree a new text, but the language should be improved to win public support. This was the broad consensus that emerged from an EP Constitutional Affairs Committee meeting on 28 February to discuss the outcome of a controversial conference, held on 26 January in Madrid, of EU Member States that had ratified the draft constitution.

The outcome of the Madrid conference (which had prompted fears that it might widen differences between those Member States that had ratified the draft and those that had not) was presented to the Constitutional Affairs Committee by Luxembourg Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Nicolas Schmit and Spanish State Secretary for the European Union Navarro Gonzáles.

The Madrid meeting's aim - "to change the atmosphere in Europe, to show to citizens that there is a commitment to change the situation" - had been achieved, said Mr Schmit, recalling that 18 Member States had already approved the draft constitutional treaty and that just two had rejected it. "It is necessary to remind citizens that a majority has already ratified the Treaty. There have been no pauses in the ratification process: 5 more countries have ratified the text" (since the Dutch referendum), he said. Commenting on the Madrid conference participants, Mr Navarro Gonzáles said "We represented the 60% of EU population and the majority of the Member States: we felt we had the legitimate right to meet".

#### Support for the "Treaty +" solution

The great majority of committee members backed the Madrid initiative, agreeing that it had helped to re-launch the constitutional process. There was also a broad consensus on the need to preserve the substance of the draft treaty and to try to improve it to address people's concerns. Both the Ministers and most of the MEPs also expressed support for the steps that the EU's Germany Presidency plans to take to end the impasse.

"We want to preserve the substance of this Treaty, since there is no alternative", said Mr Schmit. Mr Navarro agreed, declaring his full support for the constitutional process. "The future of Europe is about us, is about our future", he said, adding that "we are prepared to amend the treaty if necessary". He suggested that the draft constitution text could be improved, for example, by including provisions on the fight against climate change. He added: "We need to look for alternatives if we want to find the way out of the impasse

Committee Chairman Jo Leinen (PES; DE), proposed discussing the desirability of organising a follow-up to the Madrid meeting and recalled the high costs, for all EU citizens, of not having a Constitution. The draft treaty "has great democratic legitimacy" and the substance of the text must be preserved, said the Constitutional Affairs Committee's co-rapporteur on the Road Map for the Constitutional process, Mr Elmar Brok (EPP-ED, DE). "It must be clear that it is not for the demands of one or two countries that the rest of the EU must give up its views", he added. The other co-rapporteur, Enrique Barón Crespo (PES, ES), observed that "there are many reasons to back the constitution", since approving it would help Europe to fight terrorism and improve its energy policy.

Mr Jens-Peter Bonde (IND/DEM, DE), one of the few critics of the Madrid conference, deplored the lack of transparency, as "all meetings were held behind closed doors". The best way to improve transparency would be to hold "an EU-wide referendum on the same day in all Member States", he suggested.

Concluding the debate, Mr Navarro recommended convening an Intergovernmental Conference to end the impasse. "The idea is to have it before the summer, with a clear mandate on which points we want

to look at", he said. Mr Schmit rejected the idea of a "mini-treaty", i.e. of ratifying a shorter text including just the institutional reforms. "Only the constitutional treaty can properly address the main challenges facing the EU, such as the future of social services and the democratic deficit", he said

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/002-3656-059-02-09-901-20070226IPR03643-28-02-2007-2007-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/002-3656-059-02-09-901-20070226IPR03643-28-02-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### International Criminal Court

- ▶ **Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP, welcomes the International Criminal Court's initiative to present evidence on alleged crimes in Sudan/Darfur (27/02/2007)**

Javier Solana, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), **welcomes today's decision by the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to present evidence to the Court in the case of two individuals who have allegedly committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur**

Mr Solana reiterates that the European Union is one of the strongest advocates of the International Criminal Court and appreciates today's decision, which will further the cause of peace Mr Solana stresses that peace for the region of Darfur, where crimes of particular gravity have been committed, cannot be founded on impunity

For this reason, Mr Solana calls upon the Sudanese authorities to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court, as stipulated in resolution 1593 of the United Nations Security Council

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?lang=EN&cmsid=358](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?lang=EN&cmsid=358)

### International Criminal Court

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the International Criminal Court's investigation into Darfur (01/03/2007)**

On 27 February the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague applied to the Pre-Trial Chamber to issue summonses to appear against Ahmad Muhammad Harun, former Minister of State for the Interior of the Government of Sudan, and Ali Kushayb, a Militia leader. The Prosecutor, after completing the necessary investigative steps, has concluded there are reasonable grounds to believe that these two individuals bear criminal responsibility in relation to 51 counts of alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes, including persecution, torture, murder and rape committed in Darfur in 2003 and 2004.

The EU welcomes the fact that an independent investigation has been conducted in Darfur following the adoption by the Security Council of Resolution 1593 on 31 March 2005, which referred the situation in the Darfur region to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

The EU calls on all parties concerned, in particular the Government of Sudan, to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court and to comply with any decision the Pre-Trial Chamber may take.

The EU reiterates the Common Position of 16 June 2003 in which the Council held that the International Criminal Court was an essential means of promoting respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, thus contributing to freedom, security, justice and the rule of law as well as contributing to the preservation of peace and the strengthening of international security.

The EU recalls the fundamental principle contained in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court that the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole must not go unpunished. Putting an end to impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes contributes to the prevention of such crimes.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/March/0301Sudan.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/March/0301Sudan.html)

## **Operations and Civilian Missions**

### **► Talks on EU Operations and Civilian Missions (01/03/2007)**

The talks held on March 1<sup>st</sup>, the first day of the informal meeting of the European Union Defence Ministers, focussed on crisis management operations and missions. The meeting is chaired by the German Defence Minister, Dr. Franz Josef Jung. Apart from the Defence Ministers of the 27 member states of the European Union, the Secretary General and High Representative of the EU, Dr. Javier Solana, other EU representatives and NATO Secretary General Jaap De Hoop Scheffer participated in the first working session of the meeting. Mr. De Hoop Scheffer took part in the talks as a guest which were of special relevance for the cooperation between EU and NATO.

### **Western Balkans**

As a first agenda item the participants discussed the situation of the western Balkans. In his introduction, Dr. Jung gave a basically positive estimation of the development in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The German Minister said that the improvement of the security situation was also to be reflected in the operation ALTHEA according to which a conditioned and phased withdrawal of the forces is planned. This step should, however, take into account the development of the overall security situation of the western Balkans.

According to the Minister, the presence of international forces (KFOR) continues to be indispensable in Kosovo, the question of their status being of special importance. Dr. Jung described the coordination between the future ESDP Police and Rule-of-Law Mission and KFOR as an essential factor for success. Cooperation between EU and NATO would be the decisive prerequisite after another resolution expected to be issued by the UN Security Council. UNMIK led missions should not be neglected or taken over by KFOR.

### **Afghanistan**

The second item to be discussed was the current status of the envisaged European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan. The mission was decided by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on February 12<sup>th</sup>. It is to contribute to consolidate the country's stability. Civilian elements gain an increasing significance in crisis management operations. The various international players of a mission must be coordinated effectively and cooperate. Dr. Jung mentioned ISAF as an important element.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press\\_Releases/March/0301BMVgRAA.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/March/0301BMVgRAA.html)

## **EU Fundamental Rights Agency**

### **► European Commission welcomes the opening of the EU Fundamental Agency (01/03/2007)**

**Europe's determination to protect and promote Fundamental Rights was further boosted by the launch today of the Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna. The Commission views the Agency as a key resource to advise Community institutions and Member States, raise public awareness, and provide information and data to support Fundamental Rights work.**

President José Manuel Barroso stated: *"The European Commission is fully committed to promoting the respect of fundamental rights at EU level. The establishment of the Fundamental Rights Agency is a step forward in providing the European Union with the expertise it needs to successfully combat discrimination. Once the Agency is fully operational, I believe it will provide a valuable resource for the Commission and other EU institutions. I see the Agency as a complement rather than competition to work being done elsewhere "*.

Vice-President Frattini also warmly welcomed the creation of the Fundamental Rights Agency *"We must promote fundamental rights if we are to achieve a Europe of which we can all be proud. A Europe which is richly diverse, where people are integrated and live side by side and gender, racial and other inequalities are overcome. European citizens support this: a recent survey found that 73% of them want more EU level decision making on promoting and protecting fundamental rights. The Fundamental Rights Agency will be one of the key resources to facilitate this"*.

**The Fundamental Rights Agency replaces and builds on the work of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). Going beyond the work of the Monitoring Centre, the Fundamental rights agency will have three key functions: to collect information and data; provide advice to the European Union and its Member States and promote dialogue with civil society to raise public awareness of fundamental rights.**

During the course of 2007, the agency will become fully operational. Later this year the EU institutions will adopt the Multi-Annual Framework to define the precise areas of the Agency's activities. The Director of the Agency will also take up office. During the interim period, the Agency will focus its work on combating racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Among those attending the launch today in Vienna were the President and Vice-President of the European Commission, the Austrian Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the German Minister of Justice and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/266&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>