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MISCELLANEOUS

Rights of the Child

- ▶ **Rights of the Child: Civil Liberties Committee sets out its strategy** (19/12/2007)

IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

EU - THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

Committee on Development

- January, 14, 2008 (Strasbourg)

Committee on Foreign Affairs

- January, 21, 22, 23, 2008

Subcommittee on Human Rights

- January, 10, 2008

Subcommittee on security and defence

- January, 10, 2008

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

- January, 21, 22, 2008

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- January, 14, 2008 (Strasbourg)

Committee on budgetary control

- January, 21, 22, 2008

CONFERENCES / EVENTS

REGIONS:

AFRICA

Eritrea/Ethiopia

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the border issue between Eritrea and Ethiopia** (28/12/2007)

1. The European Union (EU), aware of its responsibilities under the Algiers Agreement and willing to facilitate the solution of the existing difficulties in the relations between the two Countries, reiterates its unwavering commitment to support efforts to promote sustainable peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

2. In this respect, the EU strongly urges both parties to refrain from any threat or use of force and to resolve their differences by peaceful means.

3. The EU, while welcoming the commitments made by both Parties with respect to demarcation and normalization of their relations, urges the Parties to fulfil their obligations under the Algiers Agreements and relevant Security Council Resolutions and Statements.

4. The EU confirms the Parties primary responsibility to resolve their differences and express its readiness to assist them in the implementation of their respective obligations under international law.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071228EtiopiaEritreia.htm

Kenya

- ▶ **Javier Solana, EU High Representative for CFSP, urges to address irregularities in the elections in Kenya** (31/12/2007)

Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), urges to address irregularities in the elections held in Kenya.

The High Representative notes with satisfaction the orderly and dignified way in which Kenyans cast their votes. However, he expresses concern at the irregularities reported by the EU observers and others. It is important that these irregularities are addressed through dialogue and the appropriate appeal process so as to ensure that the election result is supported by all. Javier Solana calls upon the political leadership to work in a spirit of unity to that end. Any violence must be avoided.

In an already fragile region, it is important that Kenya upholds its status as a model of democracy.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/97873.pdf

Kenya

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union concerning Presidential elections in Kenya** (04/01/2008)

The EU condemns the recent acts of violence in Kenya. The EU urges political leaders of all sides to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from any action or comment which could provoke further violence. The people of Kenya exercised their right to vote in the elections on 27 December in a dignified way. They can now expect that their human rights are respected as the election results are disputed.

The EU calls on Kenya's leaders to address the concerns about the integrity of the election process raised by EU observers, as well as by Kenyan civil society organisations and by other international observers. The

EU expects all parties to resort to dialogue and do their utmost to reach a political solution. The EU stands ready to support the outcome.

The EU welcomes the readiness of the African Union to support Kenya in finding a way out of the present crisis. The Kenyan authorities should take advantage of these good offices. The EU also supports other efforts from Africa to the same end.

In the meantime, EU member states and the European Commission, individually and collectively, will respond to the humanitarian needs of Kenyans displaced from their homes by the recent acts of violence.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/January/0104MZZKenya2.html

AMERICAS

ASIA

Pakistan

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the suicide attack on a mosque in Peshawar** (21/12/2007)

The Presidency strongly condemns today's suicide attack on a mosque in Peshawar.

The Presidency conveys its deepest sympathy, condolences and solidarity to the families of the victims and to those who have been injured in these atrocities.

The EU reiterates its support to the Government of Pakistan in the defense of the rule of law and the writ of the State against the threat posed by such armed radical groups in the context of the fight against extremism.

The EU reaffirms that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and that any acts of terrorism are unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071221pesc2.htm

Pakistan

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on the assassination of Benazir Bhutto** (27/12/2007)

The Presidency strongly condemns the assassination of Benazir Bhutto and other 15 people in a suicide attack at an election rally at Rawalpindi.

The Presidency condemns extremism in all its forms and expresses its wish that this tragic event does not undermine the on-going democratic process in Pakistan. Moreover, the Presidency calls on the Pakistani people to refrain from violence and civil unrest and pursue the path of national reconciliation.

The Presidency further expresses its heartfelt sympathy for Benazir Bhutto's family as well as those of the other victims in this time of grief and sincerely hopes that those responsible for this barbaric act of violence will be brought to justice.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071227pescpaquistao.htm

Pakistan

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the decision of the Pakistani Election Commission to postpone general elections until 18 February 2008** (3/1/2008)

The EU took note of the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan to postpone general elections until 18 February. The EU strongly reiterates the importance of holding free and fair elections by this new date, which should allow for a democratic and transparent electoral process under proper security conditions. The EU calls upon all involved parties to accept the decision of the Election Commission with dignity and restraint, and participate fully in the general elections, ensuring a truly democratic outcome. The EU urges the Pakistani authorities to improve conditions for elections in line with international standards. At this stage, overall stability in the country and further progress on the path towards democracy are among the most important challenges for Pakistan. The EU continues to support the Pakistani people in addressing these challenges. Elements looking to destabilise Pakistan should not be allowed to succeed.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/January/0103MZZPakistan.html

Pakistan

- ▶ **Javier Solana EU High Representative for CFSP condemns the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan today** (27/12/2007)

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), made the following statement after the terrorist attack in Pakistan today:

"I am shocked by the assassination of former Prime Minister Madam Benazir Bhutto in today's terrorist attack in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. I condemn this despicable act in the strongest possible way. I offer my deepest condolences to Bhutto's family, the relatives of other victims of the attack, and all the Pakistani people. This attack is clearly aimed at destabilising the country and it shows that there are forces and people who are trying to undermine reconciliation and the democratization process in Pakistan. I am deeply concerned about what is happening and I call on the Pakistani people to refrain from violence and to further pursue the path of national reconciliation. Now it is extremely important to do everything possible to guarantee the stability and security in the country. I have confidence in the capacity of the Pakistani nation to face the current challenge with dignity.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/97864.pdf

Thailand

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Thai Elections on 23rd December** (23/12/2007)

The European Union considers the general election of 23 December an important milestone on the road back to constitutional order in Thailand. This election reaffirms the commitment of the people of Thailand to democracy and their determination to decide their own future.

The European Union looks forward to strong and fruitful relations with a new, elected Royal Thai Government, in the spirit of the long-standing friendship between Thailand and the EU.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071223pesctai.htman

Uzbekistan

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on Presidential Elections in Uzbekistan on 21 December (27/12/2007)**

The European Union has been closely following events over the course of the Presidential Elections held in Uzbekistan on 21 December. The Presidency of the EU takes note of the assessment of the OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission.

The Presidency notes with concern that the presidential election did not meet many OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections and that the recommendations issued by the OSCE/ODIHR after the 2004 parliamentary elections have not yet been implemented.

However, the Presidency of the EU takes note of the positive changes introduced into the legislation since the previous presidential election and encourages Uzbekistan to continue to cooperate with ODIHR to bring its election process and framework in line with OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections. The EU stands ready to assist Uzbekistan in its efforts.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071227Uzbequistao.htm

Uzbekistan

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the abolition of the death penalty in Uzbekistan (03/01/2007)**

The EU welcomes the abolition of the death penalty in Uzbekistan on 1 January 2008. We congratulate the Uzbek government and the Uzbek people on this important decision and the EU encourages the Uzbek government to fully implement it and carry out further reforms of the judicial system.

Members of the European Union consider that the abolition of capital punishment contributes to the enhancement of human dignity. The European Union reaffirms its objective of working towards universal abolition of the death penalty. It believes that abolition by Uzbekistan is an important step towards that aim and hopes that this decision will encourage other countries in the region to follow suit.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/January/0103MZZ_Uzbekistan.html

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Turkey

- ▶ **EU Presidency statement on the terrorist attack in Diyarbakir on January 3, 2008 (04/01/2008)**

The Presidency of the EU strongly condemns the atrocious act of terrorist violence carried out yesterday against military personnel and civilians in Diyarbakir.

The Presidency expresses its sincere condolence to the families of the dead and wishes the wounded a swift recovery.

The Presidency expresses its full solidarity and support to the people of Turkey.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/January/0104MZZDiyarbakir.html

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Lebanon

► **EU Presidency Statement on Lebanon (29/12/2007)**

The EU Presidency regrets that the election of a new Lebanese president has been postponed yet another time, until 12 January 2008.

The Presidency is deeply concerned by the risks of further prolonging the institutional void in the country and calls upon the parties to use the timeframe until January 12th to work flexibly and responsibly in order to finalise an agreement that allows for the election of a new President in a spirit of consensus, in full respect of the Lebanese constitutional norms and democratic institutions, and free from outside interference.

The EU has actively encouraged constructive dialogue between the parties and will continue to do so.

While calling for the full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1559, 1680 and 1701 and recalling previous statements, the EU Presidency pledges its strong support for a new president and a new government committed to Lebanon's sovereignty and independence.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071229LIBANO.htm

Syria

► **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the situation of human rights defenders in Syria (31/12/2007)**

The EU is deeply concerned about the recent detention of members of a pro-democracy grouping in support of the “Declaration of Damascus”, in Syria.

The EU recalls Syria's international commitments, namely the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and more specifically the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Syria has signed and ratified and that clearly states the right to freedom of expression (article 19) and the right to freedom of assembly (article 21).

The EU also fears for their safety and physical integrity and calls upon the Syrian authorities to comply with article 10 from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that “ 1. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person”.

The EU urges the Syrian authorities to immediately release all of those detained while freely and peacefully expressing their opinions and to ensure that all Human Rights Defenders in Syria are able to operate free of all restrictions and harassment.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071231Siria.htm

THEMATIC :

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EU / UN REFORM

MISCELLANEOUS

Rights of the Child

- ▶ **Rights of the Child: Civil Liberties Committee sets out its strategy** (19/12/2007)

The proposed EU strategy on the rights of the child won the backing of the EP Civil Liberties Committee on 18 December, but also inspired many new proposals from MEPs, including tougher measures to combat paedophilia on the internet. The committee also advocated creating a single set of extraterritorial criminal laws to counter child sex tourism, and a system enabling the prosecution within Europe of suppliers of products manufactured with child labour.

The Civil Liberties Committee reiterated the European Parliament's opposition to all forms of violence against children, and called for a specific budget heading for their rights, with which to fund work required by the future strategy. Its own-initiative report was approved almost unanimously (just one abstention).

Combating paedophile pornography and violence on the internet

The committee's many proposals included devising technical measures to combat the dissemination of paedophile content via the internet. They would like to involve access suppliers, search engines and even banks, so as to block payment by would-be purchasers of illegal content.

MEPs also wish to protect children by tightening up rules on the transmission of harmful content via the internet or multimedia messaging services and the sale of violent video games. They would like a uniform classification and labelling system to be created for such games, and for all audiovisual content.

Finally, they would like children to be better informed of their rights, via a dedicated internet site to be set up for this purpose

Enforce ban on child labour

MEPs advocate a mechanism to enable the prosecution, in Europe, of suppliers of products that have been manufactured with child labour. The European Commission is urged to check whether production lines comply with rules prohibiting child labour.

European kidnap alert system and prosecution of sex criminals in Europe

The committee recommends establishing a European kidnap alert system, and a telephone help line for

children. It also advocates devising a European strategy, and creating a single EU-wide set of extraterritorial criminal laws, to counter child sex tourism.

Community instrument on adoption

Reiterating every child's right to a family, MEPs suggest establishing a Community instrument to facilitate adoption. Finally, they urge the EU to adhere to the UN and Council of Europe conventions on the rights of the child.

The report, draft by Roberta Angelilli (UEN, IT) is scheduled for a plenary vote at the January session, in Strasbourg.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/019-15679-351-12-51-902-20071217IPR15664-17-12-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm