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| Subcommittee on Human Rights

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- March, 6, 2008

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| International Women's day, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- March, 5, 2008: A seminar for journalists on "The role of the media in intercultural dialogue: a perspective from women." EP, Brussels, PHS 7C50
- March, 6, 2008: Conference, the role of women in intercultural dialogue." EP, Brussels, PHS 0A50
- March, 6, 2008: Seminar "Gender mainstreaming in parliamentary work."

The Treaty of Lisbon: implications for the 2009 elections to the European Parliament

- March, 4, 2008, EP Brussels, ASP 1G3

I Role of civil society in improving women's rights in Turkey

- March, 5, 2008, EP Brussels, PHS 0A50

I International Women's day

- March, 8, 2008

REGIONS:

AFRICA

Kenya

► **EU Presidency statement in support of the Annan Process** (26/02/08).

Together with Kenya's international partners, the Presidency strongly supports the efforts by the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, led by Mr Kofi Annan, to engage Kenya's leaders in a National Dialogue in order to agree a sustainable and consensual political solution to the crisis.

The Presidency is therefore very concerned to learn that there remains a serious gap between the Kenyan parties, preventing them from reaching a final agreement. At this critical stage in the Dialogue the Presidency strongly urges the parties to redouble their efforts to engage constructively in a spirit of compromise to secure a legitimate political settlement.

The Presidency emphasizes that a means of effective power-sharing in Kenya must be found and that individuals who obstruct the dialogue process will have to face the consequences.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0226MZZ_Kenija.html

► **Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, urges the actors of the Kenyan crisis to reach a substantial political agreement** (27/02/08)

The ongoing situation is not only a threat to peace, prosperity and stability of Kenya but it also affects the stability of an already fragile region.

The High Representative reiterates his full support to the efforts that Mr Kofi Annan, Mrs Graca Machel and President Benjamin Mkapa are currently deploying.

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy(CFSP), urges President Kibaki and Mr Raila Odinga to reach a substantial political agreement to take Kenya out of the crisis in which it has been immersed since the announcement of the results of the last presidential elections.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/99051.pdf

► **EU Presidency Statement on the Agreement by the Kenyan parties to a coalition Government** (28/02/08).

The Presidency welcomes a power-sharing agreement between Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga.

The Presidency commends the work of the Panel of Eminent Personalities led by the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan whose determination was crucial in the difficult task of reaching this agreement.

The EU has strongly supported the political dialogue in Kenya under the auspices of Mr. Annan and will continue to do so throughout the process. The agreement reached today signifies the commitment of both parties to find a legitimate political way out of the post-election situation in the country.

The Presidency believes that this is an important step towards peace and reconciliation in Kenya, and hopes that both sides will build on this momentum in addressing the remaining issues.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0228MZZkenya.html

- **Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, welcomes the political agreement reached in Kenya (28/02/08)**

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), issued a statement this evening welcoming the agreement reached by the President of Kenya, Mwai KIBAKI, and the opposition leader, Raila ODINGA:

"This is a particularly important agreement that will enable Kenya to return to stability and prosperity and will also have a positive impact throughout the region. I am pleased that the parties in Kenya have been able to put compromise, moderation and the fundamental interests of the Kenyan people first. I encourage them to pursue their negotiations on the outstanding issues in the same spirit. I pay tribute in particular to Kofi ANNAN, to the panel of eminent persons and to the President of Tanzania, Jakaya KIKWETE, who is also the President of the African Union, without whom this agreement would not have been possible."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/99117.pdf

T **Partnership EU/Africa**

- **Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, appoints General Pierre-Michel JOANA as Special Advisor for African peacekeeping capabilities (29/02/08)**

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) made today the following statement on the appointment of Pierre-Michel JOANA as Special Advisor for African peacekeeping capabilities:

"The EU attaches great importance to strengthening the partnership between Africa and the EU in the field of African capabilities for the prevention management and resolution of conflicts. This is in line with the EU-Africa joint strategy adopted last December in Lisbon, of which peace and security is a key dimension. In that context I have appointed General Pierre-Michel Joana as Special Advisor for African peacekeeping capabilities. General Joana will play a key role in coordinating all related activities within the Council Secretariat, in close cooperation with the European Commission but also with African partners, in particular the African Union, and international stakeholders. In carrying out his mission General Joana will also liaise closely with Koen Vervaeke, the EU Special Representative to the African Union recently established in Addis Ababa. Thanks to his in-depth knowledge of Africa and his long experience on the ground, including in his latest position as Head of the EUSEC RD Congo mission, General Joana will be perfectly suited to these new responsibilities."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/declarations/99145.pdf

AMERICAS

I Colombia

- ▶ **Javier SOLANA, Alto Representante de la UE para la Política Exterior y de Seguridad Común (PESC), celebra la liberación de cuatro rehenes de las FARC (SP) (28/02/08)**

Javier SOLANA, Alto Representante de la Unión Europea para la Política Exterior y de Seguridad Común (PESC) hizo la siguiente declaración con motivo de la liberación de cuatro rehenes de las FARC:

"Celebro la liberación de cuatro rehenes retenidos por las FARC desde hace más de seis años. Confío en que este paso conduzca a la liberación inmediata e incondicional del resto de los rehenes, incluida Ingrid Betancourt."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/ES/declarations/99068.pdf

- ▶ **Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benito Ferrero-Waldner on the release of four FARC hostages (28/02/08)**

"I am glad to hear that the FARC have handed over to the Venezuelan government four Colombian former members of Parliament who were held hostages for more than six years and are under ill health conditions. This was a humanitarian need.

This liberation could be an encouraging step but we expect the immediate and unconditional liberation of all hostages, including Ingrid Betancourt, on the path towards a global peace agreement.

The Colombian government has all our support and solidarity in their commitment to search for a negotiated, peaceful and lasting solution to the process."

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/344&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

T Cuba

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on Cuba (25/02/08)**

The Presidency of the EU takes note on the election by the National Assembly of Raúl Castro for a new Head of State of the Republic of Cuba as an important event and opportunity for Cuba and its new leadership to embark on the road of substantial and enhanced process of reforms. We wish President Raúl Castro to discharge his high responsibilities for the social and economic well-being of Cuba and its people.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0225MZZ_Cuba.html

T Guatemala

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union concerning the death penalty in Guatemala (25/02/08)**

The European Union expresses its deep concern regarding the passage of a law, the "law regulating the commutation of the death sentence", which if it were to enter into force, would effectively represent the ending of the de facto moratorium on the death penalty, which has been in place in Guatemala since 2000.

The EU considers the law adopted by the Guatemalan Congress in this regard to be a highly negative development.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0225MZZGuatemala.html

ASIA

China

► China's policy in Africa: MEPs on the alert (27/02/08)

In a report on the effects of China's growing presence in Africa, the EP Development Committee points the finger at investments made by China with no strings attached in African countries ruled by oppressive regimes. This policy helps perpetuate human rights violations, say MEPs, who also highlight Beijing's role in the spread of arms and the conditions under which natural resources are being exploited.

The report, drafted by Ana Gomes (PES, PT), urges the EU to call on China "to suspend any arms trade deals with those governments that are responsible for human rights violations, are involved in conflicts or on the brink of war", such as Zimbabwe, Sudan, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In addition, says the report, China should increase the transparency of its national arms export control regime, namely by ensuring complete reporting on exports to the UN Register on Conventional Arms Exports.

The EU should maintain its arms embargo on China, adds the committee, for as long as China continues to export arms to armed forces and armed groups in countries, many of them in Africa, that fuel and perpetuate conflicts and perpetrate gross violations of human rights.

Investment in Africa

Unlike the EU, which ties its investment to respect for human rights and good governance, China makes most of its investments without laying down any particular conditions. Such investment in countries suffering from bad governance by oppressive regimes helps perpetuate human rights abuses, say MEPs.

The EU should encourage Chinese export-credit agencies, including the Exim Bank, to conduct systematic environmental assessments of infrastructure projects in Africa, such as dams, roads and mines, believes the committee.

The report also calls on the EU to actively promote transparency regarding revenue generated by natural resources. MEPs argue that a clause requiring the investment of "a percentage of profit in local community development" should be included in international conventions on energy resources extraction or exploration.

Peacekeeping and non-interference

MEPs call on the EU to encourage China to continue increasing its participation in UN or African Union (AU) peacekeeping missions in Africa "by also supplying combat troops, when necessary". The EU is also urged to encourage China to assume its responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, including the "responsibility to protect" civilians.

However, the report stresses that the EU should avoid generalisations about China's role, should regard it

with an "open and constructive attitude". MEPs also call for joint projects (EU, China, Africa) to fight climate change and develop renewable energies.

In addition, the EU should devise a strategy to meet the new challenges raised by emerging donors in Africa, such as China, including a coordinated approach between different Member States and EU institutions. It should also enter into a dialogue with China, in order to discuss methods and aims of development policy.

Role of parliaments

Lastly, the Development Committee stresses that the European Parliament is willing to engage with the Chinese National People's Congress, the Pan-African Parliament and African national parliaments in a dialogue aimed at fostering sustainable development and enhancing their scrutinising capabilities.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/028-22176-057-02-09-903-20080225IPR22120-26-02-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm

T **Pakistan**

► **EP: Pakistan voters, election officials praised by election observers** (27/02/08)

MEPs who monitored Pakistan's general election on 18 February praised Pakistani voters and election officials who braved the threat of violence. In a report to Parliament's foreign affairs committee on Tuesday, MEPs on the observer mission said the poll took place in a positive atmosphere although there were irregularities. With all the results in, the election represents a defeat for the supporters of President Musharraf.

The European Union sent a large observation mission to Pakistan, headed by German Christian Democrat Michael Gahler. It was made up of 131 observers from 23 EU countries and was present in Pakistan from December onwards. For the election itself it was joined by a cross party team from Parliament headed by British Labour Member Robert Evans.

The report was presented by Mr Gahler and Mr Evans. During their mission they reported finding evidence that local authorities primarily favoured the former ruling parties during the campaign. There was also some disorder and some procedural irregularities. A final report will be published in mid-April.

With all the results in, the main winners were the Pakistani People's Party (now run by Benazir Bhutto's widow) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) run by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Both MEPs paid tribute to the voters, candidates, officials and the media and civil society who took part in the poll, which was overshadowed by the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. Commenting on the result Mr Gahler said that "people did express their views through the vote and the vote, the results, reflected what people have said".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/030-22159-168-06-25-903-20080225STO22144-2008-16-06-2008/default_en.htm

I **Armenia**

► **EU Presidency Statement on the events following the presidential elections in Armenia**
(1/03/08)

The Presidency of the EU is concerned about the situation in Armenia, and especially about the use of force of Armenian authorities against the demonstrators. The Presidency is also very troubled by the reports of physical injuries incurred to the demonstrators.

The Presidency is deeply concerned about the curtailment of freedom of movement of the opposition leader and former presidential candidate Levon Ter-Petrosian and about the detention of demonstrators. The Presidency calls for their immediate release.

The Presidency calls upon the authorities and the opposition to revert only to the use of peaceful and democratic measures and to reengage in political dialogue immediately in order to restore stability in the country and avoid further use of violence.

In this regard, The Presidency is in contact with the EU Special Representative for the Southern Caucasus Peter Semneby who will continue to work closely with the Armenian authorities and opposition.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/March/0301MZZ_Armenia.html

► **Statement of Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, after his phone conversation with the President of Armenia Robert KOCHARIAN** (2/03/08)

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) today spoke with the President of Armenia Robert KOCHARIAN on the phone, following the declaration of a state of emergency in Armenia.

In the call, the High Representative Javier SOLANA expressed his concern about the situation in Armenia: "I call upon all parties to exercise restraint so as to facilitate a quick return to normality. Dialogue with the opposition should be resumed as it is the only way forward. I have also asked my Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby, to go to Yerevan on my behalf and to meet with all parties."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/declarations/99151.pdf

T **Belarus**

► **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Belarus** (27/02/08)

The Presidency, on behalf of the European Union, expresses its condolences to imprisoned former Belarusian presidential candidate, Mr Aliaksandr Kazulin and his daughters on the death of Irina Kazulina.

The European Union takes note of the release of Mr Kazulin from prison for three days so that he can say farewell to his wife. The European Union reiterates its call upon the competent Belarusian authorities for the permanent and unconditional release of Mr Kazulin.

The final release of all political prisoners would be considered by the EU as a concrete step towards Belarusian compliance with core European values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This would enable the EU to progressively re-engage with Belarus, in connection with further steps by Belarus in that direction.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0227MZZbelarus.html

- ▶ **Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, on the death of Irina KAZULINA, wife of political detainee and former Belarusian presidential candidate Aliaksandr KAZULIN (25/02/08)**

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), issued the following statement today extending his condolences following the death of Irina KAZULINA, wife of the detained former Belarusian presidential candidate, Aliaksandr KAZULIN, and calling for Mr Kazulin's immediate and unconditional release:

"It is with great sadness that I received the news of the death of Irina KAZULINA, the wife of the imprisoned former Belarusian presidential candidate Aliaksandr KAZULIN. I express my heartfelt condolences to Mr KAZULIN and his daughters. I urge the Belarusian authorities to free Mr KAZULIN from prison immediately and unconditionally, so that he can be reunited with his family and attend his wife's funeral. Mr KAZULIN'S release would mean the release of all of political prisoners, after the five others were released during the past month. I sincerely hope that this important step will now be taken."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/98920.pdf

T **CIS Countries**

- ▶ **Human rights, gas, democracy: Cem Özdemir MEP on Central Asia (26/02/08)**

MEPs want the European Union to beef up measures to promote human rights, democracy, education and good governance in countries in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan). In a report adopted during the February plenary, MEPs called for human rights to carry equal weight to energy security and trade. We asked rapporteur and German Green MEP Cem Özdemir about his proposed strategy for this vast and often overlooked region.

Mr Özdemir, why should people in the EU care about Central Asia – a relatively distant and unknown region?

I believe that we should care about where our energy comes from, under what conditions it is produced, the leadership of these countries and what happens to the citizens of these countries. In the long-term we can only have energy security if those countries are stable countries. Dictatorship does not guarantee stability. The best guarantee for stability is participation of all the citizens, and that's what we call democracy. Like global warming, Central Asian issues are universal: caring about Central Asia is good for the people there and good for our people in Europe.

What are the factors that will determine future relations between the countries of Central Asia and the EU? Can the EU speak with one voice?

Twenty seven countries (of the EU) can do a lot - but we can do a lot more if we join forces. Is it really necessary that 27 states open 27 embassies in the 5 Central Asian countries? Do we have the means for

that? Probably not. But an EU diplomatic service - such as the one foreseen in the Lisbon treaty - could be much more efficient.

A lot of these countries have a leadership that is post-Soviet and not very experienced in democracy to say the least. So, our business is to train the next generation. I want the next generation of leaders to study in European universities and to know us, and I want us to know them. If they study in Europe, they will come back with "the virus of democracy" and they will know that losing power does not mean the end of the world, that you can always come back at the next election. We have to encourage all those who have more democracy - like Kyrgyzstan - and who want reforms.

What would you say to those claiming that democracy only brought instability into Kyrgyzstan and that Central Asia is not ready for democracy?

For the past 15 years we have said "this is a post-Soviet era". But now we are in the "post-post Soviet era". How many more years are they going to tell us that they have a specific situation? If they want to continue using that argument, these countries have to develop a strategy towards democracy.

They can't for example put opposition politicians or independent journalists into prison, because these are not steps towards democracy but in the other direction. In a country like Kazakhstan, had the elections been fair, the President would have still won - maybe with 70%. So, the leaders of these countries can afford to be more generous towards the opposition and the independent media.

Is there a risk that the immense energy potential of the region could push concerns over torture and other violations of human rights into second place?

We always speak about 5 Central Asian countries and energy but in reality it is 2: Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. In a country like Tajikistan there are big energy problems: people are freezing. We had to postpone a delegation to Tajikistan recently, because the government could not guarantee acceptable working conditions for us. If this is true for MEPs, what about average people, the ill, the old and the young? The situation is unbelievable. Uzbekistan is selling gas to Russia at the expense of its own people, who are freezing. That's the reality.

Russia and China are also helping Central Asia. But their help is "we give you money, we want your energy". Our help goes beyond that: we also want an end to child labour, healthy and secure conditions for people, who can express their opinions without being threatened with jail or prosecution.

What we offer to Central Asia is technological exchange, environmental knowledge, the best universities in the world, pure friendship which goes beyond just having energy resources. I believe in the long-term that will pay off. We have to tell the leaders of Central Asia "if you want to move your country forward then jump into the 21st century. We know how to do it. So, why don't you copy a successful model which has worked? That's our offer."

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/030-22156-168-06-25-903-20080225STO22136-2008-16-06-2008/default_en.htm

Turkey

- **EU Presidency Statement on the military action undertaken by Turkey in Iraqi territory (25/02/08)**

The Presidency of the EU is following with great concern the operation of the Turkish Army in the territory of Iraq, undertaken on 21 February 2008. While recognizing Turkey's need to protect its population from terrorism, the Presidency calls on Turkey to refrain from taking any disproportionate military action and to respect Iraq's territorial integrity, human rights and the rule of law. It also calls on Turkey to limit its military activities to those which are absolutely necessary for achieving its main purpose - the protection of the Turkish population from terrorism.

The Presidency encourages the Turkish authorities to pursue dialogue with its international partners, particularly with the Government of Iraq.

The Presidency reiterates its call on the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to take appropriate measures and ensure that the Iraqi territory is not used for violent action against Iraq's neighbours.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0225MZZturkey.html

T Russia

- **EP: Looking ahead to Russia's election on Sunday (28/02/08)**

Ahead of Sunday's Presidential election in Russia doubts have been raised about the extent the election is indeed an open and fair one. The European Parliament will not be sending any election observers after the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe announced that it would abstain from monitoring the election. The OSCE withdrew this month after a dispute with Moscow over the restrictions the Kremlin wanted to impose on the organisation.

Dutch MEP Ria Oomen-Ruijten (EPP-ED) chairs the Parliament's delegation to Russia and regrets the attitude of the Russian authorities: "election observation is taking place in many countries in the world, and is neither an intrusion in the sovereign affairs of a country, nor any kind of punishment".

There will be an estimated 300 international observers in the country including 25 members of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Foreign Affairs Committee member István Szent-Iványi was dismissive of Sunday's poll. "The election itself has no political importance. It is a carefully staged formal investiture of the successor already designated by President Putin," said the Hungarian Liberal.

The absence of the OSCE casts a shadow on the election process but it will probably not have a dramatic impact on EU-Russia relations. Dutch Socialist Jan Marinus Wiersma from the foreign affairs committee hopes that new Russian president "will be able to make a new start on two issues: first, the start of negotiations with the EU about a new partnership agreement. Second, progress in WTO membership for Russia".

After the Parliamentary elections in Russia in December the OSCE and Council of Europe concluded that

the elections were not fair and failed to meet many commitments and standards for democratic elections. There was criticism of media restrictions and harassment of opposition parties and NGOs.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/030-22163-168-06-25-903-20080225STO22150-2008-16-06-2008/default_en.htm

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Gaza Strip

► EU Presidency Statement on security and humanitarian situation in Gaza and Southern Israel (28/02/08)

The Presidency of the European Union is deeply concerned by the latest escalation of violence in Southern Israel and Gaza Strip. It deeply deplores the civilian casualties and expresses its sympathy to the population affected by the violence.

The Presidency strongly condemns rocket attacks from Gaza on Southern Israel and calls for their immediate end. While recognising Israel's right to self-defense and protection of its citizens, it urges Israel to show restraint and refrain from all activities contrary to international law. The deterioration of the security situation will only aggravate the already grave conditions in the region.

Israel and the Palestinian Authority must do their utmost to meet the commitments they made at the Annapolis Conference. An immediate cessation of violence is one of the key elements in achieving these commitments and to advance on the path to a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as set out in Annapolis.

The Presidency remains deeply concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. The continued closure of crossings in and out of Gaza and restrictions on the provision of sufficient electricity and fuel to Gaza further deteriorates the situation. The Presidency underlines the importance of uninterrupted emergency and humanitarian assistance without obstruction and calls for continued provision of essential services, including fuel and power supplies.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0228MZZgaza.html

► EU Presidency Statement on further escalation of violence in Gaza and Southern Israel (2/03/08)

The Presidency of the European Union follows with grave concern further escalation of violence in Southern Israel and the Gaza Strip. The confrontation has caused tragic loss of life also of a number of civilians, among them innocent children. The Presidency expresses its sincere sympathies to the families of victims.

The Presidency condemns the recent disproportionate use of force by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) against Palestinian population in Gaza and urges Israel to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from all activities that endanger civilians. Such activities are contrary to international law. The Presidency at the same time reiterates condemnation of continued firing of rockets into Israeli territory and calls for its immediate end.

The Presidency rejects collective punishment of the people of Gaza. We are deeply worried about the suffering of the civilian population on Israeli and Palestinian side. We have stated too many times that both Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in peace and security.

The peace process should not be interrupted. Actions that undermine this process should be stopped immediately. Cessation of violence is one of the key elements in achieving the commitments made in Annapolis. The Presidency urges all sides to advance on the path to a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict as set out in Annapolis.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/March/0302MZZ_Gaza.html

T **Iran**

- [Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU concerning the consideration of a draft Penal code in Iran](#) (25/02/08)

The European Union is deeply concerned by the on-going deterioration in the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The EU expresses its acute concern about the news that the Iranian Parliament is reviewing a draft Penal code. The EU is concerned, in particular, about Section Five on Apostasy, Heresy and Witchcraft.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/index.html

T **Iraq**

- [EP: Call to step up "quantity and quality" of EU aid to Iraq](#) (27/02/08)

The Council should become more actively engaged in assistance to Iraq and also improve the transparency of its aid to the country, says a Foreign Affairs Committee report on the EU's role in Iraq. It calls on the Council to "step up the quantity, but especially the quality, of EU support for UN efforts to build a safe, stable, unified, prosperous and democratic Iraq."

In Wednesday's report, drawn up by Ana Maria Gomes (PES, PT), the committee enumerates several areas in which it believes EU assistance should be concentrated. These include support for the rule of law and justice reforms, amelioration of the electoral process, and capacity building in the health care sector. MEPs also called on the Council to ensure that "substantive EU assistance is directed towards improving public finance management and budgetary control, with the aim of ensuring that the Iraqi government is better able to disburse the substantial and increasing public funds now available to it."

The report also urges the Council to make "extensive use of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights in providing technical and financial assistance to civil society organisations," especially with the view to improving the rights of women, children and minorities, and fighting against torture and the death penalty. Finally, Members emphasised the need for the Council to urge the Commission to "ensure the transparency and efficiency of EU assistance for Iraq."

Security matters

Members urge Turkey "to respect the territorial integrity of Iraq and not to react to terrorist actions through military actions on Iraqi territory", while also calling on the Iraqi authorities not to allow its territory to be used as a base for terrorist actions against Turkey.

The report also advocates "making the EU code of conduct on arms exports legally binding", and urges the Council to help the security situation in Iraq "by improving EUFOR Althea's oversight of stockpiles in Bosnia-Herzegovina, by accelerating the destruction of stockpiles in the Balkans, and by helping the Iraqi authorities to 'mop up' surplus SALW [Small Arms and Light Weapons] through a large-scale disarmament, demobilisation and integration."

MEPs also demand "clear guidelines for the use of private military and security companies by EU institutions", and call on the Multi-National Force - Iraq (MNF-I) to "account for the situation of the over 24 000 detainees held in MNF-I custody, so as to ensure respect for due process and their basic human rights".

Iraqi Refugees

The report asks the Council to "urge the Commission to alleviate the plight of Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria and in other countries in the region", and to "improve the possibilities for Iraqi refugees to find refuge in EU Member States".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-22178-056-02-09-903-20080225IPR22124-25-02-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm

- **EU Presidency statement on the kidnapping of Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Faraj Rahou** (1/03/08)

The Presidency strongly condemns yesterday's kidnapping of Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Faraj Rahou in Mosul, and calls for his unconditional and immediate release.

The Presidency expresses its solidarity with the Iraqi and particularly Chaldean communities, and urges the Iraqi authorities to do their utmost for the release of the abducted Chaldean Archbishop.

The Presidency would like to reiterate its condemnation of taking hostages in any circumstances whatsoever.

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/March/0301MZZ-Rahou.html

T **Israel**

- **MEPS deeply disturbed by reports of Palestinian detainees' plight** (27/02/08)

Members of the Human Rights Subcommittee reacted on Wednesday with deep concern to descriptions of the lives of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, with some MEPs concluding that the Parliament should try to send a fact-finding mission to Israel.

At a public hearing chaired by Hélène Flautre (Greens/EFA, FR), the subcommittee heard from Ashraf Al Ajrami, the Palestinian Authority's minister for prisoners' affairs, Fadwa Ibrahim, of the Free Marwan Marghouti Campaign (Ms Ibrahim is the wife of Mr Marghouti, the Fatah Tanzim leader) and Anat Barsella of B'Tselem (the Israeli Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories). Several MEPs deplored the Israeli Embassy's decision not to send a representative to the hearing.

Equivalent of a third of Palestinians have been in jail

There was broad agreement on detainee numbers: currently over 10,000, including more than 300 children, around 100 women and over 40 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Since 1967 a number equivalent to over a third of the Palestinian population has spent time in jail. "If there are so many detainees, this says a lot about the political situation", said Ms Ibrahim.

Ashraf Al Ajrami told MEPs that the torture of the prisoners is not only acknowledged but legally authorised by Israel. He listed other problems such as lack of medical care, overcrowding and obstacles facing relatives wanting to visit prisoners (a point later backed by Ms Barsella). He added "the EU should push Israel to respect humanitarian law".

Fadwa Ibrahim emphasised the suffering of prisoners and their families, especially that of children, pointing out that under international conventions the imprisonment of children is supposed "to be a last resort and to be as short as possible". She called for "political prisoners to be released immediately" and "an end to torture and acts in breach of the Geneva Convention". To questions by EP vice-president Luisa Morgantini (GUE/NGL, IT) and subcommittee vice-chair Richard Howitt (PES, UK) about the situation of Palestinian women, she said "a Palestinian woman often has to be mother and father to her family".

Anat Barsella described the legal position. Of "security detainees", 47% are held because of membership of illegal organisations, which can even include charities. Under "administrative detention", military commanders can detain individuals for up to six months, with unlimited renewals. Israel refuses to apply the Hague Convention and the fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Territories. Minors are not held separately from adults, in defiance of international law.

An EP fact-finding mission?

Among MEPs who spoke, Laima Andrikienė (EPP-ED, LT) said "My understanding is that the Israeli security agencies do not act in a vacuum but as part of a system" that includes political support, while Marios Matsakis (ALDE, CY) was "shocked", "disappointed" and "astonished" that Europe had been able to do nothing and that the Israeli Supreme Court, the Knesset and the lawyers' associations had not reacted.

Summing up, subcommittee chair Hélène Flautre said the EP should "put pressure on the Commission and Council" to raise these issues with Israel. She also took up a suggestion by Ms Morgantini and Mr Matsakis that the EP should contact the Israeli authorities with a view to sending a fact-finding mission. The aim must be "to get this issue higher up the political agenda: it is still too low".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-22183-058-02-09-902-20080225IPR22170-27-02-2008-2008-false/default_en.ht

T **Middle East**

- **Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP to visit the Middle East from Sunday, 2 March to Tuesday, 4 March 2008 (29/02/08)**

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), will be visiting the Israel and the Palestinian Territories from Sunday, 2 March to Tuesday, 4 March 2008 and Lebanon on Tuesday, 4 March.

In Israel, on Monday, Mr SOLANA will meet Shimon PERES, President of Israel, Prime Minister Ehud OLMERT and Foreign Minister Tzipi LIVNI in Jerusalem and Defence Minister Ehud BARAK in Tel Aviv.

In the Palestinian Territories, on Tuesday, Mr SOLANA will have meetings in Ramallah with Mahmoud ABBAS, President of the Palestinian National Authority, Prime Minister Salam FAYYAD, Ahmed Ali

Mohammed QUREI, Chairman of the Palestinian Negotiating Team and Saeb EREKAT, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department.

In his meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders Mr SOLANA will stress the importance of keeping the Annapolis peace process on track and underline the EU's commitment to this process and its support for the parties. He will also stress the EU's readiness to help bring about and implement a solution to the situation in Gaza.

In Lebanon, on Tuesday afternoon, Mr SOLANA will meet Prime Minister Fouad SINIORA and Nabih BERRI, Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament in Beirut.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/sg/99142.pdf

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

I **Terrorism policy**

► **Framework decision on combating terrorism** (28/02/08)

The objective of this proposal is to update the Framework Decision 2002/475 on combating terrorism and align it with the Council of Europe Convention on prevention of terrorism, by including public provocation to commit terrorist offences, recruitment for terrorism and training for terrorism.

The Presidency considered that this proposal was very important and also highlighted that it was very delicate since it was situated on the borderline of fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedom of expression, assembly or of association and the right to respect for family life. It was therefore essential that the right balance was struck in the instrument.

The Council focused its debate on the safeguards relating to the respect for human rights and the principle of proportionality. The Presidency concluded that a majority of member states could agree to add in the recitals of the text a clause on proportionality based on Article 12.2 of the Convention. A majority of member states could also support the addition in the framework decision of a new Article based on the framework decision on combating certain forms of expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. The Presidency announced its intention of reaching a general approach on this proposal at the next JHA Council in April 2008.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/99114.pdf

T **EU Agency For Fundamental Rights**

► **Agreement with the Council of Europe** (28/02/08)

The Council adopted a decision approving the conclusion of an agreement between the European Community and the Council of Europe on cooperation between the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe (16623/07).

The Agency for Fundamental Rights was established in March 2007 in Vienna (Austria). It provides the relevant institutions and member states with assistance and expertise relating to fundamental rights in order to support them when they take measures or formulate courses of action to fully respect fundamental rights. The agency has three key functions: to collect information and data; provide advice to the EU and its member states and promote dialogue with civil society to raise public awareness of fundamental right.

The agreement abrogates and replaces the agreement of 10 February 1999 between the European Community and the Council of Europe establishing close cooperation between the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia and the Council of Europe.

► **Multi-annual framework for 2007-2012** (28/02/08)

Council adopted a decision establishing a multi-annual framework for the period 2007-2012 for the Agency for Fundamental Rights, which defines the precise thematic areas of the work of the Agency (16773/07).

The Agency will carry out its tasks in particular within the following thematic areas: racism, xenophobia and related intolerance; discrimination based on sex, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and against persons belonging to minorities and any combination of these grounds (multiple discrimination); compensation of victims; the rights of the child, including the protection of children; asylum, immigration and integration of migrants; visa and border control.

The Council gave its opinion recommending the appointment of Mr. Morten Kjaerum as Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

The opinion will be now forwarded to the Agency's management board which is the appointing authority.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/99114.pdf

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

I EU- Membership

► Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: progress towards EU (27/02/08)

The Foreign Affairs Committee stresses the need for Croatia to resolve outstanding bilateral border issues, and reiterates that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's bilateral name dispute with Greece should not obstruct FYROM's EU accession process, in two reports, adopted on Wednesday, that are generally positive about on the two countries' progress towards EU accession.

The report by Hannes Swoboda (PES, AT) on Croatia "congratulates the Croatian authorities on the positive results achieved so far, particularly with regard to the number of negotiation chapters which have been opened." It urges the government to "redouble its efforts to meet the benchmarks for the remaining chapters," while also reminding the authorities that "it is now crucial to speed up the development of administrative capacity required in order to implement the new legislation." MEPs commend Croatia for its "exemplary Constitutional Law on National Minorities."

MEPs also address the Commission, calling on it to "step up its efforts and increase the resources allocated for preparing, processing and finalising negotiating material so that the EU can respond rapidly and efficiently to progress made by Croatia in meeting the relevant opening and closing benchmarks." The committee expressed its hopes that "increased efforts on the part of Croatia and enhanced support by the EU institutions can still lead to the finalization of an accession treaty in time for the European Parliament to take its final decision on the EU-membership of Croatia before the next European elections in June 2009, so as to start the ratification process as early as possible."

Remaining concerns for Croatia

Members expressed their concerns about the further need to improve the judiciary in the country, as well as efforts to eradicate the "in some cases unacceptably high level of corruption, which undermines the economic development of the country." While welcoming the fact that "Croatia continues to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)," they called on Croatia to involve

media and civil society in maintaining popular support for the court after the negative impact on public opinion of some of its rulings.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The report by Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL, NL) on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia welcomes the government's achievements "in the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement", which deals with the political aspects of inter-ethnic relations in the country, while noting the "continuing discrimination against the Roma community." The committee also welcomes the fact that the government has pledged to rebuild the mosque that was damaged in the otherwise "professional and effective" police operation in Brodec on 7 November, 2007. MEPs also commended the government's economic performance, and the adoption of several crucial laws on prosecutors.

While welcoming the entry into force of the visa facilitation and readmission agreement between the country and the EU, MEPs underline the difficulties citizens still face when trying to enter the EU. At the same time, Members regret the signing of a bilateral immunity agreement between the US and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, granting exemption from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in the Hague, which "contradicts EU standards and policies."

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-22177-056-02-09-903-20080225IPR22123-25-02-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm

□ **Enlargement**

► **Euro-Mediterranean Agreements with Egypt and Israel – Enlargement (28/02/08)**

The Council adopted two decisions approving the conclusion of a protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean agreement with Egypt (13199/07) and a protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean agreement with Israel (15061/07), to take account of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU in January 2007.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/99114.pdf

EU / UN REFORM

MISCELLANEOUS

I **Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home affairs/ Subcommittee on Human Rights**

► **Guantánamo Bay: How did it happen? What next for detainees? (28/02/08)**

A joint hearing on human rights and Guantánamo Bay was held on Thursday at the European Parliament by the Civil Liberties Committee and the Human Rights Subcommittee. Debate focused on how detainees' rights had been eroded, what should be done for those still in custody and in particular whether the EU might play a role in resettling detainees cleared for release.

The first part of the hearing considered questions of due process and procedural rights, including habeas corpus, evidence and Combatant Status Review Tribunals (CSRTs).

Procedural rights trampled, say experts

Jennifer Daskal of Human Rights Watch described Guantánamo Bay as "a place chosen because the United States thought it would be beyond the reach of any US courts". In fact, the US Supreme Court had ruled that prisoners did have certain basic legal rights, only for Congress to pass special legislation stripping them again of those rights. She said the US is currently planning to use the Military Commissions (ruled illegal by the Court) to try six high-profile detainees. "The use of evidence obtained through torture and other coercive interrogation methods is expected to be a central issue in these cases", but ultimately, "the high-profile detentions of a few dozen potentially dangerous men in Guantánamo do little to make the United States and its European allies safer. To the contrary, it delegitimizes US moral authority", she stressed.

Stephen E. Abraham described to MEPs his experience as a US army intelligence officer and lawyer, notably his work as a member of the Office for the Administrative Review of the Detention of Enemy Combatants. His scepticism at the removal of detainees' rights had grown, leading him to conclude that the CSRT process "was little more than an effort to ratify the prior exercise of power to detain individuals in the war against terror". He spoke of the support he had subsequently received from people who showed "an unwillingness to quietly submit to an erosion of fundamental human rights".

Resettlement of endangered detainees in Europe?

The other area of discussion was what to do with the prisoners whom the Americans would willingly release (around 30) but who fear for their safety in their countries of origin, which are ruled by brutal regimes. According to Emi MacLean of the US Center for Constitutional Rights, "these men are faced with an impossible choice: to be detained indefinitely in the US extrajudicial prison camp at Guantánamo Bay or to be repatriated to countries in which they face certain torture or persecution". The answer, she believed, was for Europe to open its doors to these "few stranded refugees".

While MEPs did not, overall, question the facts as set out by the guest speakers, Ewa Klamt (EPP-ED, DE) preferred to stress the democratic nature of the USA, pointing out that the three leading presidential candidates all believed "Guantánamo should be closed", so things were "moving in the right direction". Referring to the possible resettlements of detainees in Europe she wondered "why should the EU be obliged to solve problems that the US did not want to resolve itself?"

Subcommittee vice-chair Sarah Ludford (ALDE, UK) believed the aim must be for the European Union to "help the US to close Guantánamo Bay" by "putting its money where its mouth is", i.e. by taking in some of the endangered detainees. Ana Gomes (PES, PT) argued that the "complicity" of some Member States in sending individuals to Guantánamo in the first place was probably inhibiting their readiness to take in refugees now.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-22182-058-02-09-902-20080225IPR22133-27-02-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm

T **Meeting UN/EU**

- **Transcript of joint press briefing by Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, and Jaap DE HOOP SCHEFFER, Secretary General of NATO (25/02/08)**

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and Jaap DE HOOP SCHEFFER, NATO Secretary General, met bilaterally today to discuss the situation in Kosovo and in Afghanistan. The meeting took place in the margins of the PSC-NAC meeting to discuss Bosnia and Herzegovina. The following is an edited transcript of their remarks to reporters at a joint press briefing following their meeting:

Javier SOLANA

"Let me once again publicly welcome the Secretary General of NATO, my dear friend Jaap, to this building once again. We had a very good and long meeting, fundamentally about Kosovo. The two of us and our two teams followed and analysed together the situation and the cooperation between NATO and the European Union, today and in the future as long as our missions are deployed on the ground. We are concerned and we would like to share our hope that everybody acts responsibly in the coming period of time, so that the cooperation between international actors on the ground can be constructive and positive for the stability of the region. That has always been the aim of NATO and the aim of the European Union as you know very well, and I think this was very well explained last Monday by the ministers of foreign affairs of the European Union and at the end of the week by the ministers of defence. So the cooperation is solid and we are going to continue to work in that direction.

We commented also on the situation in Belgrade. I would like to say very clearly that for us a good and solid relationship with Belgrade is fundamental. Belgrade has an offer to negotiate with the European Union the manner in which this relation can be deeper, namely through the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and through other mechanisms that can be put forward. And it is important for that that the situation calms down and that everybody acts responsibly.

Let me say that the two of us and our teams have also spoken about Afghanistan. We have discussed the situation in Afghanistan and how the cooperation between NATO and the European Union can be done in an effective manner now that we have the mission practically deployed on the ground. Afghanistan is for NATO and for us a very important theatre and we are going to continue working very closely.

We held later on in the morning a formal meeting with NATO on Bosnia and Herzegovina. As you know, in Bosnia-Herzegovina there is a force of the European Union, under the Berlin Plus arrangement, and we do practically monthly a review of the situation. There are two agreements which I think are important. On EUFOR, the forces which are deployed, we do not want to take any decision today about the drawing down of the force. We want to wait until we analyse in detail the situation in the region before taking such a decision. The force is acting very well and the cooperation is therefore very strong.

The second thing we are going to discuss in the coming days is the future of the OHR – the office of the international representative. Again we are going to see how the situation evolves in the region, and in particular how the reform of the police is moving forward in Bosnia and Herzegovina. You know that we have initialled the SAA with Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it has not been signed and will not be until the process of reform finishes, in particular the police reforms.

In any case the relationship is very solid and very good. The Commander of the force was also in Ljubljana at the end of last week, he reported to the ministers of defence of the European Union, something which we also discussed today.

Thank you very much!"

Jaap DE HOOP SCHEFFER

"Thanks for the hospitality, Javier. It is good to have the opportunity from time to time, apart from frequent telephone calls, to have a fundamental and serious bilateral meeting, and this was what we had this morning.

I can to a great extent echo Dr Solana's words on Kosovo, where KFOR is present as you know on the basis of Resolution 1244. KFOR will stay there, KFOR has the role to secure Kosovo and to protect all citizens of Kosovo, wherever they are across Kosovo, minority and majority alike. We also see the European Union coming in, as well as a third important partner in Kosovo, which is UNMIK. It was good that we had the opportunity to go into some depth and some length, Dr Solana and I, to discuss Kosovo because by definition NATO-EU cooperation in Kosovo is of great importance although the two organisations each have their own responsibilities.

The same is true for Afghanistan. You might know that I took all 26 NATO ambassadors to Afghanistan last week. We spoke at length and had a briefing about the EU police mission in Afghanistan, which is coming very well off the ground. As you know, in Afghanistan, we – NATO –should do more in training the Afghan national army. We are lagging behind there, that is one of the holes I would like to see filled. We are happy that the European Union police mission, under the able leadership of Mr Scholz, is coming off the ground. They are training the trainers and I think we have the arrangements in place to be all together there as well, given the fact that also a number of NATO allies are very much involved in this police training. Afghanistan was the second important topic.

Point number three, and that relates to the NATO Bucharest Summit. The meeting devoted to Bosnia and Herzegovina is of course also related to a discussion in NATO. Apart from the state of play, Bosnia and Herzegovina having the Partnership for Peace, and EUFOR and NATO having a Headquarters in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I drew the circle a bit wider. You know that at the Bucharest Summit there are three nations having Membership Action Plans, knocking on NATO's door, but you also know that the allies want to look at the region in a more general way in the run-up to Bucharest and during Bucharest. So what was also discussed was the possibility of invitations, mark my words, the possibility of invitations, we are not there yet, and how NATO is going to relate to the region in general, including the NATO relationship with Serbia. I hope that in the region, and more specifically – I end where I started – in Kosovo, we could do without unhelpful rhetoric coming from certain places. But this is important in the framework of the NATO relationship with the region as a whole. And let me stop here."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/discours/98980.pdf

T **Council of Europe**

► **Council of Europe anti-torture Committee publishes report on Bulgaria** (28/02/08)

The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has today published the report on its fourth periodic visit to Bulgaria in September 2006, together with the Bulgarian authorities' responses. Both documents have been made public at the request of the Bulgarian Government.

The majority of the persons met by the CPT's delegation who were, or had recently been, detained by the police, indicated that they had been correctly treated. However, a significant number of the persons interviewed did make allegations of physical ill-treatment at the time of their apprehension and/or subsequent questioning by police officers. The Bulgarian authorities have taken steps in recent years to address the problem of ill-treatment by the police, including the adoption of new legislation and a Code of Ethics for police staff, and the stepping up of police training and supervision. At the same time, it is clear that continued determined action is needed to combat this phenomenon. The CPT has made recommendations aimed in particular at improving the screening for injuries and their reporting to the competent authorities, as well as strengthening the formal safeguards against ill-treatment.

As regards investigation detention facilities (IDFs), the CPT's delegation noted a positive trend towards reducing the number of persons held for lengthy periods of time. However, the situation remained problematic in other respects, in particular at the IDF in Plovdiv, which was seriously overcrowded and continued to lack outdoor exercise facilities. Similar deficiencies were observed at the detention facilities in Pleven, Sliven and Slivnitsa. In response to a recommendation by the CPT that Plovdiv IDF be transferred without delay to an appropriate facility, the Bulgarian authorities have launched a procedure for the construction of a new IDF.

The CPT's delegation did not hear any allegations of deliberate physical ill-treatment of prisoners by staff at either Sofia or Sliven Prisons. However, there were indications that inter-prisoner violence was on the rise. The overcrowding prevailing in the prison system clearly did little to defuse tensions and rendered staff control more difficult. The Committee has called upon the Bulgarian authorities to redouble their efforts to combat prison overcrowding, by adopting policies designed to limit or modulate the number of persons sent to prison. Further, the CPT has recommended that the authorities strive to increase purposeful activities for prisoners, both sentenced and on remand.

The follow-up visit to Karlukovo State Psychiatric Hospital revealed that some efforts had been made to implement the recommendations made in the report on the CPT's 2002 visit. As regards Byala State Psychiatric Hospital, material conditions displayed a number of deficiencies, and the Committee has recommended that a refurbishment be carried out without delay and steps taken to improve the food provided to patients.

In their responses, the Bulgarian authorities provide information on the measures being taken to address the concerns raised in the CPT's report.

The CPT's visit report and the responses of the Bulgarian Government are available in English on the CPT's website: <http://www.cpt.coe.int>

<http://www.cpt.coe.int/documents/bgr/2008-02-28-eng.htm>