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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

Committee on Development

- October, 22, 2007 Strasbourg

Committee on Foreign Affairs

- October, 16, 2007; October, 22, 2007 Strasbourg

Subcommittee on Human Rights

- November, 5, 2007

Subcommittee on security and defence

- November, 5, 2007

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

- November, 5, 2007

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- November, 5., 2007

Committee on budgetary control

- November, 6, 2007

CONFERENCES / EVENTS

REGIONS:

AFRICA

Ethiopia

- ▶ **EU Presidency Declaration on the behalf of the European Union on the Somali region of Ethiopia** (9/10/2007)

The EU is closely following the situation in the Somali region of Ethiopia. It welcomes the report on the findings from the UN Humanitarian Assessment Mission to the Somali region, taking note with concern of the report's conclusion that humanitarian conditions within the conflict areas have deteriorated substantially over the past several months.

The EU commends the Ethiopian government for its reaction to the report and calls upon it to follow up all recommendations of the mission, including actions to protect civilians in conflict, and welcomes its stated willingness to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the population in the Somali region of Ethiopia are properly addressed.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071009pescetiopia.htm

Somalia

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the conflict in the Sool Region, Northern Somalia region of Ethiopia** (9/10/2007)

The European Union (EU) is concerned about the evolving security situation in the Somali northern region of Sool particularly in and around the regional capital of Las Anod. The EU urges all parties involved to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from any further confrontation to avoid further escalation and degeneration into a wider conflict.

The EU supports all efforts towards the settlement of the current dispute through peaceful discourse, and urges all parties involved to declare an immediate unconditional state of cessation of hostilities and influence the full restraint of local groups from any further fighting thereby availing space for dialogue and reconciliation.

The EU believes that military confrontation will not serve the interest of the local communities but instead threaten the stability of the area as a whole. The EU shall remain seized with developments.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071009PESC/SOMALIA.htm

Northern Niger, Northern Mali

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation in Northern Niger and Northern Mali** (9/10/2007)

The European Union is concerned at the deterioration in the security situation in the regions of northern Mali and northern Niger. It condemns the abductions and the use, in violation of international conventions, in particular the Ottawa Convention, of landmines, which constitute a great danger for the civilian population and are obstacles to the development of those regions.

The EU confirms its support for the governments of Mali and Niger in their actions to preserve the peace and territorial integrity of their respective countries. It offers its support for initiatives intended to strengthen national and regional cooperation to ensure security, peace and development in the Sahel Saharan region. It encourages both countries to seek joint, shared solutions to issues that transcend national borders.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071009Niger.htm

AMERICAS

Colombia

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union regarding humanitarian agreements in Colombia** (9/10/2007)

The European Union welcomes all recent initiatives in pursuit of humanitarian agreements that can secure the release of all hostages, end the armed conflict and bring peace to Colombia taken with the Colombian government's support.

In this sense, the EU follows with interest the mediation efforts of the President of Venezuela and supports the work of all those committed to the application of international humanitarian law in Colombia.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071009PESCCOLOMBIA.htm

Central America and Mexico

- ▶ **EU action to tackle murders of women in Central America and Mexico** (11/10/2007)

MEPs adopted an own-initiative report on the murders of women in Central America and Mexico. The report is part of a global strategy for the eradication and prevention of femicide and proposes EU actions in the framework of partnerships agreements. The report was adopted with 560 votes in favour, 4 against and 6 abstentions.

The report drafted by Raúl Romeva i Rueda (Greens/EFA, ES) is the outcome of a hearing held at the European Parliament in April 2006 on the subject of femicide in Mexico and Central America, organised by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the Subcommittee on Human Rights.

Femicides: a global issue

According to the definition laid down in the report, the word "femicide" should be understood as "any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or sexual harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere".

Central America and Mexico have witnessed a sharp increase in violent killings in recent years. The cases of two European women murdered in Mexico, Hester Van Nierop in 1998 and Brenda Susana Margaret Searle in 2001, have symbolic value.

However, violence against women has a global dimension and concerns all countries. Europe included, and this report, MEPs stress, should be considered as part of a global strategy for the eradication and prevention of violent deaths of women. The report urges the countries to take all necessary steps for the effective combating of violence towards women and to take measures to ensure full respect for human rights. However, the aim of the European Parliament's resolution is to "issue an invitation to take concrete steps to improve what it sees as unsatisfactory state of affairs in states" and does not constitute "any kind of accusation or charge sheet against states which are sovereign and considered as equal partners in the field of international politics".

Action at European level

In the report, MEPs ask the national governments in the framework of their bilateral relations with the countries of Latin America, and European Institutions within their strategic partnership, to support the prevention and protection policies relating to violence. They also insist that the European members of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee, as well as Parliament's delegation for relations with the countries of Central America, include systematically the issue of femicide and impunity in the programmes for their visits to the region.

The report also stresses the need for the European Union to give priority to the restructuring and reinforcement of judicial and prison systems. Such actions should be conducted in partnership with the International Labour Organization and with the OECD's National Contact Point of Mexico in order to devise programmes aimed at ensuring safety, decent working conditions and equal pay for women.

The European Commission should, MEPs believe, coordinate the different European initiatives and submit such initiatives to Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. They also propose that EU representations and Member States' embassies organise a round table on femicide and impunity and that a joint hearing be organised by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, the Subcommittee on Human Rights and the delegations concerned, before the EU/Latin America summit in Lima in May 2008, with a view to evaluating the measures in place.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/014-11451-283-10-41-902-20071008IPR11355-10-10-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

ASIA

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Turkey

► **EU Presidency Statement on the attacks of PKK in Turkey (12/10/2007)**

The EU Presidency strongly condemns the violent actions carried out by the PKK in Turkey, namely the recent attacks in the South East of the country.

It regrets the suffering caused by these actions and reiterates its condemnation of all terrorist acts as criminal and unjustifiable under any circumstances

The EU Presidency understands the need of the Turkish authorities to protect the Turkish population, while respecting the Rule of Law and preserving the international and regional peace and stability.

The Presidency reiterates the commitment of the EU to the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071012PESCPKK.htm

Kosovo

► **Troika meeting (14/10/2007)**

On October 14, delegations from Belgrade and Pristina continued their direct dialogue under Troika auspices to discuss Kosovo's future status. The Troika facilitated several hours of direct face-to-face talks between the parties. After the direct dialogue, the Troika met separately with each side to discuss possible areas of agreement in the parties' positions.

Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic and the Minister for Kosovo and Metohija Slobodan Samardzic led the Belgrade delegation. It also included Feodor Starcevic, Branislava Alendar, Aleksandar Simic, Gaso Kenezovic, Thomas Fleiner, Milos Jovanovic, Zoran Soljaga, Valdimir Jovicic, Marko Jaksic and Goran Bogdanovic.

Pristina was represented by the Unity Team led by President Fatmir Sejdiu, Prime Minister Agim Ceku, President of the Assembly Kole Berisha, Hashim Thaci, Veton Surroi, Blerim Shala and Skender Hyseni.

During the face-to-face talks both parties expanded on the discussions in New York on September 28 by presenting their respective proposals on Kosovo's future status to one another in greater detail. Belgrade further described its proposal of autonomy for Kosovo within Serbia. Pristina elaborated its proposal of friendship and cooperation between two independent states and full implementation of minority rights. Both parties asked questions and responded to each others' proposals.

Both parties stated that they would continue to abide by their commitment made in Vienna on August 30 and reaffirmed in New York on September 28 to refrain from any provocative acts or statements that might jeopardize the security and stability of the region or the Troika process.

The Troika, reminding the parties of the Contact Group Ministerial Statement of 27 September, expressed the hope that elections, due in Kosovo on 17 November, would take place with full participation of all communities and against a calm and orderly background.

The Troika intends to be vigorous and proactive in helping the parties reach an agreement on Kosovo's status; in particular, the Troika will work with the parties to identify areas of common perspective that might open a path to a solution. The Troika will next meet with the parties in Vienna on October 22, followed by an intensive schedule of face-to-face meetings in the following weeks.

The Troika reminded both parties that the Troika process will be concluded by the Contact Group reporting to the UN Secretary General by 10 December.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/20071015TroikaKosovo.htm

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Gaza

► **MEPs express “deepest concern” about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza** (11/10/2007)

In adopting a joint resolution on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, MEPs express their deepest concern about the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and its possible grave consequences. Parliament stresses that human rights and international humanitarian law must be fully respected in the area. The European Parliament reiterates its call on all sides to renounce violence.

The House calls on Israel to fulfil its international obligations under the Geneva Conventions to guarantee the flow of humanitarian aid, humanitarian assistance and essential services, such as electricity and fuel, to the Gaza Strip.

International Peace Conference - secure and recognised border

Parliament expresses its wish that the efforts to convene an international peace conference should contribute to achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, based on the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, the right of the State of Israel to live within secure and recognised borders, and the right to a viable state for Palestinians.

The European Parliament calls for the lifting of the blockade of the Gaza Strip and calls on Israel to ensure the movement of people and goods at Rafah, in compliance with the Agreement on Movement and Access and the EU Border Assistance Mission, as well as the movement of goods at Karni.

MEPs call on the Council, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Commission to face up to their full responsibility on the implementation of this Agreement.

Parliament calls on Israel to guarantee the flow of financial assets to the Gaza Strip, which has been suspended since 25 September 2007, and considers that the lack of access to any financial assets has a serious impact on the economic, social and daily life of the Palestinian people.

Parliament calls on the Palestinian Authority and Hamas to facilitate, despite the political deadlock, the functioning of the public institutions providing essential services and the operations of international humanitarian offices, agencies and organisations seeking to improve the living conditions of all Palestinians living in the area.

MEPs call on the Council and the Commission to continue to guarantee, together with the international community, essential humanitarian aid for the Palestinian population, with special regard to the specific needs of particularly vulnerable groups.

Finally, the House urges the Council and the Commission to ensure, in compliance with the Association Agreements with Israel and with the Palestinian National Authority, that international humanitarian law and human rights are fully respected in the area, including by non-state actors, in order to preserve the necessary humanitarian space.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/025-11450-283-10-41-903-20071008IPR11354-10-10-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

THEMATIC :

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Death Penalty

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of the World Day against Death Penalty (10/10/2007)**

On the occasion of the fifth World Day against the Death Penalty, the European Union reiterates its longstanding position against the death penalty in all circumstances. The abolition of the death penalty contributes to enhancement of human dignity and progressive development of human rights. All measures of abolition of the death penalty should be considered as progress in the enjoyment of the right to life. Therefore, the EU reiterates its call upon States that still maintain the death penalty to work towards abolishing the death penalty and in the meantime, to immediately establish a moratorium. The EU wishes to recall that any miscarriage or failure of justice in the application of capital punishment represents the irreparable and irreversible loss of human life, while expressing its compassion towards individuals who have wrongly been sentenced to death and with their relatives and other indirect victims of death penalty.

EU expresses its profound concern about capital punishment cases which do not meet the highest standards of justice. The EU is deeply concerned by the fact that in a few countries minors are still being sentenced to death and executed, in clear violation of those countries' international obligations. The EU strongly welcomes the abolition of the death penalty in Rwanda. It sets a powerful example to other countries around the world that a country like Rwanda, with the terrible violence it has known in its recent past, has chosen to abolish the death penalty. The European Union is very pleased to note that the trend towards the worldwide abolition of the death penalty for all crimes continues.

The EU is committed to keep lobbying in various countries around the world in support of the abolition of the death penalty. The EU also continues to support initiatives of civil society organisations that deepen worldwide abolitionist movement and encourages all countries on their positive developments towards the complete abolition of the death penalty.

The EU, in the framework of a cross regional alliance, will introduce a resolution on a moratorium and the abolition of the death penalty at the 62nd United National General Assembly. On this World Day against the Death Penalty the European Union recalls that the efforts to abolish the death penalty must continue and calls on all countries which still retain the death penalty to embrace the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances.

http://www.ue2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071010PESCPMorte.htm

Death Penalty

► **Statement by Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner on World Day against Death Penalty (10/10/2007)**

Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner joins in the calls to abolish the death penalty: "Today, on the World Day against the Death Penalty I join in with all those who urge all states to abolish the death penalty in practice and law. We must break the cycle of violence and reaffirm the value of life. The EU's firm political commitment is shown by its decision to introduce, in the framework of a cross-regional alliance, a resolution against the death penalty at the 62nd United Nations General Assembly."

The European Union's commitment against the death penalty goes beyond formal statements: The European Commission has funded around 30 anti-death penalty projects worldwide since 1994, with an overall budget of about €15 million. As of 2007, eight projects were ongoing and six new ones have been selected. A further €4 million have been allocated to support the abolition of the death penalty for 2007-2008.

To date 133 countries have abolished the death penalty in practice or in law and over 50 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes since 1990.

<http://www.europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1471&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>