

SUMMARY

REGIONS:

AFRICA

AMERICAS

ASIA

♦ **Burma/Myanmar**

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on detentions in Burma/Myanmar (05/10/06)

♦ **Thailand**

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation in Thailand (28/06/06)

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

♦ **Iran**

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on freedom of the press in Iran (05/10/06)

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

◆ USA/EU

- ▶ Joint press release: Agreement with the United States on the continued use of passenger name record (PNR) data (06/10/06)

◆ EU/US

- ▶ EU-US seminar about anti-terrorism sanctions in Helsinki (26/09/06)

EU / UN REFORM

◆ EU/UN

- ▶ EU on the second session of the Human rights council: Working methods developing, but substantive results disappointing (09/10/06)

MISCELLANEOUS

◆ European Parliament

- ▶ 2006 Sakharov Prize - supporting Freedom of Thought around the world (26/09/2006)

IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

EU - THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

◆ Committee on Development

- November, 6, 2006

◆ Committee on Foreign Affairs

- October, 10, 2006

◆ Subcommittee on Human Rights

- TRILOGUE SUR L'INSTRUMENT FINANCIER EUROPÉEN POUR LA PROMOTION DE LA DEMOCRATIE ET DES DROITS DE L'HOMME DANS LE MONDE
October, 11, 2006

◆ Subcommittee on security and defence

- October, 9, 2006

◆ Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

- October, 23, 2006

◆ Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- October, 26, 2006

CONFERENCES / EVENTS

◆ Subcommittee on Human Rights

- CONFERENCE ON SERIOUS INTERNATIONAL CRIME
November, 20, 2006

REGIONS:

AFRICA

AMERICAS

ASIA

♦ **Burma/Myanmar**

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on detentions in Burma/Myanmar (05/10/06)

The EU notes with deep concern that former student leaders Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi and Htay Kywe, detained by the Burmese/Myanmar authorities on the 18th anniversary of the National League for Democracy (NLD) last week, have still not been released. The detention of two further activists, Min Zeya and Pyone Cho, on September 30 has given rise to further concern.

The European Union appreciates the aspirations of different civil society actors who try to promote peaceful reconciliation and transition to democracy in Burma/Myanmar. Dialogue between various representatives of the society in Burma/Myanmar, like in any other country, is indispensable for the development of the country.

The EU reiterates that a genuine process of democratization can only be achieved by a dialogue between the government and all other political and civil society forces. The EU therefore calls upon the government of Burma/Myanmar to release the detained individuals immediately.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.ASP?lang=en>

♦ **Thailand**

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation in Thailand (28/06/06)

Further to the EU Presidency statement of 20 September 2006, the European Union attaches great importance to Thailand's speedy return to democracy and constitutional order, legitimised by free and democratic elections to be held as soon as possible.

Martial law should, without delay, give way to the rule of ordinary law with full respect for human rights and civil liberties.

The European Union has noted with great attention the military leadership's assurances that Thailand will continue to abide by the United Nations Charter and international treaties and agreements. The decisions and actions of the new military-appointed government will be evaluated by the European Union in the light of Thailand's international obligations, **inter alia in the area of human rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, as well as the military leadership's specific assurances to this respect as mentioned above.**

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=73&LANG=1&cmsid=359

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

◆ Iran

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on freedom of the press in Iran (05/10/06)

The European Union expresses its grave concern about **the worsening situation with regard to the freedom of the press in Iran**. On 11 September, the Supervisory Board of the Press announced the closure of four newspapers, including the leading reformist daily, the Shargh.

This announcement is especially alarming given the already limited freedom of the press in Iran. In addition, the European Union finds the continued harassment of journalists, such as threats of prosecution, extremely worrying.

The European Union calls on the Iranian authorities to comply with their obligations to respect the freedom of the press and to allow Iranian journalists to practice their profession without harassment or intimidation.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/latest.ASP?lang=1&cmsid=363

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

◆ USA/EU

- ▶ Joint press release: Agreement with the United States on the continued use of passenger name record (PNR) data (06/10/06)

The EU and the United States completed negotiations today on an interim Agreement on the processing and transfer of passenger name record (PNR) data by air carriers to the US Administration. The interim Agreement, which will be submitted for approval by the EU Council as soon as possible, provides legal certainty by replacing the Agreement of May 2004 between the European Community and the US, following the Court of Justice of the European Communities judgment of 30 May 2006 (see below). The EU welcomes the new Agreement **which will help to prevent and combat terrorism and serious transnational crime, whilst ensuring an equivalent level of protection of passengers' personal data in line with European standards on fundamental rights and privacy**. The interim agreement enables PNR data in the

reservation systems of air carriers to continue to be transferred to the US in the same way as under the previous Agreement. The US Administration may access electronically PNR data from air carriers' reservation/departure control systems located within the territory of the EU Member States, in accordance with specific undertakings. This system will be replaced in due course by one under which airlines in the EU will send the required data to the US. Under the interim Agreement, the EU will ensure that air carriers operating passenger flights in foreign air transportation to or from the US process PNR data contained in their automated reservation systems as required by the US Administration. The US Administration will continue to process PNR data received and treat data subjects concerned by such processing in accordance with undertakings given in 2004. The Agreement will apply provisionally as of the date of signature. It will expire upon the date of application of any superseding agreement and in any event, no later than 31 July 2007, unless extended by mutual written agreement.

Background

In its judgment of 30 May 2006, the Court of Justice annulled Council Decision 2004/496/EC of 17 May 2004 on the approval by the European Community of the previous Agreement (on the processing and transfer of PNR data by air carriers to the US Administration), as well as Commission Decision 2004/535/EC of 14 May 2004 (the so-called Adequacy Decision), which was closely linked to it. **The Court annulled these Decisions on the grounds that they did not fall within the competence of the European Community; however, it did not rule that the Decisions infringed fundamental rights with regard to data protection.** In annulling the Decisions, the Court preserved the effects of the two Decisions, but only until 30 September 2006. In consequence, the EU denounced the Agreement and negotiated the new one with the US, which falls within the competence of the European Union, and not the European Community.

http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/press_releases/vko40/en_GB/1160125412438/

◆ EU/US

▶ EU-US seminar about anti-terrorism sanctions in Helsinki (26/09/06)

The representatives of the European Union and the United States will convene in Helsinki on 27-28 September to **discuss financial sanctions against terrorism**. The joint seminar will examine particularly the question of transparency and fairness in decision-making concerning the sanctions. The theme of the seminar is "Transparency and Fairness in Listing and De-listing". In addition to the EU member states and the United States, representatives from Norway and Switzerland have also been invited to the seminar.

The anti-terrorism sanctions are based on the UN Security Council resolutions. It is a question of so-called targeted sanctions which are directed against separately listed private individuals and entities. **The funds and assets of individuals or entities targeted by the financial sanctions are frozen.** In addition, handing over of funds and assets to the listed individuals or entities is forbidden. Since 2001, the financial sanctions have become established as an essential means of combating financing of terrorism in international anti-terrorism activities.

Finland has been emphasising the viewpoints associated with the legal rights of individuals when financial sanctions against persons and entities are being imposed. In recent times, the questions related to the issue of legal rights have arisen more and more strongly as a topic of international debate both within the EU and the UN. **The purpose of the Helsinki seminar is to examine the listing and de-listing criteria and procedures particularly from the point of view of the legal rights of an individual.**

http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/press_releases/vko39/en_GB/169231/

EU / UN REFORM

◆ EU/UN

- ▶ EU on the second session of the Human rights council: Working methods developing, but substantive results disappointing (09/10/06)

Concerning the second session of the Human Rights Council that took place in Geneva from 18 September to 6 October, the EU found the interactive dialogues with both the High Commissioner and Special Rapporteurs very positive. These open and very substantive dialogues helped to identify topical human rights challenges both in thematic as well as country-specific terms, and provide a good basis for the Council to develop new kind of working methods in the future.

However, the **EU was disappointed at the lack of substantive results at the second session.** Only a brief text was adopted, noting at general level the reports and dialogues with special rapporteurs. All other texts presented were postponed to when the Council meets next time, in other words 27 November. This was due to the amount of texts presented, including also many traditionally controversial initiatives from the old Human Rights Commission. The Council has a broad mandate that mentions prevention and cooperation, but also urgent human rights situations. On this basis, the EU was i.a. in the process of negotiating together with the African Group a text concerning the alarming human rights situation in Darfur, when the texts were all postponed. Also texts on cooperation with different countries, including Sri Lanka, had been prepared.

From the outset of the creation of the HRC, the **EU has aimed that this new body is equipped with the status, mandate and tools as well as the spirit to give human rights the central role foreseen by the UN Charter - and also the UN Summit that took place just a year ago.** To achieve these expectations, the HRC needs to get prepared to address human rights challenges in more substantive terms. However, the EU emphasizes the HRC is still an evolving body, its working methods not yet fully developed. The EU will play an active role, in cooperation with others, for the Council to achieve more tangible results in its future sessions.

http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko41/en_GB/1160381827294/

MISCELLANEOUS

◆ European Parliament

- ▶ 2006 Sakharov Prize - supporting Freedom of Thought around the world (26/09/2006)

Every year, the European Parliament awards the Sakharov Prize for "Freedom of Thought" to exceptional individuals or organisations fighting against oppression, intolerance and injustice. Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan and the UN are among former winners. The award is a visible means for Parliament to honour and support those who have put themselves at risk in the cause of liberty. Watch the website to see the latest on the nominees, selection and award of the 2006 prize.

The prize is named after Andrei Sakharov (1921-1989), one of the leading scientists who developed the hydrogen bomb for the Soviet Union, and who later became an outspoken critic of the nuclear arms race. In

1970 he founded a committee on human rights. His activities did not go unnoticed, in the Soviet Union he was jailed, while in the West he received the Nobel Peace prize in 1975.

The award founded in 1988 that bears his name is to recognise achievement in the following fields:

- **defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly the right to free expression**
- **safeguarding the right of minorities**
- **respect for international law**
- **development of democracy and implementation on the rule of law**

The prize is awarded to persons, associations or organisations irrespective of their nationality, place of residence or seat.

Why does the European Parliament support the prize?

The promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law is one of the most fundamental of the European Parliament's roles. It has a number of "tools" to help this aim, they include:

A Subcommittee on human rights to monitor the situation internationally. There is also a yearly report on the human rights situation in countries both inside and outside the European Union. The reports list breaches of human rights and make practical suggestions for improving matters.

During Parliament's monthly plenary sessions, Thursday afternoon is reserved for debates on human rights. In September MEPs debated Zimbabwe, North Korea and Sri Lanka. Parliament also adopted regular resolutions condemning governments that breach human rights - the latest being on China. Parliament can also decide to allocate EU money to projects promoting human rights or democracy.

Who selects the winner?

Every year Political Groups in the Parliament and MEPs nominate potential candidates. From this list, the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Development jointly select three "finalists". The chairpersons of the political groups (the "Conference of Presidents") then select a winner. The prize is formally awarded by the President of the Parliament during the December Plenary session, on or around 10 December, which is also the day on which the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948.

The winner receives a certificate and a cheque for €50,000. One of last year's winners, Hauwa Ibrahim, used the prize money to fund children's education in her native Nigeria.

(Please use the following link to know the list of nominees for the 2006 Sakharov prize)

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/focus_page/008-10518-254-09-37-901-20060911FCS10501-11-09-2006-2006/default_p001c002_en.htm

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/focus_page/008-10518-254-09-37-901-20060911FCS10501-11-09-2006-2006/default_en.htm