

SUMMARY

REGIONS:

AFRICA

DRC

- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the Joint communiqué issued by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Government of Rwanda on a common approach to ending the threat to the peace and stability of both countries and of the Great Lakes Region (12/11/2007)

Somalia

- ▶ EP resolution (15/11/2007)

AMERICAS

Colombia

- ▶ Council Conclusions on Colombia (19/11/2007)

ASIA

Iran

- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the imminent execution of Mohammed Reza Tork (14/11/2007)

Burma/Myanmar

- ▶ Council Conclusions on Burma/Myanmar (19/11/2007)
- ▶ Council adopts additional restrictive measures on Burma/Myanmar (19/11/2007)
- ▶ Remarks by EU Special Envoy for Burma/Myanmar Piero Fassino, after his meeting with UN SG Special Advisor, Ibrahim Gambari (19/11/2007)

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Russia

- ▶ EU-Russia relations after the Mafra Summit (14/11/2007)
- ▶ EU-Russia summit Resolution (15/11/2007)
- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Mission to the Russian Duma elections (16/11/2007)

Uzbekistan

- ▶ Uzbekistan: restrictive measures – 2828th economic and financial affairs council meeting (13/11/2007).

- ▶ Backing for EU engagement with Uzbekistan (15/11/2007)

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

EU / UN REFORM

MISCELLANEOUS

Moratorium on the use of the death penalty

- ▶ EU Presidency Statement on the adoption of the UNGA resolution on the moratorium on the use of the death penalty (15/07/2007)

Christian Communities

- ▶ EP Resolution (15/07/2007)

European Neighbourhood Policy

- ▶ EP report on ENP (15/07/2007)

IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

EU - THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

Committee on Development

- November, 28, 2007

Committee on Foreign Affairs

- November, 19,20,21, 2007

Subcommittee on Human Rights

- November, 26, 2007

Subcommittee on security and defence

- November, 21, 22, 2007

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs

- November 20, 21, 2007

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- November, 20, 21, 2007

Committee on budgetary control

- November, 20, 21, 2007

CONFERENCES / EVENTS

REGIONS:

AFRICA

DRC

- **EU Presidency Statement on the Joint communiqué issued by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Government of Rwanda on a common approach to ending the threat to the peace and stability of both countries and of the Great Lakes Region** (12/11/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union warmly welcomes the signature and publication in Nairobi during the night of 9-10 November 2007 of the «Joint communiqué issued by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Government of Rwanda on a common approach to ending the threat to the peace and stability of both countries and of the Great Lakes Region».

This joint communiqué, which in particular opens the prospect of finally putting an end to the presence of FDLR forces in the east of DRC, represents an important step towards solving the problems which continue to seriously affect the lives of the population and to endanger the future of relations between the countries of the region.

The Presidency of the European Union urges the two parties to implement in good faith and without delay the commitments they have given in the Nairobi joint communiqué.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071112deslacs.htm

Somalia

- **EP resolution** (15/11/2007)

In the light of the worsening situation in Somalia, Parliament **adopted a resolution urging an immediate ceasefire as well as enforcement of the longstanding UN arms embargo on the country.** The African Union's member states are pressed to provide peacekeeping troops, while the international community is urged to provide financial and logistical support for those troops.

At least 80 people have been killed in the recent fighting between the Union of Islamic Courts and allied Ethiopian and Transitional Federal Government (TFG) troops and at least 100,000 people have been displaced. The total number of displaced persons in Somalia is now over 850,000. About 38,000 children under the age of five among the rural population are estimated to be acutely malnourished and 10,000 are believed to be at risk of death.

Calls for immediate cessation of hostilities and of all foreign military intervention

Against this background, **Parliament's resolution "strongly condemns the serious violations of human rights committed by all parties to the conflict", calls for "the immediate cessation of hostilities", demands that "all warring factions refrain from indiscriminate attacks on civilians" and calls for "an independent panel to investigate war crimes and human rights violations".**

Parliament also warns that there is a clear risk of the Somalia conflict growing into a regional war affecting the entire Horn of Africa. **It calls on the international community "to step up and sustain diplomatic**

efforts to end the violence" and propose a mechanism to negotiate and monitor an immediate ceasefire. It also calls for "the cessation of all foreign military intervention in Somalia".

African states urged to provide full contingent of AU peacekeeping troops

While welcoming the efforts by the African Union to assemble a peacekeeping force, MEPs deplore the fact that so far only 1,600 soldiers out of the 8,000 promised have actually been deployed. The AU is asked to call on its member states to honour their commitments, while the EU is urged to provide political, financial and logistical support.

More generally, the international community, particularly the EU, is asked "to increase the provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and people in need".

Enforce the UN arms embargo

MEPs also urge "strict and renewed application and monitoring of the arms embargo against Somalia imposed by the UN in 1992, for which scant respect is paid" and call for "the violators of the Somalia arms embargo to start being held accountable".

In addition, they highlight the urgent need for journalists to be protected and condemn the Somali Government's systematic harassment of journalists. Lastly, says Parliament, the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon on 8 and 9 December 2007 should "give urgent consideration to the grave situation prevailing in Somalia".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-13079-316-11-46-902-20071114IPR13078-12-11-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

AMERICAS

Colombia

► **Council Conclusions on Colombia** (19/11/2007)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1 The Council recalls and reaffirms the EU Conclusions of 3 October 2005, expresses EU's total solidarity with Colombian people, its full support for the Colombian Government in its search for a negotiated solution to the internal armed conflict, and underlines the importance the EU attaches to the ongoing implementation of the Justice and Peace Law (JPL) and its related legal framework and the development of the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process under the JPL.
- 2 The Council reconfirms the readiness of the EU and its Member States to assist the Colombian Government, state institutions, civil society and international organisations in providing support for activities that promote peace, truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation and in providing support for activities that advance DDR processes.
3. The Council welcomes the steps that have been taken by the Colombian government and Colombian authorities to implement the JPL in a transparent and effective manner, the work of the National Reconciliation and Reparation Commission and the role played by the Constitutional Court. It also welcomes the appointment and the work of the High Commissioner for the Social and Economic Integration of Armed Individuals and Groups

4. While recognising what has been achieved, the Council also takes note that the implementation of the JPL is far from complete. It urges the Colombian government to support and resource the quick and efficient implementation of all aspects of the JPL - including by providing adequate staffing to the Justice and Peace Law unit within the Office of the Attorney General - in a manner that gives priority to victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation.
5. The Council welcomes the ongoing efforts of the Colombian government to improve the human rights situation in Colombia, including the drafting of the National Action Plan on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. It commends the work of the UNHCHR Office in Colombia and calls on the Colombian government to implement its recommendations fully and quickly. In this context the Council takes note with satisfaction of the improved cooperation between the Colombian government and the UNHCHR Office. The Council firmly believes that the continuous interaction with and the full support for the UNHCHR Office by the Colombian government remain of vital importance for the peace process, as well as the dialogue between the UNHCHR and the civil society. In this context the Council also welcomes the prolongation of the mandate of the UNHCHR Office for another three years.
6. The Council has noted the additional means that have been made available by the Colombian government to protect human rights defenders, witnesses, journalists, trade unionists and other persons at risk. Nevertheless, attacks against such individuals continue. Therefore, the Council urges the Colombian Government to continue adopting concrete measures to protect those people at risk and to put an end to impunity. Protection of human rights defenders should be given special attention. Special attention should also be given to witness protection programmes, since their effectiveness is central in the search for peace and justice in Colombia.
7. The Council welcomes the improved dialogue between the Colombian government and civil society and commends the role of the G24 in facilitating this dialogue. In this context the Council looks forward to the III Conference on Colombia on co-operation, human rights and peace, to be held on 29-30 of November 2007 in Bogotá. The Council also welcomes the continuing engagement of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in accompanying the demobilisation / reintegration of paramilitary groups in Colombia, to the funding of which EU members states are contributing.
8. The Council takes note with satisfaction of the steps that are being taken, including by the Colombian Supreme Court and the "Fiscalía", to independently investigate, expose and punish politicians and public servants with links to the paramilitary groups and to those involved in the illegal drugs business.
9. The Council confirms the readiness of the European Union to work with the Colombian Government in the fight against drugs and illegal narco trafficking, which remains a significant driver of the conflict, and exacerbates the difficult human rights situation in Colombia.
10. The Council strongly condemns the violations of International Humanitarian Law that continue to be committed by the illegal armed groups. In this context it demands that they stop kidnapping and all other acts of terrorism or violence against the civilian population forthwith. The Council reaffirms the EU's solidarity with the Colombian government, the Colombian people and all victims of those acts. It also reiterates its firm demand that the illegal armed groups stop kidnappings and release all detained hostages immediately and unconditionally, and cease all hostilities.
11. The Council encourages the Colombian government's determination to improve the armed forces' respect for human rights and welcomes the progress which has been made in this respect.

However, it notes with real concern the persisting problem of human rights violations by some members of the security forces, including extra-judicial killings.

12. The Council is concerned by the emergence of new paramilitary and other armed criminal groups. It takes note of the efforts already taken by the authorities to fight these emerging groups and calls on the Colombian government to increase its ongoing efforts and step up the measures it is taking to fight these groups.
13. Whilst welcoming the government's efforts to alleviate the plight of Colombia's large number of internally displaced persons, the Council calls on the Colombian authorities to reinforce these efforts, i.a. through the speedy implementation of relevant recommendations by the Constitutional Court.
14. The Council hopes that progress will be made in taking forward negotiations between the Colombian government and illegal armed groups, in order to reach a humanitarian agreement, and secure the release of all hostages, to overcome the armed conflict and bring lasting peace to Colombia. In the same spirit, the European Union welcomes all initiatives taken with the Colombian government's support with the objective of promoting a successful peace process. The EU follows with interest the efforts undertaken by the Colombian Government, namely with the collaboration of the President of Venezuela and supports the work of all those committed to the application of international humanitarian law in Colombia.
15. The Council strongly welcomes the fact that the 28 October local and regional elections further strengthened democracy in Colombia. It agrees with the OAS Observer Mission's opinion that most of these elections were held in an essentially free, democratic and transparent environment. The Council condemns all those who tried to disrupt the proper electoral process through murder, kidnapping, threats and vote buying, and urges that those responsible be brought to justice. The Council calls on all those elected to use their offices to further strengthen Colombia's democratic path, as part of wider efforts to deliver enduring peace and prosperity to the Colombian people. "

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BIID=71&LANG=1&cmsid=349

ASIA

Iran

- **EU Presidency Statement on the imminent execution of Mohammed Reza Tork**
(14/11/2007)

The EU Presidency is deeply concerned by the news of the imminent execution of Mohammad Reza Tork, who was sentenced to death by a judge of the Hamadan Court for a crime allegedly committed when he was 16 years old.

The EU Presidency recalls the Islamic Republic of Iran's international commitments, specifically the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both clearly prohibiting the execution of minors or people who have been convicted of crimes committed while they were minors.

The EU Presidency reiterates its longstanding position against the death penalty in all circumstances and 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.

The EU Presidency urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to halt the sentence on Mr Tork and to have the case reviewed by the appropriate instances in compliance with the Islamic Republic of Iran's international obligations.

The EU Presidency also appeals to the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure that the new law under consideration is approved by the Majlis and the Judiciary and that it should clearly excludes the application of death penalty sentences to minors or juvenile offenders.

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071114PESC1.htm

Burma/Myanmar

► Council Conclusions on Burma/Myanmar (19/11/2007)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The European Union remains concerned by the situation in Burma/Myanmar and reiterates its call on the government to take substantive steps to address the concerns of its people and the international community. **The Council underlines its call for an end to the continuing arrests, the release of those detained in recent protests and all other political prisoners, as well as the early launch of a credible, comprehensive and inclusive process of national reconciliation.**

2. The EU reaffirms its strong support for the UN efforts to bring about positive change in Burma/Myanmar. The EU welcomes the visit of the UNSG's envoy, Mr Ibrahim Gambari there, from 3 to 8 November 2007. The EU looks forward to Mr Gambari's return and reiterates its call on the government of Burma/Myanmar to afford him all possible assistance, access and freedom of action in order to carry out his mandate.

3. The Council welcomes the recent visit of UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar, Mr Sergio Pinheiro, from 11 to 15 November, and looks forward to his report to the December session of the Human Rights Council.

4. The Council welcomes the appointment of Mr Piero Fassino as EU Special Envoy for Burma to support the UN's good offices mission. This appointment underlines the importance that the EU attaches to development, democratic change, reconciliation and the improvement of the human rights situation in Burma/Myanmar.

5. The Council welcomes Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's constructive statement relayed through Mr Gambari, and urges the government of Burma/Myanmar to seize this opportunity to enter into a meaningful dialogue leading to stability, prosperity and democracy for Burma/Myanmar. The EU calls for all restrictions on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to be lifted so that she can play a full part in the process of national reconciliation.

6. The EU welcomes the efforts by ASEAN and the neighbours of Burma/Myanmar to influence the Burmese authorities, and encourages its partners in ASEAN and the region to use every opportunity, including the 11th ASEAN Summit and the East Asia Summit, to maintain the pressure for a credible and inclusive process of national reconciliation. The EU will use the occasion of the upcoming EU-ASEAN commemorative Summit to discuss the situation in Burma/Myanmar.

7. The Council notes today's adoption of the Common Position implementing restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar. Recalling the Council Conclusions of 15 October 2007, the Council also notes that relevant bodies are taking forward work to elaborate further restrictive measures.

8. The EU again expresses its readiness to assist Burma/Myanmar in a process of transition. The EU regrets that the Burmese government has made this impossible so far. The EU is planning, with international partners, to increase humanitarian support to the Burmese people. The EU stands ready to review the restrictive measures, to engage with Burma/Myanmar in its development and to find new areas of cooperation, should the situation improve."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=71&LANG=1&cmsid=349

Burma/Myanmar

► Council adopts additional restrictive measures on Burma/Myanmar (19/11/2007)

The Council adopted today a common position amending common position 2006/318/CFSP renewing restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar in view of the seriousness of the current situation in the country (14443/07). This follows a political agreement by the Council on 15 October.

The common position is aimed at :

reinforcing existing measures in respect of Burma/Myanmar by extending and updating the list of persons subject to a travel ban and a freezing of assets. The scope of the investment ban on Burmese State-owned enterprises is also extended by including enterprises that are owned or controlled by the regime or by persons or entities associated with the regime.

introducing additional restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar by targeting the sources of revenue of the regime, including in sectors where human rights abuses are common. To that end, it prohibits the export from the member states to Burma/Myanmar of relevant equipment and technology destined for enterprises engaged in the industries of logging, timber, and mining of metals and minerals, precious or semi-precious stones, as well as related technical and financial assistance. It also prohibits the import into the Community of round logs, timber and timber products, metals and minerals, as well as precious and semi-precious stones. Moreover, new investments in enterprises in Burma/Myanmar that are engaged in these industries are also prohibited.

Last October the Council strongly condemned the brutal repression perpetrated by Burmese authorities against peaceful protestors and the continuing serious violations of human rights in Burma/Myanmar.

The Council adopted common position 2006/318/CFSP renewing restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar in April 2006. These measures confirmed and updated previous measures, the first of which were adopted in 1996.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsRoom/loadBook.asp?BID=71&LANG=1&cmsid=349

Burma/Myanmar

► **Remarks by EU Special Envoy for Burma/Myanmar Piero Fassino, after his meeting with UN SG Special Advisor, Ibrahim Gambari**(19/11/2007)

EU Special Envoy for Myanmar, Mr Piero Fassino, accompanied by the Ambassador of EU Presidency and the Head of EU Liaison Office to the UN, met with the UNSG Special Advisor, Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, in New York on 16 November. After the meeting Mr Fassino made the following remarks:

"The EU strongly supports efforts and actions of the United Nations, the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his Special Advisor, Ibrahim Gambari, to bring about positive change in Burma/Myanmar. The EU wants to contribute to this process. I express the appreciation for the first outcomes reached by Mr Gambari during his missions in Myanmar/Burma. The only possible way to improve the situation in Burma/Myanmar is the dialogue between all parties. The declaration of Aung San Suu Kyi is a great opportunity and we wish that the Government of Burma/Myanmar will not miss it. We call upon the Burmese authorities to lift all restrictions on Aung San Suu Kyi and enter into a real dialogue leading to national reconciliation.

We also demand the release of all political detainees, the respect for civilian and human rights of the Burmese people, as asked by Mr Pinheiro, UN Special Rapporteur.

This is a responsibility of the whole international community to back up and support the dialogue and reconciliation process in Burma/Myanmar. And for this the EU appreciate the efforts by the ASEAN and other Asian countries and hopes that the UE-ASEAN Summit in Singapore will be an occasion to reinforce European-Asian cooperation and identify the common action in support of the national reconciliation in Myanmar/Burma.

The European Union is ready to contribute to the actions of the international community, also through supporting the democratic transition with economic, social and humanitarian aid. Mr Gambari and I agreed to continue close contacts. I reiterated that I would work to provide support to the UN efforts led by Mr Ibrahim Gambari."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?lang=EN&cmsid=358

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Russia

► **EU-Russia relations after the Mafra Summit** (14/11/2007)

In adopting a joint resolution on the EU Russia Summit of 26 October, MEPs call on the Russian Government to create together with the European Union the necessary condition for a rapid start to the negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia.

The House stresses the importance of unity and solidarity among the EU Member States in their relations with Russia. The European Parliament stresses once more, in this connection, that democracy and human rights must be at the core of any future agreement with the Russian Federation.

WTO

The European Parliament welcomes the progress made at the Summit as regards Russia's accession to the WTO. The House calls on Russia to take the necessary steps to remove the remaining obstacles to the accession process.

MEPs emphasise, that the current situation in Russia gives rise to serious concern in terms of respect for human rights, democracy, freedom of expression and the rights of civil society and individuals to challenge

authorities and hold them accountable for their actions. The EP is extremely worried about the lack of any substantive response by the Russian authorities to the numerous expressions of this concern. MEPs stress that the implementation of the current NGO law has had a negative impact on the work of many NGOs.

Human rights

MEPs call for a stepping-up of the EU-Russia human rights dialogue and for this process to be opened up to effective input from the European Parliament, the State Duma and civil society and human rights organisations. The House calls for the situation of minorities within Russia to be included on the agenda of the human rights dialogue. The House calls on Russia to respect fully its obligations as a member of the Council of Europe, including respecting the right of association and the right to peaceful demonstration.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-12912-316-11-46-903-20071109IPR12793-12-11-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

Russia

► EU-Russia summit Resolution (15/11/2007)

EU-Russia summit resolution: MEPs call for free elections

MEPs adopted a resolution on relations with Russia that notes concern about human rights, democracy and freedom of expression in the country. It came following the EU-Russia Summit in October. Other areas of concern voiced in the resolution include freedom of expression and the rights of civil society and individuals to challenge the authorities.

MEPs also called on the country's leaders to ensure free and fair elections for the Duma and the Presidency. The resolution also welcomed Russia's bid to join the WTO and initiatives towards visa-free travel between the EU and Russia. It also called on Russia to cooperate on international issues such as Kosovo and Iran.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/008-12845-316-11-46-901-20071109STO12837-2007-12-11-2007/default_en.htm

Russia

► EU Presidency Statement on the OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Mission to the Russian Duma elections (16/11/2007)

The EU Presidency regrets that, due to unprecedented restrictions and a number of bureaucratic obstacles, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is unable to act upon the invitation issued by the Russian Federation to observe the 2 December elections to the Russian State Duma.

The Presidency reiterates its full support to the election observation activities of the ODIHR and the efforts undertaken to ensure the deployment of an election observation mission

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071116DECLARACAOPESCru ssia.htm

Uzbekistan

- **Uzbekistan: restrictive measures – 2828th economic and financial affairs council meeting (13/11/2007)**

The Council adopted a Common Position concerning restrictive measures against Uzbekistan (14104/07).

Following the political agreement reached by the Council on 15 October, the Common Position renews for a period of 12 months the arms embargo and the visa ban for individuals who are directly responsible for the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force in Andijan in May 2005 and the obstruction of an independent inquiry. With a view to encouraging the Uzbek authorities to take positive steps to improve the human rights situation and taking into account the commitments of the Uzbek authorities, the visa ban will not apply for a period of six months.

Before the end of this period the Council will review whether the Uzbek authorities have made progress towards meeting a set of objectives, including the implementation of international obligations relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as rule of law. The Council called on the Uzbek authorities, in particular, to allow full unimpeded access by relevant international bodies to prisoners; to engage effectively with the UN special rapporteurs to Uzbekistan; to let all NGOs operate without constraints in Uzbekistan; to release human rights defenders from detention and cease their harassment; to engage positively on human rights issues in the context of the forthcoming EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Committee and to pursue reforms of the judiciary, law enforcement and police law.

Progress towards these goals will be evaluated on the basis of a report by the UE Heads of Missions in Tashkent, which will include an assessment of the upcoming Presidential elections.

In November 2005, the Council adopted Common Position 2005/792/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Uzbekistan in response to the excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Uzbek security forces during the events in Andijan in May 2005. Certain restrictive measures were renewed a year later by Common Position 2006/787/CFSP. On 14 May 2007, the Council extended the restrictions on admission for 8 individuals for six months (Common Position 2007/338/CFSP).

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ecofin/97067.pdf

Uzbekistan

- **Backing for EU engagement with Uzbekistan (15/11/2007)**

MEPs rejected a draft resolution by the PES, ALDE, Greens/EFA and EUL/NGL groups severely criticising the Uzbekistan government and also taking the Council of the EU to task for suspending some of the visa restrictions on the regime. Instead they approved, by 39 votes to 27, a resolution by the EPP-ED and UEN groups endorsing the Council's approach.

The background is that the External Relations Council, at its meeting of 15 and 16 October 2007, renewed for a 12-month period the EU arms embargo on Uzbekistan and certain visa restrictions for individuals. However, the Council lifted for six months a separate visa ban on Uzbek officials "to encourage the Uzbek authorities to take further positive steps to improve the human rights situation".

In the resolution adopted today, Parliament first of all "reaffirms its serious concerns about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan". It "reiterates the importance of EU-Uzbekistan relations and acknowledges Uzbekistan's crucial role in the Central Asia region but stresses that those relations must be based on

mutual respect for the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as is clearly laid down in the EU-Uzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement".

However, it goes on to say that "the policy of targeted sanctions has not produced positive results so far" and "considers it, therefore, justifiable to encourage the Uzbek authorities by lifting for six months the visa ban on Uzbek officials as set out in the annex to Council Common Position 2007/338/CFSP". It invites the European Council "to monitor and clearly evaluate after six months the effects of this measure on EU-Uzbekistan relations".

More broadly, the resolution "welcomes the general progress in EU-Uzbekistan relations which has taken place in the course of 2007" and "notes in particular the willingness shown by the Uzbek authorities to engage in dialogue with the EU by holding two rounds of experts' talks on the events in Andijan, as well as the first round of the human rights dialogue between the EU and Uzbekistan".

Lastly, the Uzbek authorities are urged to make further progress in the area of human rights. In particular they are asked "to implement fully their international commitments to fundamental freedoms, freedom of the press and media, and the rule of law", to reconsider the Ministry of Justice's refusal to recognise the Human Rights Watch office and to release fifteen Uzbek human rights defenders.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-13079-316-11-46-902-20071114IPR13078-12-11-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

EU / UN REFORM

MISCELLANEOUS

Moratorium on the use of the death penalty

- **EU Presidency Statement on the adoption of the UNGA resolution on the moratorium on the use of the death penalty (15/07/2007)**

The EU Presidency warmly welcomes today's adoption of a UNGA resolution calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty. This resolution was tabled by cross-regional group led by Albania, Angola, Brazil, Croatia, Gabon, México, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal on behalf of the European Union, Timor Leste, with 87 co-sponsors.

This is a historical moment: it is the first time that a resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty is approved by the Third Committee of the General Assembly and it is the result of a comprehensive and in-depth consultation process with all UN Member States by a cross-regional group of States.

The EU Presidency believes that this cross regional initiative has started a process of dialogue and engagement at the level of the General Assembly on an issue of fundamental importance for the enhancement and progressive development of human rights which is the issue of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty. The European Union has in this respect a long standing position on the question of the death penalty. It has been a pleasure and an honour for the European Union to work in a truly cross-regional group on this initiative, which we believe is a landmark in the promotion and protection of human rights

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/Declaracoes_PESC/20071115DeclaraPESC.htm

Christian Communities

- **EP Resolution (15/07/2007)**

Threats to Christian and other religious communities around the world

In a resolution on threats to Christian and other religious communities, MEPs voice serious concern at the persecution of religious believers in numerous places around the world.

Parliament is especially worried about the proliferation of episodes of intolerance and repression directed against Christian communities, particularly in the countries of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. It lists many cases in detail, in countries and territories such as Iraq, Pakistan, Gaza, Egypt, Turkey, the Philippines, Sudan, China and Vietnam.

The resolution "strongly condemns all acts of violence against Christian communities, wherever they happen, and urges the governments concerned to bring to justice the perpetrators of these crimes". It also condemns "all kinds of discrimination and intolerance based on religion and belief and acts of violence against all religious communities" and urges the countries concerned "to ensure that their constitutional and legislative systems provide adequate and effective guarantees of freedom of religion or belief".

In particular, Parliament wants the governments of these countries "to improve the security situation of the Christian communities" and stresses that "the public authorities have a duty to protect all religious communities, including Christian communities, from discrimination and repression".

EU action

The resolution calls on the Commission and the Council to raise the subject of the situation of the Christian communities in the framework of the political dialogue with the countries where they are threatened, and when drafting and implementing development cooperation and aid programmes with those countries. MEPs also urge the European Union and the Member States to earmark more funds for the activities of the UNHCR and for humanitarian aid managed by that organisation.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-13079-316-11-46-902-20071114IPR13078-12-11-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

European Neighbourhood Policy

► **EP report on ENP** (15/07/2007)

The European Parliament adopted a report in plenary today assessing the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The House noted that although some common threads such as visa facilitation and the encouragement of civil society and people-to-people contacts existed, the Eastern, potentially candidate, countries and the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood countries needed to be dealt with in quite different ways.

The report "expresses doubt about the meaningfulness of the ENP's geographic scope, as it involves countries which geographically are European together with Mediterranean non-European countries." For this reason, it advocates that "the unified implementation of the policy take as much account as possible of the differing identities of all the countries covered by the ENP." The report was drafted by two rapporteurs, with Charles **Tannock** (EPP-ED, Conservative, London, UK) dealing with Eastern European Neighbourhood, and Raimon **Obiols i Germa** (PES, ES) responsible for the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood.

Speaking in the debate on 14 November in Strasbourg, Mr Tannock said: "It is self-evident that everybody needs good neighbours. In an uncertain and ever-changing world, the EU needs to develop good and enhanced relationships with countries on its periphery that are based on security, stability and mutual benefit to all. So far the European Neighbourhood Policy is proving to be a valuable tool in this process, in creating a ring of friends aimed at improved trade, travel and political cooperation, particularly against

terrorism and people trafficking. But, of course, of utmost importance are the shared values and in particular reinforcing democracy, the rule of law and human rights as our main priority.

Eastern European Neighbourhood

On the former, the report notes that "democratic neighbours who are clearly identifiable as European countries and who respect the rule of law may in principle [...] apply for membership of the Union." It believes that the gradual integration of the EU's Eastern neighbours into the European Energy Community should be pursued, and also suggests the setting-up of an "EU-Neighbourhood-East Parliamentary Assembly (EURO-NEST)" to strengthen parliamentary cooperation. The report also underlines the need for stronger EU involvement in the resolution of so-called frozen conflicts, and condemns the continued human rights violations and the use of the death penalty in Belarus.

Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood

On the latter, the committee says human rights clauses' implementation mechanisms need to be included in the next-generation accords that will be signed between the EU and countries in the region, and regrets that so far, no substantial progress has been made in terms of democracy or human rights since the beginning of the European-Mediterranean Partnership. The report also notes that any new initiatives for the region need to involve a relaunch of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), with a serious look at its difficulties of the past few years.

General framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy

For both regions, the Parliament stresses that "conditionality can constitute an appropriate incentive for acceleration of reform processes in the ENP countries towards their convergence with the EU if conceived positively, and differentiated according to the country's specific needs and capacities." MEPs also underline that "respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms is the core principle of EU policy," and say that civil society and a free media must be supported everywhere, "regardless of the degree of willingness of partner countries' governments to cooperate and to share in these values."

Members welcome the longer-term aim of establishing a neighbourhood-wide free trade area and advocate that visa facilitation and readmission agreements be negotiated with all ENP countries. The report emphasises the importance of people-to-people contacts, for instance, by involving ENP countries in the Erasmus Mundus student exchange programme and by encouraging the Commission to set up city and region-twinning programmes.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-13069-316-11-46-903-20071114IPR13068-12-11-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm