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#### **Committee on budgetary control**

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### **CONFERENCES / EVENTS**

**REGIONS:**

**AFRICA**

**Libya**

- ▶ **Statement by Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner on Libyan Court verdict on the Benghazi case (19/12/06)**

Today the Libyan Criminal Court has confirmed the death sentence on the Bulgarian and Palestinian medical personnel involved in the Benghazi case. European Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, gave this reaction:

*"We simply can not accept this verdict and trust that the matter will now be referred to a higher authority. I firmly hope that clemency will be granted to the medical staff, in the same spirit of mutual respect and humanitarian compassion which characterised the intense discussions held between the European Union and other partners with the families of the Benghazi children."*

The Supreme Court cancelled a first death sentence verdict on 25 December 2005 and reopened the case.

The Commission has also been closely following and working with the Libyan authorities on the Benghazi AIDS tragedy, where more than 400 children and mothers have been infected with HIV/AIDS. In November 2004 the EU launched the "HIV Action Plan for Benghazi", which includes technical and medical assistance for the Benghazi Centre for Infectious Diseases and Immunology (BCIDI); helping the social integration of patients and their families; and assisting the Libyan Authorities in designing a national AIDS programme. Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner said on this matter: *"We continue our work to upgrade the quality of care for the infected children and will spare no efforts to bring them back to a normal life. This started 2 years ago with great success through the HIV Action Plan for Benghazi and will continue through the Benghazi International Fund, now supported by many governments as well as public and corporate sponsors."*

Work under this action plan, implemented by the Libyan authorities with support from the Commission and EU Member States, is well on its way and the Commission has already provided €2 million from the Community budget. Several EU Member States are preparing to contribute to the EU Action Plan for Benghazi.

Five Bulgarian nurses (Kristiana Vulcheva, Nasya Nenova, Valentina Siropulo, Valya Cherveniyashka, Snezhana Dimitrova) and one Palestinian medic (Ashraf Al Hagoug) have been in prison in Libya since the outbreak of HIV/AIDS at the Benghazi hospital in 1999. The EU has repeatedly expressed serious reservations about the basis on which they were prosecuted and tried, their treatment in prison, and delays to the legal process. The EU has repeatedly urged the Libyan authorities to ensure a fair trial.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1836&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

**AMERICAS**

**Iran**

► **UN: EU statement on situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran** (20/12/06)

United Nations, General Assembly, 61st Session; Agenda Item 67(c): Human rights situations;  
Statement in accordance with rule 74 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, against the motion to adjourn the debate on the Third Committee resolution "Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran"

Mr. Janne Jokinen, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, on behalf of the European Union  
New York, December 19, 2006

Madam President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Madam President,

There should be no question about the United Nations General Assembly's mandate to look into human rights situations to promote and encourage respect for human rights, one of the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations Charter. United Nations General Assembly has passed resolutions expressing its concern about the worst human rights situations for decades.

The call of a motion now to adjourn debate represents an attempt to prevent the consideration of a resolution on procedural grounds. The calling of such a motion aims at denying the Members States of the United Nations their sovereign right to bring before the General Assembly any concern that they themselves deem to merit its attention, and limiting the agenda of the General Assembly.

Further, the Third Committee already voted upon the same motion and decided not to adopt it. Accordingly, the Third Committee has already considered - on its merits - the resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and deemed it worthy of adoption. A No Action Motion on this resolution in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly is therefore a vote of no confidence in the Third Committee. It undermines that body.

Madame President,

**It is an important matter of principle for the European Union to vote against any motion to close the debate on an item under discussion, even more so in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly. The calling of this motion is clearly aimed at preventing the United Nations from dealing with the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. No country – large or small – can be regarded as being beyond or above consideration by international human rights fora. This would run counter to the principles of universality and interdependence of all human rights.**

**The Third Committee of the General Assembly already addressed the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on the gravity of the situation on the ground. By choosing not to**

**address the situation, we would show callous disregard for the very people whose human rights and fundamental freedoms we have committed ourselves to protecting.**

Madame President,

If successful, this motion to adjourn the debate would prevent us from even considering the issues covered in the resolution and already adopted by the Third Committee. This runs not only contrary to the good practice of the General Assembly but also to the spirit of dialogue to which we are all attached. The General Assembly would undermine its own credibility if it remained silent on grave and widespread violations of human rights in situations where the country concerned refuses to cooperate in any meaningful manner with the United Nations human rights system.

The EU strongly urges delegations to vote against this motion to adjourn the debate for reasons of principle, regardless of their voting intentions on the draft resolution on the Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Thank you, Madam President.

[http://eu2006.fi/news\\_and\\_documents/other\\_documents/vko51/en\\_GB/1166630171394/](http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko51/en_GB/1166630171394/)

## EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

### Azerbaijan

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation of the freedom of the media in Azerbaijan (20/12/06)**

The European Union has noted with concern the recent developments affecting the freedom of media in Azerbaijan. Numerous cases of harassment, arbitrary detentions, court cases and violence against independent journalists as well as opposition figures in Azerbaijan have been reported. The EU is also concerned about the reported pressure against entire media outlets.

The EU attaches great importance to the principle of the freedom of the media, which represents a constituent element of democracy. It calls upon the government of Azerbaijan to create an environment where the media can work freely, effectively and without fear.

The EU underlines that the measures to limit the freedom of the media in Azerbaijan run contrary to the spirit and purpose of the recently adopted ENP Action Plan and of the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, as regards human rights and fundamental freedoms and the specific commitments made by Azerbaijan therein. The EU also stresses that those measures are not in line with international obligations undertaken by Azerbaijan in the context of its membership of, inter alia, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

The EU acknowledges the decision of the National Television and Radio Council to allow ANS TV and radio to resume broadcasting, pending resolution of outstanding licensing issues, as a positive step. The EU underlines the importance of resolving outstanding regulatory issues so that a strong and independent media sector can flourish in Azerbaijan.

The EU will continue to keep the situation of the freedom of the media in Azerbaijan under close review.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/92281.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/92281.pdf)

### Belarus

- ▶ **UN: EU statement on situation of human rights in Belarus (20/12/06)**

United Nations, General Assembly, 61st Session; Agenda Item 67(c): Human rights situations;  
Statement in accordance with rule 74 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, against the  
motion to adjourn the debate on the Third Committee resolution "Situation of human rights in Belarus"

Mr. Janne Jokinen, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, on behalf of the  
European Union

New York, December 19, 2006

Madam President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Madam President,

There should be no question about the United Nations General Assembly's mandate to look into human rights situations to promote and encourage respect for human rights, one of the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations Charter. United Nations General Assembly has passed resolutions expressing its concern about the worst human rights situations for decades.

The call of a motion now to adjourn debate represents an attempt to prevent the consideration of a resolution on procedural grounds. The calling of such a motion aims at denying the Members States of the United Nations their sovereign right to bring before the General Assembly any concern that they themselves deem to merit its attention, and limiting the agenda of the General Assembly.

Further, the Third Committee already voted upon the same motion and decided not to adopt it. Accordingly, the Third Committee has already considered - on its merits - the resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus, and deemed it worthy of adoption. A No Action Motion on this resolution in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly is therefore a vote of no confidence in the Third Committee. It undermines that body.

Madame President,

**It is an important matter of principle for the European Union to vote against any motion to close the debate on an item under discussion, even more so in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly. The calling of this motion is clearly aimed at preventing the United Nations from dealing with the situation of human rights in Belarus. No country – large or small – can be regarded as being beyond or above consideration by international human rights fora. This would run counter to the principles of universality and interdependence of all human rights.**

**The Third Committee of the General Assembly already addressed the situation of human rights in Belarus, based on the gravity of the situation on the ground. By choosing not to address the situation, we would show callous disregard for the very people whose human rights and fundamental freedoms we have committed ourselves to protecting.**

Madame President,

If successful, this motion to adjourn the debate would prevent us from even considering the issues covered in the resolution and already adopted by the Third Committee. This runs not only contrary to the good practice of the General Assembly but also to the spirit of dialogue to which we are all attached. The General Assembly would undermine its own credibility if it remained silent on grave and widespread violations of human rights in situations where the country concerned refuses to cooperate in any meaningful manner with the United Nations human rights system.

The EU strongly urges delegations to vote against this motion to adjourn the debate for reasons of principle, regardless of their voting intentions on the draft resolution on the Situation of human rights in Belarus.

Thank you, Madam President.

[http://eu2006.fi/news\\_and\\_documents/other\\_documents/vko51/en\\_GB/1166630061391/](http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko51/en_GB/1166630061391/)

<b>MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST</b>
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**THEMATIC :**



## FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

### EU Council / European Parliament

- ▶ **Council adopts financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights**  
(19/12/06)

The Council today adopted a regulation establishing a financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide, with a total of EUR 1.1 billion for the 2007-13 period. (PE-CONS 3688 06). European Union financial assistance under the new instrument will include:

- Promotion and enhancement of democracy and the processes of democratisation, mainly through civil society organisations;
- The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as proclaimed by the universal declaration of human rights and other instruments, mainly through civil society organisations;
- The strengthening of the international framework for the protection of human rights, the rule of law and the promotion of democracy;
- Building confidence in and enhancing the reliability and transparency of democratic processes.

The promotion and protection of gender equality, the rights of the child, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of persons with disabilities and similar principles will be also taken into account by assistance measures whenever relevant.

**The instrument for democracy and human rights is part of a new framework aimed at making the EU's external assistance more effective for the 2007-13 financing period.**

The framework also includes:

- An instrument for pre-accession assistance to candidate countries and countries that are potential candidates for membership of the EU;
- A European neighbourhood and partnership instrument;
- An instrument for industrialised and other high-income countries and territories;
- An instrument for development cooperation.

In adopting the regulation, the Council accepted two amendments voted by the European Parliament in first reading, following an agreement between the two institutions under the co-decision procedure.

The regulation will enter force on 1 January 2007.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/92255.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/92255.pdf)

## JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

## EU / UN REFORM

## Finland's EU Presidency

### ► UN: Statement on abolition of death penalty (20/12/06)

United Nations, General Assembly, 61st Session, 81st Plenary Meeting: The Abolition of the Death Penalty Statement by H.E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations / New York, 19 December 2006

Madam President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Tuvalu, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vanuatu and Venezuela.

**The right of everyone to life was universally affirmed in article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed in other international instruments, such as in article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and articles 6 and 37 (a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Over the last decade, the Commission of Human Rights has adopted in all consecutive sessions a Resolution on the 'question of the death penalty', expressing deep concern at the continuing use of the death penalty around the world and calling upon States that still maintain the death penalty to abolish it completely and, in the meantime, to establish a moratorium on executions.**

Madam President, we firmly believe that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. The death penalty provides no added value in terms of deterrence. Any miscarriage or failure of justice is irreversible, when, in a cruel and inhumane way, the punishment deprives one of his or her right to life. The signatories of this statement are pleased to note that the trend towards the worldwide abolition of the death penalty continues and welcome the abolition of capital punishment in three States over the last year, together with positive developments towards its complete abolition in many other countries.

However, despite these developments, there is still cause for great alarm. The signatories of this statement remain deeply concerned about the resort to death penalty all over the world.

Madam President, the signatories of this statement commit themselves to work towards the abolition of the death penalty and, where the death penalty still exists, call for its use to be progressively restricted, insist that it be carried out according to minimum standards (ECOSOC resolution of 1984) and, in the meantime, call for the establishment of a moratorium on executions. The signatories call upon the General Assembly to be seized of this matter in the future.

Thank you, Madam President.

[http://eu2006.fi/news\\_and\\_documents/other\\_documents/vko51/en\\_GB/1166630395097/](http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko51/en_GB/1166630395097/)

Finland's EU Presidency

► **UN: EU general statement on the resolution on the report of the Human Rights Council (21/12/06)**

United Nations, General Assembly, 61st Session, 82nd Plenary Meeting; Agenda Item 68: Report of the Human Rights Council - International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, General Statement on the Resolution

H.E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland to the UN, on behalf of the EU  
New York, 20 December 2006

Madam President of the General Assembly,

Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Madam President,

The European Union welcomes the adoption by consensus of the "International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance" as one of the major achievements of the General Assembly this year. We would therefore like to thank all delegations for joining the consensus. The very high number of co-sponsors of the resolution through which the Convention was adopted by the 3rd Committee is very encouraging, in particular with a view to universal ratification of this new instrument.

For over 25 years, victims' families, non-governmental organizations, many governments and international organizations have undertaken continuous and unflagging efforts for the adoption by the United Nations of an international instrument against enforced disappearances in order to tackle this heinous and inhuman affliction. And finally, here we are!

Madam President,

The adoption of the Convention by the General Assembly is a significant step forward in the promotion and protection of human rights. The Convention recognizes the right not to be subjected to enforced disappearance, as well as the right of victims and their relatives to justice and reparation. Enforced disappearance is qualified as a crime both in peace and wartime, and no exceptional circumstances, whether a state of war, internal political instability or any public emergency, may be invoked as a justification for enforced disappearance. In the Convention, States Parties pledge to criminalize enforced disappearances and, accordingly, to try the perpetrators and masterminds.

Moreover, pursuant to this new instrument, States Parties undertake to prohibit secret detention and unofficial places of detention, as well as reaffirm their obligation to provide legal guarantees in cases of deprivation of liberty. Such legal commitments are key to prevent situations when a person could be relegated to total vulnerability at the hands of the perpetrators of the crime, deprived of all of his or her rights and placed outside the protection of the law.

The Convention also lays ground for an obligation on the part of States Parties to guarantee the victims' relatives the right to know the truth about the circumstances of an enforced disappearance and the fate of the disappeared person. By these means we can at least alleviate the torture caused by endless waiting and uncertainty about the return of one's beloved.

Madam President,

In our view, the adoption of the Convention by consensus fills a substantial gap in international human rights law, as well as reflects the strong political signal of the international community that this shameful and still widespread practice must come to an end. It also demonstrates the will of the international community to put a stop to impunity for this grave human rights violation. The European Union is fully convinced that the Convention will serve as a powerful tool to prevent enforced disappearances and torture, and to fight impunity for these crimes in the future.

In this regard, adoption of this instrument is not just a token of our achievement; it also denotes a new starting point: the next step is to ensure that the Convention comes into force as soon as possible. The European Union therefore calls on all Member States of the United Nations to consider signing this Convention during the signing ceremony to be held in Paris on 6 February 2007.

We thank you, Madam President.

[http://eu2006.fi/news\\_and\\_documents/other\\_documents/vko51/en\\_GB/1166688841415/](http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko51/en_GB/1166688841415/)

<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>
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