



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 8 November 2012

16006/12

**PE 498
COHOM 248**

NOTE

from:	General Secretariat of the Council
to:	Delegations
Subject:	Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) , held in Brussels on 05 November 2012

The meeting was chaired by Mr Kukan (EPP, SK) and Mr Grzyb (EPP, PL). The agenda was adopted as proposed. The minutes of the meeting of 17-18 September 2012 were also adopted.

Item 3 on the agenda

Election of 2nd Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee

The Chair explained that following the resignation of Ms Le Brun (EPP, FR) from the position of Vice president, political groups proposed Mr Roatta (EPP, FR) to replace her. Mr Roatta was elected by acclamation.

Item 4 on the agenda

Chair's announcements

The Chair explained that there were serious concerns over the situation of the two Iranian Sakharov prize laureates for 2012, Ms Nasrin Sotoudeh and Mr Jafar Panahi, and called for their immediate release. It was hoped they could collect the prize in person in Strasbourg in December. Ms Ingabire,

Rwandan political activist, also nominated for the Sakharov prize this year, had been sentenced to eight years in prison in a trial that fell short of international standards. The Chair recalled a recommendation to the Council, adopted by the EP, to establish a visa ban and assets freeze for Russian officials involved in the Magnitsky case.

Item 5 on the agenda

Human Rights aspects of the European Commission 2012 - Progress Reports (Enlargement package)

The Commission representative presented the recently adopted Enlargement package focusing on the human rights aspects. As an overall assessment he stressed that, although there was progress in this area, the level of protection of human rights remained a matter of concern. He observed in particular that whereas in the past the issue had been the introduction of an adequate legislative framework, current problems revolved around the implementation. He stressed that the protection of rights in practice and the improved enforcement of such rights would require significant additional funding. He highlighted some trends in individual countries concerning media freedom and the freedom of expression, which were of concern in several countries, as well as particular concerns with regard to Turkey. Regarding LGBT discrimination, he stressed that this was still widespread, and singled out Serbia in particular. He emphasised that the post-conflict situation of internally displaced persons and refugees in various Balkan countries remained unresolved, and referred in particular to the situation of the Roma minority. He also pointed out that the rule of law was clearly key to the reforms needed for progress towards EU membership. This had been developed as a new approach currently being tested in the negotiations with Montenegro, with *acquis* chapters on the rule of law and the judiciary being dealt with from the start. He briefly summarised the main conclusions for individual countries.

During the subsequent debate Mr Kukan, Chair of Delegation for relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, spoke about transitional justice and reconciliation efforts, the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons, serious economic problems and widespread corruption. In particular he raised the issue of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their lack of access to education, which encourages them to claim asylum in the

EU. Mr Van den Brande, Committee of Regions Rapporteur on Enlargement, discussed the importance of cooperation at the level of local/regional authorities. He asked the Commission for its opinion on the future revision of the Turkish constitution.

Representatives from the Embassies of FYROM, Serbia, BIH and Albania briefly took the floor.

The Commission representative agreed with Mr Kukan that asylum applications were indeed a problem that needed serious consideration, and pointed out that this had recently been discussed in the JHA Council. He also stressed that it was up to Turkey to adopt its new constitution; nevertheless, the process itself was extremely important and parameters had been clearly set.

Item 6 on the agenda

Review of the EU's human rights strategy

AFET/7/09293

Rapporteur: Rui Tavares (Verts/ALE) PR – PE487.734v01-00

Responsible: AFET –

Opinions: DEVE – Alf Svensson (PPE) PA – PE492.637v01-00

LIBE –

- Consideration of the draft report

The rapporteur thanked Mr Svensson for a very useful DEVE contribution. He stressed that the EU should be consistent regarding human rights and follow up more rigorously the implementation of Human Rights clauses in international agreements. He recognised that the issue of social responsibility of businesses was lacking in the report and said that he was still working on a possible compromise text. He saw the need for adequate information on the activities of EU businesses in order to monitor possible human rights violations. He also considered that the European Parliament needed to improve the effectiveness of its working methods, particularly regarding the follow-up to urgency resolutions. During the discussion Ms Gal (EPP, HU) said that

the EPP could agree with most amendments and agreed that overall more effectiveness was needed in this area. Mr Svensson highlighted the most important paragraphs in his report, i.e. a rights-based approach, policy coherence, human rights assessment and development, and the role of the Endowment for Democracy.

Item 7 on the agenda

Annual report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2011 and the European Union's policy on the matter

AFET/7/09999

Rapporteur: Leonidas Donskis (ALDE)

Responsible: AFET –

Opinions: FEMM – Mariya Gabriel (PPE)

The rapporteur explained that he was able to agree to the various amendments tabled and stressed that the report should be sharp and focused and avoid duplication and repetition. Ms De Keyser (S&D, BE) said that the EU should speak clearly on human rights with one voice and stressed that differences of opinion between Member States were clearly a weakness. She also spoke of the need to ensure proper follow-up to electoral observation missions and called for full use of Human Rights clauses in international trade agreements. She stressed that more emphasis should be given to the rights of women. Mr Kukan emphasised that such a report needed the widest possible support in the EP. Mr Grzyb expressed his dissatisfaction over the compromise text regarding the Bialatski incident and the role played by the Lithuanian and Polish authorities. The rapporteur concluded that the various contributions would strengthen his report.

Item 8 on the agenda

The impact of the financial and economic crisis on human rights

2012/2136(INI)

Rapporteur: Inese Vaidere (PPE)

Responsible: AFET –

Opinions: DEVE – Keith Taylor (Verts/ALE)

The rapporteur presented a working document and briefly outlined its main elements, which focused on education, vulnerable groups, poverty reduction, and access to electricity and water. The EEAS representative explained that its services were still examining the report but suggested, as a first reaction, that it might be useful to reflect on the way forward for the Millennium Development Goals, due to expire in 2015.

- Deadline for tabling amendments: 12 December 2012, 12.00

Item 10 on the agenda

Next meeting(s)

- 28 November 2012, 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
 - 29 November 2012, 09.00 – 12.30 (Brussels)
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