



The Wider Europe

The Socialist Group's Willy Brandt Programme Newsletter



Socialist Group in the
European Parliament

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Immediate release for the Bulgarian nurses in Libya

If you are not familiar with the names Snejana, Nasia, Kristina, Valentina, Valia, Ashraf, you soon will be. During the plenary session in Strasbourg this week, the two largest groups in the European Parliament, namely the PES and EPP-ED have launched a campaign with the aim of collecting MEPs signatures for the immediate release of the Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor illegally detained in Libya.

The case started back in 1999, when five Bulgarian nurses, together with Libyan and Palestinian doctors were arrested and accused of deliberately infecting people with HIV AIDS.

In 2004 the Libyan doctors were acquitted by the court in Benghazi whilst the Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor were condemned to death. In 2004 Amnesty International revealed that the Libyan authorities had obtained statements from the nurses by means of torture.

The 2004 sentences were announced amidst a number of reports released by renowned international experts, including Professor Luc Montagnier, claiming that the accused were innocent. Those scientific experts have excluded the possibility of deliberate contamination with HIV and stated so in court.

Moreover, some of the people were infected before the accused even began work in the hospital in question and many of the children in question were never treated in the health facilities where the accused worked. However, so far, the Libyan authorities have turned a blind eye.

In the light of these facts, Euro MPs are calling on all involved in this case in Libya to release the nurses immediately. All the collected signatures will be sent to the Libyan mission to the EU in Brussels.

Urgent need to speed up reform of women's rights in Turkey



Interview with Claude MORAES, MEP

"We need Europol to be a democratically accountable organisation with a degree of transparency".

"Read more further down.

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Anti-racism MEP brings fight to world cup.

Dutch Socialist Group MEP Emine Bozkurt attended the quarter-finals of the football World Cup on Friday, June 30, on the invitation of the German Foreign Affairs Minister, Frank Walter Steinmeier. Mr Steinmeier invited Ms Bozkurt because of her initiative in having the European Parliament adopt a resolution condemning racism in football.

Ms Bozkurt said: 'Racism in football is a crime, a crime with millions of witnesses. Football sends out strong signals to

Emine Bozkurt, Dutch Socialist member of the European Parliament, has called for 'an urgent speeding-up of women's rights legislation in Turkey.' She was speaking after a five day visit to the country, which is a candidate for EU membership.

Ms Bozkurt said: 'Last year in my first report to the European Parliament, I argued that whereas women's rights in Turkey were good on paper, implementing them in practice was a problem. Now I see that there are even attempts to roll back some of the reforms already achieved. The quicker laws are actually implemented in practice, the more difficult it will become to block or water down that legislation.'

During her visit to Istanbul and Ankara Ms Bozkurt spoke with, among others, the prime minister, the ministers of social affairs and the status of women and representatives of women's rights NGOs, trade unions and employers' organisations.

Ms Bozkurt is expected to present her second report to the European Parliament in the autumn of 2006. The report is being drawn up in the context of Turkey's bid to become a member of the EU. Apart from an update of the situation since last year's report, Ms Bozkurt will focus on women's participation in the Turkish labour market.

society. Therefore it is important that this problem is finally being tackled. Like any other worker, a football player has the right to a discrimination-free work environment.'

Apart from watching the quarter-finals together with other guests, Ms Bozkurt attended a FIFA presentation on their campaign 'Say no to racism' and associated activities taken against racism.

Other participants included: Ján Figel, EU commissioner for sports - Doudou Diène, UN Special Rapporteur on racism - René van der Linden, Chairperson, Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe - - Beate Winkler, Director, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia and Barbara Lochbihler, Secretary General, Amnesty International Germany.

**Interview with
Claude MORAES, MEP
Member of the Committee
on Civil Liberties, Justice
and Home Affairs**

The European Parliament is aware of the importance of Europol as a very important piece of the architectural security in the EU. Progress has been made as far as cooperation and exchange of information on criminal analysis and organised crime are concerned. In what way could the EU further cooperation on security issues?

The Member States could improve their cooperation on

such as 'hot pursuit' - following suspects over borders.

Cooperation is needed at this level as crime is becoming more and more sophisticated and with issues such as cyber crime and money laundering, borders of countries are not respected. The EU needs to work together on these issues to protect its citizens.

Euro MPs have insisted several times on the requisite of democratic control, data protection, transparency (access to documents) and accountability of Europol. So far these elements have not yet been addressed by the

to support the strengths of Europol. Member State governments need to make more progress on this accountability before the Parliament will be satisfied.

Europol can be a very useful support to the Member States law enforcement authorities in preventing and combating serious forms of international organised crime. Can Member States benefit from Europol without the proposed reform?

I would argue that reform of Europol is crucial - although of course Member States are currently benefiting from the work of Europol and, as I have

<p>security issues in many ways, both in formal and informal ways.</p> <p>There are lots of recent examples of success in the field of improved police cooperation. At the moment, Member States are trying to reach agreement on issues</p>	<p>Council. Why?</p> <p>I believe that the Council has not appreciated that the European Parliament wants more democratic control and accountability, not for the purposes of interfering with the work of Europol, but to ensure efficiency, value for money and</p>	<p>already said, the Parliament feels that the reforms are necessary to support the strengths of Europol and not to interfere with its work.</p> <p>We need Europol to be a democratically accountable organisation with a degree of transparency to ensure its efficiency and to ensure it is supported by the citizens of the EU.</p>
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Illegal CIA activities in Europe

The plenary session of July will vote on the interim report of the Temporary Committee on extraordinary renditions.

This is the practice of transferring an individual, with the involvement of the US or its agents, to a foreign State in circumstances that make it more likely than not that the individual will be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The interim report, which comes after a six month inquiry, says that "in a number of cases, the CIA or other US services have been directly responsible for the illegal seizure, removal, abduction and detention of terrorist suspects on the territory of EU Member States."

It is unlikely that several European governments were unaware of the CIA activities, the report says, pointing to Italy, Sweden, FYR of Macedonia and Bosnia."

The report makes it clear that illegal activities, including rendition of prisoners in the war

Finnish Presidency will focus on enlargement

Finland will take over EU's Presidency in the second half of 2006, starting on July 1. During his address to the Finnish Parliament on 21 June, Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen declared that the Finnish EU President will seek harmony among the Member States on key issues of EU enlargement. Mr. Vanhanen said his government will bring all member states together in order to reach a common ground on enlargement before the issue is tackled at the 14 - 15 December 2006 European Council in Brussels.

"The first priority is a general one, the future of the European Union. This priority covers the Constitutional Treaty as well as the enlargement discussion in general.(...) We will improve the way the Union functions on the basis of the existing Treaties at the same time as we bring the mere passive reflection period to a close and start discussing how to proceed with it."

Concerning the issue of the EU Constitution, the Finnish Prime Minister said Finland would actively strive to turn the 'Pause for Reflection' into a period of dynamic assessment on how to bring the project forward. However he vowed to address the dilemma which EU citizens are facing as he referred to the increasing lack of interest and confidence in the EU institutions.

The Finnish premier said that one of the main reasons for this could be the bureaucratic EU decision making process. "The EU should concentrate on that which is significant, and it should be efficient in those significant things", he said.

Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen, deputy premier Eero Heinäluoma, who is also finance minister and social democratic party leader, together with foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja took part in the discussions with European Parliament Socialist Group leader Martin Schulz and the members of the Group Bureau on during their visit in Finland last week. The talks covered a wide range of themes including EU-Russia relations, education, research and development, social dialogue, EU foreign and security policy, and competitiveness and challenges for the EU economy.

on terror, took place inside the EU" said Committee member and Socialist Vice President Jan Marinus Wiersma.

The mandate of the Committee is not finished. Further investigation is needed in order to ascertain whether there have been breaches of article 6 of the Treaty by one or more member states. Therefore the Committee will be granted a six-month extension period to continue its work.

The Rapporteur, Italian Socialist Claudio Fava called for approval of two missions to Poland and Romania in the coming months. The Committee will also hear the representatives of governments implicated in extraordinary rendition.

The interim report calls for further investigation into the alleged existence of a secret detention facility in Kosovo and the possible involvement of KFOR forces in the illegal detention of terrorist suspects. It also calls on the EU governments to take a stronger stance on the closing of the detention centre in Guantanamo Bay.

The interim report will be adopted in plenary two weeks after the report by Swiss senator Dick Marty on behalf of the Council of Europe concluded that 14 European countries colluded with US intelligence in a spider's web of human rights abuses to help the CIA transfer terror suspects to illegal detention facilities. The burden of proof is now with the governments.

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