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IMPORTANT COMING MEETINGS

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26 April 2005

♦ EU- Croatia Association Council

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♦ EU- Chile Association Council

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THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

7 April 2005

♦ EU- India (Troika)

10-11 April 2005

♦ EU- African Union (Troika)

27 April 2005

♦ EU- Pakistan (Troika)

6-7 May 2005

♦ EU- Japan (Troika)

8-9 May 2005

♦ EU- China (Troika)

10 may 2005

♦ EU-Russia Summit

18 May 2005

♦ EU- ECOWAS (Troika)

26 May 2005

♦ EU- Central America (Troika)

31 May 2005

♦ EU- Arab Group (Troika)

♦ EU- Israel (Troika)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

♦ Plenary Session

- 11-14 April 2005
- 9-12 May 2005

♦ Committee on Foreign Affairs

- 19 April 2005
- 26 April 2005
- 23 May 2005
- 14 June 2005

♦ Subcommittee on Human Rights

- 25 April 2005
- 28 April 2005
- 16 June 2005

♦ Subcommittee on Security and Defence

- 18 April 2005
- 26 April 2005
- 26 May 2005

♦ Committee on Development

- 26 April 2005

➤ 23 May 2005

♦ Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

➤ 19 April 2005

➤ 26 April 2005

➤ 26 May 2005

♦ Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

➤ 21 April 2005

➤ 25 April 2005

➤ 28 April 2005

➤ 24 May 2005

➤ 26 May 2005

REGIONS:

AFRICA

♦ Zimbabwe

- Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the conduct of the elections in Zimbabwe (05.04.05)

The European Union takes note of the parliamentary elections held in Zimbabwe on 31 March 2005. **The European Union notes that it was not invited to observe the elections.**

The European Union has duly noted Zimbabwe's commitment to complying with the SADC principles and guidelines governing democratic elections, as well as SADC's engagement in this context.

There were some improvements in the conduct of the elections compared with previous polls, and Zimbabwe has made some technical adjustments to the electoral framework in order to observe SADC's principles and guidelines.

However, **the European Union is concerned by a number of serious shortcomings found in the Zimbabwean electoral system. It also expresses reservations about the environment in which the voting took place. These are in addition to more general and more worrying findings concerning the human rights situation.**

This assessment and an examination of the application of international electoral practices and standards do not allow the European Union to conclude that the elections were free and fair.

The restoration of democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and the adoption of measures to deal with the urgent humanitarian needs of the population thus continue to be fundamental requirements in Zimbabwe.

http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/84461.pdf (EN)

AMERICAS

♦ United States of America

- Discours - OSCE, 549e Conseil Permanent: Déclaration de l'UE sur la peine de mort aux Etats-Unis (07.04.05)

L'Union européenne est fermement opposée à la peine de mort dans toutes les circonstances. A plusieurs reprises, l'Union européenne a exposé en détail sa position sur la peine de mort, **en particulier en relation avec des cas récents aux Etats-Unis concernant des personnes souffrant d'une maladie mentale.** Je me réfère en particulier à nos interventions faites au Conseil Permanent du 29 juillet 2004 et à la Réunion sur la mise en oeuvre des engagements concernant la dimension humaine à Varsovie en octobre 2004. Nous sommes fermement convaincus que **l'exécution de personnes souffrant d'une maladie mentale est contraire aux normes généralement admises en matière de droits de l'homme.**

Tout en nous félicitant de développements positifs en relation avec la peine de mort aux Etats-Unis, en particulier de la décision du 1er mars dernier de la Cour Suprême des Etats-Unis sur la peine de mort appliquée aux jeunes délinquants, l'Union européenne voudrait exprimer sa préoccupation concernant un cas de plus dans le domaine des maladies mentales. M. Bill

Benefiel doit être exécuté dans l'Etat d'Indiana le 21 avril prochain bien qu'il souffre depuis longtemps d'une grave maladie mentale. On a diagnostiqué sur lui des troubles de la personnalité de type schizoïde et il a fait l'objet de nombreuses expertises avant son arrestation pour meurtre passible de la peine de mort. Nous appelons les autorités compétentes de l'Etat d'Indiana à ne pas procéder à l'exécution de M. Benefiel. Nous escomptons que ces autorités seront informées de notre appel(...)
<http://www.eu2005.lu/fr/actualites/discours/2005/04/07osce-usa/index.html>

ASIA

♦ China

► German government in disagreement over arms embargo - By Lisbeth Kirk (06.04.05)

A difference in opinion has emerged between Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and Chancellor Gerhard Schröder over the EU's intention to lift the arms embargo on China.

The German Social Democrat Chancellor **Gerhard Schröder together with French president Jacques Chirac strongly support an end to the 15-year old embargo - imposed on China in 1989 after the Tiananmen square massacre of democracy protestors.**

However, in an interview with German weekly Die Zeit, Mr Fischer, who belongs to the Greens, said "The Chancellor knows that I have a more sceptical opinion on this".

The Green party has threatened to show its opposition in the parliament by voting against lifting the arms embargo - such a move would reveal an open split inside the German red-green coalition government.

"Whoever wants to achieve consensus must try to move towards the critics [of lifting the embargo]", said Mr Fischer.

Chinese leaders were told at an EU-China summit in The Hague in December that the EU was prepared to lift the 15-year old arms embargo.

A decision to lift the embargo was expected to be taken by EU leaders in June.

However, since China passed a law allowing it to use force against Taiwan if the island makes a bid for independence, there has been strong speculation that the decision will be postponed.

The US is strongly opposed to the move fearing US weapons technology in Chinese hands.

<http://www.euobserver.com/?sid=24&aid=18800> (EN)

♦ Kirghizstan

► Discours - OSCE, 549e Conseil Permanent: Déclaration de l'UE sur le Kirghizstan (07.04.05)

(...) L'Union européenne continue d'observer de près l'évolution de la situation au Kirghizstan. Nous demandons aux dirigeants nouvellement désignés de poursuivre le dialogue avec toutes les forces politiques existantes et de mettre en œuvre une politique de réconciliation nationale, dans l'intérêt à long terme de la stabilité et de la prospérité du Kirghizstan.

L'Union européenne encourage fermement les nouveaux dirigeants kirghiz à agir en pleine conformité avec les valeurs démocratiques et les droits de l'homme. L'Union européenne se félicite de la décision du Parlement kirghiz d'organiser des élections présidentielles. L'Union européenne note que la crédibilité du prochain Président sera fonction de la manière libre et régulière dont se tiendront les futures élections, en conformité avec les normes internationales. Nous apprécions hautement l'initiative prise par le Président de l'OSCE, le Ministre Dimitrij Rupel, de promettre le plein soutien de l'Organisation au Kirghizstan pour s'orienter vers la stabilité, l'unité et la démocratie.

L'Union européenne est prête à renforcer son soutien et son assistance au Kirghizstan dans le cadre d'une coordination et d'une coopération nationale et internationale. (...)

L'Union européenne soutiendra l'OSCE pour qu'elle continue à jouer un rôle proactif. Nous encourageons le Président en exercice à continuer à prendre des initiatives visibles dans la médiation, la reprise et la facilitation du dialogue et dans la coordination des efforts internationaux visant à aider le Kirghizstan à regagner sa stabilité.

L'Union européenne se tient prête à coopérer avec les autorités kirghiz dans le cadre de l'OSCE dans les domaines qui appellent à une action. Dans ce contexte, la priorité devrait revenir à l'assistance en matière de sécurité (y compris le Programme d'assistance à la police et, à plus long terme, le Programme de réforme de la police), l'assistance au processus électoral, le renforcement de l'Etat de droit, le travail du Parlement, le développement de la société civile, la liberté des médias, les minorités ethniques, la coopération économique et les défis environnementaux. (...)

En conclusion, l'Union européenne se félicite de la décision du Président en exercice de poursuivre bientôt ses discussions au Kirghizstan et de coopérer avec les pays voisins d'Asie Centrale à la recherche de solutions. L'approfondissement de la coopération régionale est indispensable au renforcement futur de la paix, de la sécurité et du développement économique durable en Asie Centrale(...)

<http://www.eu2005.lu/fr/actualites/discours/2005/04/07osce-kirg/index.html>

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

♦ Belarus

- **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union regarding the cases of Mr Marinich and Mr Bandazhevsky** (04.04.05)

The European Union is closely following the case of Mr Mikhail Marinich. It notes with concern the deterioration in Mr Marinich's health and calls on the Belarus authorities to ensure that he is given the medical examinations and treatment required for his convalescence.

The European Union welcomes the cooperation of the prison authorities and of the Sentencing Commission in organising the visit of the local EU Presidency delegation to Mr Marinich. However, the European Union, recalling its previous declaration of 12 January 2000 , **remains convinced that there were political reasons for the trial of Mr Marinich, who was prosecuted following a dubious accusation and given a sentence which was in any event disproportionate.** The European Union calls on the Belarusian authorities to reconsider their decision and to release Mr Marinich.

The European Union is also closely following the cases of other Belarusian citizens held in the country, in particular that of Professor Bandazhevsky, whose release it continues to request. It calls on the Belarusian authorities to take the necessary steps for Professor Bandazhevsky to have access to all the care that the state of his health requires.

The European Union calls on the Belarusian authorities to ensure that the rights of the defence are properly respected throughout all the judicial investigations, in compliance with the undertakings they have given.

http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/84446.pdf (EN)

♦ Serbie-Montenegro

- Discours - OSCE, 549e Conseil Permanent: Déclaration de l'UE en réponse au chef de la mission de l'OSCE en Serbie-Monténégro, l'ambassadeur Maurizio Massari (07-04-05)

L'Union européenne souhaite la bienvenue à l'Ambassadeur Massari, de retour au Conseil Permanent, et le remercie pour son excellent rapport. Nous partageons son évaluation que la tendance générale en Serbie-Monténégro est restée positive au cours des six mois passés et nous nous félicitons de la mise en place d'une importante législation réformatrice durant cette période. (...)

La pleine coopération avec le TPIY demeure une condition sine qua non pour l'intégration de tous les pays de la région dans la communauté euro-atlantique. La performance de la Serbie-Monténégro à cet égard sera un des facteurs clés pris en considération par la Commission européenne dans son rapport sur l'Etude de faisabilité pour l'adhésion de la Serbie-Monténégro à l'Union européenne, qui sera publié le 12 avril prochain. L'Union européenne salue la reddition volontaire et le transfert de douze accusés à La Haye depuis décembre 2004 comme un progrès important pour garantir que tous les accusés répondent de leurs actes devant la justice internationale. Cependant, des efforts supplémentaires seront nécessaires pour assurer arriver à la pleine coopération avec le TPIY. Nous appelons en particulier les autorités de la Serbie-Monténégro à livrer tous les accusés encore en fuite à La Haye, y compris Ratko Mladic et Radovan Karadzic. Le travail d'assistance de la Mission de l'OSCE dans le développement de capacités institutionnelles nationales en matière de crimes de guerre, y compris par l'observation des procès de crimes de guerre, demeure une partie essentielle du soutien aux pays de la région pour remplir pleinement leurs obligations à l'égard du TPIY. (...)

L'Union européenne se félicite des efforts accomplis par la Mission dans les domaines clés de la primauté du droit, de la réforme de la défense, des médias et des réformes du système judiciaire et de la police. Nous attachons une importance particulière à la mise en oeuvre de mesures visant à combattre la corruption, qui reste un problème grave en Serbie-Monténégro. Nous sommes déçus d'apprendre qu'il n'y a pas eu d'amélioration en ce qui concerne la politisation et l'absence de contrôle sur la police, et que les deux républiques ne disposent toujours pas d'un cadre législatif pour les services de police. Nous continuons également d'attendre la mise en oeuvre complète d'une législation sur les médias, en particulier la privatisation transparente de médias locaux et régionaux.

Nous nous félicitons des évaluations positives du rapport concernant l'état des relations interethniques en Voïvodine. Il demeure essentiel qu'aussi bien la Serbie que le Monténégro adoptent une législation, qui se fait attendre, sur la protection des minorités et qu'elles veillent à ce que toutes les lois soient pleinement mises en oeuvre.

L'Union européenne continue d'attacher la plus grande importance aux efforts de la Mission dans le domaine de la lutte contre la traite des êtres humains. Nous nous félicitons de la mise en place par la Serbie d'un Mécanisme National de Référence, qualifié dans le rapport de progrès révolutionnaire. Nous nous attendons à ce que le Monténégro se dote bientôt d'un mécanisme semblable. (...)

<http://www.eu2005.lu/fr/actualites/discours/2005/04/07osce-massari/index.html>

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

♦ 15th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – EU joint Council and ministerial meeting (Manama, 5 April 2005) – Joint communiqué

On 5 April 2005, Jean Asselborn, Minister for Foreign Affairs and current President of the Council of the European Union, co-chaired the 15th Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting between the European Union and the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council in Bahrain.

Alongside bilateral issues, the agenda for the Ministerial Meeting includes a number of topical international subjects: the fight against terrorism, human rights and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

► Iraq

(...) The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the EU called on all parties in Iraq to work together to establish a safe, stable, independent, prosperous and democratic Iraq that is at peace with its neighbours and that upholds international law, human rights and cooperates constructively with its neighbours, and whose territorial integrity is preserved. The GCC and the EU reaffirmed their commitment to continue to help Iraqi reconstruction, including through significant financial contributions and debt relief. The GCC and the EU reaffirmed the central role of the UN and expressed support for the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) (...)

► Terrorism

The GCC and the EU reiterated their strong and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever the origin, cause or alleged motives. They reaffirmed their resolute commitment to combat terrorism in full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The fight against terrorism must continue to be given the highest attention, both in international fora and at national level. In this respect, they took note with interest of the valuable outcome of the international Counter-terrorism Conference held in Riyadh from 5-8 February 2005 marked by the unanimity of views on the threat that terrorism constitutes to international peace, security and stability and on the need for wide-ranging concerted action.

The GCC and the EU countries welcomed the very positive outcomes of the second GCC –EU Countries Joint Seminar on Combating Terrorist Financing, held in Abu Dhabi on 5-6 March 2005 (...). (...) The EU underlined its determination to come to a speedy adoption of the 3rd Money Laundering Directive and mentioned several other initiatives under way, regarding cash couriers and wire transfers. The seminar underlined the importance of continuing discussions and developing exchanges of information on relevant issues such as charitable contributions, informal money transfer systems, and the need for close cooperation at national, regional and international level.

The Joint Council stressed the importance of continued dialogue between the GCC and the EU and agreed to hold, on a regular basis, GCC-EU countries' expert meetings. (...)

► Human rights

The GCC and the EU reaffirmed that they share the universal values of respect for human rights and democratic principles, which form an essential element of their relations. They welcomed recent developments relating to representative bodies in the region, including those related to the Shura. They recalled the commitment of all states, as expressed at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inter-related. Both sides reiterated their continued commitment to the promotion and protection of all human rights. The two sides expressed their commitment to promote the universal values which they share, while bearing in mind the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds. The GCC and the EU emphasised the importance of respect and tolerance among people and called on all their members to fight any kind of extremism, intolerance and discrimination and to foster better understanding between peoples, religions and cultures. They expressed their shared willingness to reinforce their dialogue and develop concrete cooperation on human rights and invited officials to make proposals. Since the last meeting of the Joint Council, NGO's responsible for Human Rights have been established in

most GCC countries and are responsible for overseeing the implementation of relevant UN conventions and the laws of the respective countries.

The Joint Council welcomed the State of Qatar's initiative to host the UN Human Rights Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab region.

<http://www.eu2005.lu/en/actualites/communiqués/2005/04/05uegolfe/index.html> (EN)

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE 2007-2013

► 2649th Council Meeting (07.04.05)

The Council took note of the Presidency's presentation of the first version of its "negotiating box" for the financial perspective, a tool intended to assist in preparing the financial framework laid down for the EU's budget during the period 2007-2013 (7054/05).

The Presidency's aim is to enable the European Council to reach political agreement at its meeting on 16 and 17 June 2005, in accordance with the timetable laid down in the Council's multiannual strategic programme. The Council, in its "General Affairs" composition, is responsible for conducting the negotiations, although the specific interest of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council is acknowledged. The Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper), which is responsible for preparing the Council's proceedings, will begin its examination of the negotiating box at its meeting on 17 March.

The Presidency intends to fill in the negotiating box as and when discussions proceed until June, so as to reflect their outcome.

http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/84481.pdf (EN)

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Terrorism

► International co-operation vital to counter terrorist threat (05.04.05)

Speaking at a conference run by the Council of Europe (CoE), Franco Frattini, has said that plans will be presented in June 2005 on the co-ordination of counter-terrorism at international level. **Co-operation with bodies such as the CoE, the UN and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe was essential to secure citizens against this global threat, he said.**

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the CoE, said that a new set of international standards on prevention of terrorism, money-laundering, and the security of travel documents would shortly be ready for adoption.

The conference, being held in Helsinki on 7-8 April, will also examine ways to mitigate the social effects of crime on both offenders and victims. It will look at support and compensation for victims of crime, including terrorism. **On the treatment of prisoners the conference will discuss torture, revision of the 1987 European prison rules and the possibility of a European prison charter.**

http://www.euractiv.com/Article?tcaturi=tcu:29-137678-16&type=News&_lang=EN&email=37503 (EN)

♦ Procedural rights

- Report on the proposal for a Council framework decision on certain procedural rights in criminal proceedings throughout the European Union (08.04.05)

Kathalijne BUITENWEG (Greens/EFA, NL) will be tabling a **non-binding draft resolution** on procedural rights in criminal proceedings. **This proposal seeks to enhance the rights of all suspects and defendants in criminal proceedings. The scope of the proposal ensures that there is no differentiation between EU and non-EU nationals.**

The areas where common minimum standards are proposed at this stage are:

- access to legal advice, both before the trial and at trial;
- access to free interpretation and translation;
- ensuring that persons who are not capable of understanding or following the proceedings receive appropriate attention;
- the right to communicate, inter alia, with consular authorities in the case of foreign suspects, and
- notifying suspected persons of their rights (by giving them a written "Letter of Rights").

The committee wants to make the rights of suspected persons more specific, including on the right of interpretation. The committee says if a suspected person does not speak or understand the language in which the proceedings are being conducted, the person should be assisted free of charge by a certified interpreter at each stage of the proceedings and also (on request) when consulting the lawyer. The committee also states that a suspected person who is remanded in custody shall have the right to have his place of employment informed of the detention without undue delay.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+BR-20050411-S+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N#SECTION9> (EN)

♦ Immigration

- Brussels suggests more funds for integration of immigrants - By Lucia Kubosova (07.04.05)

The European Commission has proposed a set of new funds to help member states to tackle immigration and asylum-related problems.

Money from the funds is foreseen for the integration of newcomers within host societies or repatriating illegal immigrants.

The proposal, which totalled at 8.3 billion euro, **came as part of the new package detailing EU spending for the period 2007 - 2013** and was adopted by the Commission on Wednesday (6 April).

Within the three new programmes, Brussels *has suggested a "solidarity and management of migration" fund, supporting projects like civic orientation courses, intercultural training and handbooks assisting newcomers for their smoother integration.*

Under the proposed rules, member states could also ask for money to facilitate repatriation of illegal immigrants and failed asylum seekers.

Two other funds should be used for security issues - mainly the prevention of terrorism, and for promotion of "fundamental rights".

The latter is with a nod to the new European Constitution which makes their protection and "active promotion" legally binding at the European level.

<http://www.euobserver.com/?sid=22&aid=18806> (EN)

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

♦ United Nations

- ▶ Remarks by Javier Solana on the appointment of the UNSG's Envoys for UN reform (06.04.05)

"I welcome the appointment of Dermot Ahern, Ali Alatas, Joaquin Chissano and Ernesto Zedillo as the UN Secretary-General's Envoys for the September Summit on UN reform, which will review implementation of the Millennium Declaration adopted five years ago. This is a most distinguished group of experienced and skilled politicians, representing a wide spectrum of cultures and regional sensibilities.

The EU has welcomed UNSG Annan's report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all". We will support the work of the four UN Secretary-General's Envoys and continue to work in close cooperation with the United Nations and regional partners for a successful outcome of the Summit."

http://ue.eu.int/cms3_applications/applications/newsroom/loadDocument.ASP?directory=en/declarations/&fileName=84465.pdf (EN)

♦ International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

- ▶ Support for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia - Restrictive measures – 2649th Council Meeting (07.04.05)

The Council adopted a Common Position renewing for one year the period of application of the list of persons subject to measures in support of the effective implementation of the mandate of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)(6939/05).

The measures are intended to prevent the entry into, or transit through, the territory of the EU of persons who are engaged in activities which help persons at large continue to evade justice for crimes for which the ICTY has indicted them or are otherwise acting in a manner which could obstruct the ICTY's effective implementation of its mandate. The list, which was first drawn up in April 2003 and last amended in January 2005, includes a total of 36 persons to whom the prohibition on access to the EU applies.

http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/84481.pdf (EN)

♦ Development

- ▶ Millennium Development Goals (08.04.05)

Glenys KINNOCK (PES, UK), for the Development Committee, will be tabling a draft own-initiative report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The committee emphasises that poverty reduction through the achievement of the MDGs and the Millennium Declaration must be recognised unambiguously as the overarching framework for EU development policy and that this must be reflected clearly in all relevant policy and legislative proposals; but believes that the MDGs should not be seen as a technical matter which will be resolved simply by providing more money without identifying and tackling the underlying causes of poverty.

MEPs in the committee commend those Member States that have reached or passed 0.7% GNI, whilst noting the worrying trend set by some to begin a process of decreasing aid levels, as well as abandoning previous commitments on timetables. The committee stresses that although the EU seems currently on target for its intermediary objective of 0.39% of GNI for Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2006, there are large disparities in the performance of its Member States and therefore calls

on those Members States still lagging behind to commit themselves to a clear timetable and deadlines for reaching the 0.7% target before 2015.

The Development Committee believes that it is an illusion to achieve the MDG of halving poverty and hunger by 2015, providing free education for all and improving access to health care while developing countries spend four times more on repaying debts than they spend on basic social services.

The eight Goals identified in 2000 and to be realised by 2015 are:

- * Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- * Achieve universal primary education
- * Promote gender equality and empower women
- * Reduce child mortality
- * Improve maternal health
- * Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- * Ensure environmental sustainability
- * Develop a global partnership for development

In September 2005, in New York, the EU will participate in a special session of the United Nations to evaluate the progress in accomplishing the MDGs.

For more information on the MDGs, click here:

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+BR-20050411-S+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N#SECTION9> (EN)