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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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from: Council Secretariat  
date: 22 February 2010  
to: Delegations

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Subject: Partially accessible COREU CFSP/SEC/1407/09: EU-Turkmenistan Human Rights Dialogue, 30 June 2009, Brussels - Report

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Delegations will find in annex the partially accessible text of the COREU CFSP/SEC/1407/09.

**Subject: COHOM COEST - EU - Turkmenistan Human Rights Dialogue, 30 June 2009, Brussels - Report**

## **I. Summary**

The Second round of the dialogue was held in a constructive atmosphere with Turkmenistan demonstrating openness and considerable interest in engaging with the EU on a wide range of issues.

The recent adoption of a new constitution as well as Turkmenistan's Universal Periodic Review, held last December in Geneva at the Human Rights Council, provided a useful background for the EU to address the human rights situation and developments in Turkmenistan. The EU and Turkmenistan focused in particular on the functioning of civil society, freedom of the media, expression, association and assembly, freedom of thought and religion, freedom of movement and forced displacement, prison conditions and torture and the reform of the judiciary, Rights of women and children in follow-up to the previous meeting were enquired about as well. The EU handed over a list of individual cases.

Turkmenistan repeatedly expressed its commitment to comply with international human rights standards and repeatedly listed the many international conventions to which it is party. Turkmenistan also emphasized its co-operation with the UN as demonstrated through submitting reports to treaty monitoring committees. Turkmenistan drew attention to its constitutional reform and underlined that in connection to it a number of reforms, e.g. of the penitentiary system, juvenile justice system, family law including women and children rights, had been introduced and a set of new laws had been adopted (a new Labour Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Law on Equality of Women and Law on Human Trafficking). Turkmenistan sought to forestall criticism by underlining that some of its national legislation was subject to further ongoing review in almost all areas with a view to improving it still further. Turkmenistan was unable to provide statistics on most of the areas raised by the EU but undertook to provide them later. **DELETED**

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Both sides also discussed human rights cooperation within international organisations, in particular the UN Human Rights Council, UNGA and OSCE.



In keeping with the EU's practice of incorporating the voice of civil society into its meetings on human rights with third countries, the EU met representatives of Turkmen and international NGOs prior to the consultations.

## II. Detail

The EU troika was led by **DELETED**, accompanied by Riina Kionka, the Personal Representative of the SG/HR Solana for Human Rights, Tobias King, Human Rights Unit, (European Commission) and **DELETED**

In the beginning of the meeting Turkmenistan made a long presentation about the general human rights situation and listed a number of the latest developments: 1) provided some statistics of the recent amnesties (In 2008 1700 amnesties were granted, 17 February 2009 300 persons were released, March 2009 970 persons were released, May 2009 1700 persons were released, including foreigners) 2) declared more active cooperation with all UN agencies and other international organisations, including the EU. In 2007 the inter-departmental commission on ensuring compliance with international human rights obligations was established, Turkmenistan referred to its successful UPR and pointed out that its report for the UN Committee on the rights of the child and additional report to the UN Commission on Elimination of Racial Discrimination were prepared; National reports under ICCPR and CAT will be ready in December 2009. Turkmenistan informed that Convention on Disabilities had been ratified and entered into force 2 October 2008 and Optional Protocol to CEDAW had been ratified on 18 April 2009. Turkmenistan stressed its intention to also ratify ILO Convention No 182 and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on Disabilities. 3) As of start of 2009 the new constitution entered into force. It contained new provisions that international treaties shall prevail over domestic law, the principle of the division of powers, the principle of independence of the judiciary, provisions regarding racial discrimination and discrimination of women as well as provisions on elections; 4) Turkmenistan underlined that reforms of the penitentiary system, juvenile justice system, family law including women and children rights, religion organisations, civil society and mass media had been carried out or initiated. 5) A set of new laws had been adopted: a new labour code, which contained new provisions regarding status of trade unions, guarantees for women and minor workers, Women's Equality Act and Law on Human Trafficking and the Criminal Procedure Code; 6) developments in the social policy including establishment of the Social policy stabilization fund, amendments in the Social Code and increase of social allowances by 27 28 %, opening of 2 centres for protection of women and children; 7) Implementation of the State programme on rural development (4 billion dollars allocated from the state budget).

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## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### EU DELEGATION

**DELETED**

#### *Council Secretariat*

**Riina KIONKA**, Personal representative of Mr Solana for Human Rights

**Audrone PERKAUSKIENE**, DG E Human Rights, Desk Officer

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#### *Commission*

**Toby KING**, Policy desk officer Human Rights and Democratisation, Directorate General for External Relations

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### TURKMENISTAN DELEGATION

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