

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

THE PRESIDENT

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URGENT

To His Excellency Mr Josep Borrell Fontelles,
President of the European Parliament
Rue Wiertz
B-1047 Brussels

Athens, 20 December 2005
Prot. No 359

Dear President,

I should hereby like to inform you that the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) has prepared two appeals, one regarding the Counter-Terrorism Strategy of the European Union and the forthcoming new Directive and another one on the issue of the CIA flights in Europe. The texts of the above appeals are attached for your information.

Yours sincerely

Prof. Alice Yotopoulos-Marangopoulos
President of the
Greek National Commission for Human Rights

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EXTREMELY URGENT

**URGENT APPEAL BY THE GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**To the competent authorities of the EU and
Member-state governments**

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) unanimously expresses its deepest concern regarding the forthcoming EU Directive, which abolishes the protection of privacy and subjects all European residents to constant surveillance and monitoring of all their communications through all available technical means, and to making these data accessible to European and non-European state authorities. Even though not explicitly stated, it is certain that personal data will be supplied to the United States, and in particular to the CIA, via the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, it is the users/consumers of the technical communications means that are going to bear the extraordinary costs of their own surveillance!

It seems that the European leaders have not understood that policies such as used by the UK, that abolished by its legislation the fundamental human rights and even participating in the so called "pre-emptive anti-terrorist" wars and in the use of torture, generate terrorist activities, instead of providing protection from them.

Additionally, European air space is violated by illegal CIA chartered planes abducting individuals, European and non-European alike, and transferring them to secret detention centres in Europe and elsewhere!

We, European citizens had invested our hopes, when establishing the European Union, for the creation of a powerful, independent and self-determined federation in the international arena, forming a bastion of democracy, freedom and social justice. We cannot but be disappointed and angry at the adverse developments, which take place.

It seems that European leaders fail to see the deepening gap between their policies and the feelings of their electorate.

The so-called “improvements” in the new Directive’s draft text, which reduce the time of retention of the personal data and which set that the content of the communications monitored is not going to be recorded (it is stated that only the duration, place and names involved in the communication are to be recorded), sounds unrealistic. Who can trust that the secret services will refrain (out of discretion and good manners!) from recording the content of the communication, and will confine themselves to just noting down the duration, place and names involved? And who can eventually control whether the recorded data are going to be erased from the archives of a State (and particularly when it comes to the CIA), at the end of the period specified for their retention?

Such provisions not only fail to persuade us, but, on the contrary, infuriate us the more, as they take us for naïve.

In conclusion:

We urgently request:

That the adoption for the new Directive is stopped. There is a number of relevant and binding European instruments, which are more than enough. It is time we cease abiding to the obviously ineffective initiatives of a non-European power, which is supposedly fighting terrorism through violating civil liberties and abolishing peace at a global scale. Breaching of human dignity and of the “acquis communautaire” must be stopped, even at the very last minute. It is our duty, as a National Human Rights Commission, to raise awareness on the above. This is the very reason why independent National Human Rights Commissions are established around the globe.

Athens, 19 December 2005

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URGENT

Urgent Appeal by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights expresses its concern on the information and publications regarding the eventual activities of foreign secret services on Greek soil and the possible human rights violations connected with same.

In particular, the alleged abduction and interrogation of a number of immigrants of Pakistani origin in July 2005, necessitates scrupulous as well as thorough inquiry; we, therefore, express our satisfaction for the investigation that has been initiated by the Public Prosecutor's Office in Athens. We hope that the investigation will go in depth and that in the event of the assumptions proven to be true, all those involved, be them of Greek origin or not, will be held responsible. Obviously, and beyond the need for respect of the rule of law as well as that of human rights, this issue is of major importance for the safeguard of an atmosphere of trust and peaceful coexistence with the immigrant population residing in our country.

Moreover, information about secret flights performed by the CIA on EU soil is alarmingly growing. Several international human rights organisations report and provide evidence on at least 800 such flights during recent years, by which individuals are transferred to secret CIA detention centres in Europe or elsewhere without legal process. Judicial and/or other independent authorities in some European countries have already initiated investigations, through which, many of the allegations are confirmed. Information obtained through the press as well as through human rights organisations reveals that such flights may be performed from and to our country also. We, therefore, urge all relevant authorities to thoroughly investigate these allegations concerning European countries the Greek one included.

The independent and full-fledged inquiry of every allegation of human rights violations, particularly at a time when at the global level, nothing allows us to be optimistic vis-à-vis the institutional and actual protection of the human dignity and rights, is crucial and it is our duty as independent authority for Human Rights to promote as strongly as possible their real protection.

Athens, December 19, 2005

LOPEZ LOTSON Annika

From: INFO [info@nchr.gr]
Sent: 21 December 2005 10:12
To: TORRELL Ricard
Subject: F.A.O. Mr Josep Borell Fontelles, President of the European Parliament-URGENT
Attachments: GNCHR Appeal-Terrorism.doc; GNCHR APPEAL.doc; Letter to President of the Eur. Parliament.doc

Please find attached two appeals of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) regarding:

- the Counter-Terrorism Strategy of the European Union and the forthcoming new Directive and
- the issue of the CIA flights in Europe.

*ΕΘΝΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ ΓΙΑ ΤΑ ΔΙΚΑΙΩΜΑΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ
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*Η ΕΕΔΑ ιδρύθηκε με το ν 2667/1998 ως συμβουλευτικό όργανο της Πολιτείας σε θέματα προστασίας
Δικαιωμάτων του Ανθρώπου*

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NCHR was founded by Law 2667/1998 as a National Human Rights Institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (www.nhri.net)