

1 December 2006

‘Colombia: Libertad para todos’ exhibition

On 18 October 2006 the International Federation of Ingrid Betancourt Committees (FICIB) opened an exhibition entitled ‘Colombia: Libertad para todos’ on the Commission's premises in Brussels. This exhibition was organised with the support of the Francophone Belgian branch of Amnesty International, which contributed, in particular, a display panel on the situation of human rights activists. The exhibition was sponsored by Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

Of the display panels prepared, five were not accepted by the Commission, including Amnesty International's panel. The other four panels dealt with: (a) the paramilitaries, who are responsible for 70 % of human rights violations; (b) the problem of the 3 million displaced people in Colombia; (c) the 8000 people who have disappeared and the people behind those disappearances.

According to the Commission, the rejection of the five panels is not an act of censorship, since it is not a question of distancing itself from the spirit of the exhibition as a whole but merely from the language used.

Given that, through its rejection, the Commission demonstrated that it does not wish to be identified with certain statements contained in the panels and that it decided to remove five panels,

1. Does the Commission have written rules on accepting elements of an exhibition, or was the decision based on an ad hoc assessment?
2. Can it quote the sentences that led to its rejecting the panels?
3. Can it say what content would, in its view, have shocked members of the diplomatic corps viewing it?
4. How can the Commission's action be justified in the context of its commitments and those of the Council to continue to promote application of the guidelines for human rights defender (guideline 11 in particular)?

Answer:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2006-5214&language=EN>