

Wednesday, 17 December 2008 - Strasbourg

EU Annual report on human rights - French initiative at the UN on the decriminalization of homosexuality (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - Madam President, the Sakharov Prize awarded by this Parliament to Hu Jia, on behalf of all defenders of the people in China and Tibet, puts human rights at the centre of EU-China relations, regardless of the wish of rulers in Europe or Beijing.

As other colleagues have said, the EU cannot promote the rule of law and human rights worldwide if it is not consistent in upholding them in Europe and in Europe's external relations. Regrettably, the 2008 Annual Report on Human Rights demonstrates that European governments and institutions persist in hiding the truth about European connivance with the abhorrent practices of the Bush Administration in subtracting from justice and in subcontracting torture for thousands of men, and even children, detained for years in Guantánamo and in secret prisons. Shamefully, reference to this in the chapter about EU Troika and US consultations in human rights is limited to EU concern about 'certain practices and policies of the US in the framework of the fight against terrorism'. This speaks volumes about double standards, hypocrisy and cover-up. Until Europeans assume their responsibilities and cooperate with President-elect Obama to expose the truth, close Guantánamo and the secret prisons, and compensate victims, Europe will not regain moral authority, political credibility or efficiency in promoting human rights.