



Mr. Fredrik REINFELDT, Prime Minister, Sweden
Mr. Carl BILDT, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sweden
Ms. Benita FERRERO-WALDNER, Commissioner for External Relations
Baronessa Catherine ASHTON, Commissioner for External Trade
Cc. Member States of the European Union

Brussels, 10th of September 2009

Recommendations to the Presidency regarding Draft Council Conclusion on Honduras

CIFCA welcomes the draft Council Declaration on Honduras and more specifically the decision to make explicit reference to the human rights violations committed in this country, as indeed has been reported by our organisations since the aftermath of the coup d'etat in June 2009. CIFCA also fully appreciates the action taken by the EU confirming its support to the OAS and the mediation efforts of the President of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias as well as other efforts to restore the constitutional order.

Nevertheless, we firmly believe that the severity of the current crisis and the deterioration of the human rights situation in Honduras with its potential spill-over effects in the region, require a more assertive and comprehensive position than the previous declarations of the EU. This is particularly relevant in regards to elections being called under the de facto government.

Under the current circumstances, the European Union must ensure the effective **implementation of the democratic clause** of the Framework Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Central America. This clause clearly states that cooperation ties "*shall be based on respect for democratic principles and human rights*". The EU ought to maintain its decision to suspend negotiations for an **EU-Central America Association Agreement** before the constitutional order in Honduras is restored and negotiations can be carried out with the Central American region as a whole.

We call for the Swedish Presidency, in line with its commitment to promote human rights and democracy in EU foreign policy, to support the inclusion of the following considerations and recommendations in the final version of the Declaration:

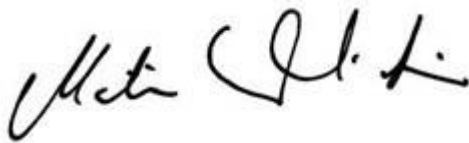
- To **maintain its initial position to return constitutional order, which can only be brought back "by reinstating President Jose Manuel Zelaya Rosales"**, as stated in the Presidency Statement on Honduras, on July 2, 2009.
- To continue stressing the **responsibility of the de facto government in refraining from using violence or engaging in any activities that may incite violence**, taking into account its current monopoly of the use of armed forces as well as its involvement in the accounted brutal repression of civil mobilizations.
- **To call for a stronger condemnation of the current restrictions and violations** to human rights, including freedom of opinion and expression as revealed in the recent report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression. As stated in the report, the violations of freedom of opinion and expression are not only causing an obstacle to the monitoring and reporting of the systematic human rights violations in the country, but is also putting into question the minimum democratic legitimacy required in a free and democratic electoral process.

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¹ Press Statement, Report on Honduras by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, following his visit to

- To take a **firm stance against the celebration of elections under the de facto government**, rejecting the possibility of free, fair and democratic elections to take place in the current climate of violations, especially in regards to the freedom of opinion, expression and assembly. We urge the EU to repeat the clear message of the United States of America that "election must be undertaken in a free, fair and transparent manner" and that therefore "at this moment, the State Department would not be able to support the outcome of the scheduled elections".²
- **To include a reference to "the need of an investigation for the temporary withdrawal of the tariff preferences given to Honduras under the GSP+ framework"**, on the basis of serious and systematic violations of human rights as laid down in the 27 conventions included in the GSP+ framework.
- To continue considering further restrictive measures³ and move forward to their implementation. We recommend the **adoption of migratory sanctions** to be taken towards representatives of the de facto government and their supporters, actions that are in line with measures taken by the State Department of the United States of America.
- Finally we urge the EU to maintain its decision to suspend the negotiations for an **EU-Central America Association Agreement** until the constitutional order in Honduras is restored and negotiations can be carried forward with the regional bloc in an atmosphere of institutionalised democracy that will set the right precedent for future negotiations with the Central American region.

Yours Sincerely,



Martin WOLPOLD-BOSIEN
President, CIFCA (Copenhagen Initiative for Central America)

Honduras on the 3rd and 4th of August 2009

² Termination of Assistance and Other Measures Affecting the De Facto Regime in Honduras, Ian Kelly, Department Spokesman, Washington, DC, September 3, 2009

³ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Political situation in Honduras, July 21, 2009