

Press review: 13th of July, 2010

EU laws will be subject to independent judicial oversight. The Union will also seek to implement the 'social clause' of the Lisbon Treaty. In addition, a programme for young leaders' creation was launched with EU financial support. Elsewhere, projects treating vulnerable children and orphans were funded by the UN. Meanwhile, Zambia created a Gender Equality Commission.

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EU Affairs

EU to get 'judicial oversight' on human rights

EU laws will be subject to legal challenges in the European Court of Human Rights under an external independent judicial oversight. EU justice and human rights commissioner Viviane Reding officially initiated negotiations aimed at making EU institutions subject to binding rulings issued by the Strasbourg-based court.

This became possible once the Lisbon Treaty came into force, granting the EU a formal legal statute, which allows it to adhere to the European Convention on Human Rights, an international treaty, defending rights such as freedom of thought, speech, assembly and religion. The convention is enforced by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg as a last resort for citizens and states when all other national avenues for appeal have been exhausted.

<http://euobserver.com/9/30464>

Belgians seek to enforce Lisbon Treaty social clause

During its six-month EU presidency, Belgium will seek to enforce the so-called 'social clause' of the Lisbon Treaty, ensuring that policymakers in Brussels and national capitals keep a close eye on the social impact of all new legislation.

Belgian Employment Minister Joëlle Milquet said the presidency would strive to guarantee "adequate social protection" in the key EU policies. The main tools to achieve this will be the "social clause" of the Lisbon Treaty and Guideline 10 of the Europe 2020 strategy, which aims to promote social inclusion and combat poverty.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/socialeurope/belgians-seek-enforce-lisbon-treaty-social-clause-news-496199>

Enlargement, European Neighbourhood

Serbia - as capable as Croatia, but doing as badly as Albania

After Croatia, Serbia is the Western Balkan country which is the most capable of making progress toward European Union membership. But despite its potential, Serbia is trailing all its neighbours in the process of EU integration.

Serbia waited longer than Albania from the start of negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) to the start of ratification of the agreement. Recently, Belgrade has set two new negative records in the history of EU enlargement – its attitude towards Kosovo and the capture of Ratko Mladic. If Serbia arrests quickly Ratko Mladic and acts pragmatically on Kosovo, Belgrade could be in position to transform its big potential into a real leading role in the region. And its application of membership could be finally passed from the EU Council of Ministers to the European Commission, diplomats believe.

<http://waz.euobserver.com/887/30470>

Development

Programme to nurture youth leaders launched

A project designed to help youths transform into responsible citizens and leaders was launched in Kigali, Rwanda by AJPRODHO-JIJUKIRWA, a youth association for human rights and development. The project, called "Youth Responsible Future Leaders of Tomorrow," will specially target students.

The idea of the project is to give the youth a platform to interact and share knowledge about human rights promotion, good governance, democracy and tolerance. The project will have focal points in the country's higher learning institutions, through which young people will be taught how to become agents of change in their own communities. The project will run for a period of two years with a financial support from the European Union.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201007120567.html>

Women welcome Equality Commission

The Zambian National Constitution Conference (NCC) came up with the adoption of a clause for the creation of a Gender Equality Commission.

The Gender Equity Commission will operate like other service commissions created under the constitution. It will monitor all organs of society to ensure that gender equality is safeguarded and promoted. It will have the power to repeal laws that are discriminatory, perform commission research and make recommendations to Parliament and other authorities. The Commission will also have the power to investigate complaints on gender-related issues and monitor Zambia's progress towards domesticating international gender equality instruments to which it has committed, such as SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=52125>

Disadvantaged Groups

UN Agency allocates funds for orphans and vulnerable children projects

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has signed a cooperation agreement with two organisations in Lesotho under which it will allocate over \$1.2 million to boost an integrated social protection system for orphans and other vulnerable children in the country.

The groups - World Vision Lesotho and Sentebale - will use the funds for projects that contribute to the achievement of Lesotho's vision for a society in which all vulnerable children are free from discrimination, live in dignity and have their rights and aspirations fulfilled. The agreement is under the umbrella of the Government of Lesotho, European Commission and UNICEF's Orphan and Vulnerable Children's (OVC) Programme (2007-2011). Civil society will remain a key partner to foster community involvement.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201007121331.html>