

Press review: 14th of July, 2010

Belgian EU Presidency is trying to help solve inter-institutional tensions linked to the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. A research institute makes suggestions on Macedonia's country name issue. Elsewhere, the UN is concerned about Nigeria's lack of ability to reach the Millennium Development Goals, while optimistic about Ethiopia's performance. Meanwhile, activists from Ghana demand reserved quota for women in Parliament.

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EU Affairs

Belgium bids to ease Lisbon Treaty tensions

Belgian EU Presidency is trying to help solve inter-institutional tensions linked to the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. Certain problems have arisen regarding the 'Framework Agreement', a legal document that will govern relations between the Parliament and the Commission for the period 2010-2015. Under the Agreement, the Commission is committed to fully informing the assembly at every stage of negotiations on international agreements.

The EU's legislative activity is of broad interest, as it directly impacts upon the approval of EU's next multi-annual budget for 2013-2021. The adoption of the budget for 2011 will set a precedent, as it will be the first to involve the Parliament as a full co-legislator, on an equal footing with the Council. Though, the Council of Ministers finds parts of the agreement out of line with the spirit of the EU treaties.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/belgium-bids-ease-lisbon-treaty-tensions-news-496287>

Enlargement, European Neighbourhood

Macedonia name dispute inspires exotic idea

A renowned research institute has suggested that Macedonia change its name to an agreed formula on the day of its EU accession as a means of resolving its ongoing dispute with Greece. The dispute on Macedonia's name has emerged as one of the most significant deadlocks in efforts to stabilise the Western Balkans.

The institute also alarms that the prevailing political thinking in many capitals is that the EU enlargement process should be slowed down. In this context, the fact that Macedonia's EU bid is stuck is even welcome, they say. And add that if Macedonian politicians get prepared to change the name of the country, it should be only on the condition that it would actually ensure the country's EU accession.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/macedonia-name-dispute-inspires-exotic-idea-news-496249>

Development

Nigeria: Nation spends N1.04 trillion on MDG projects

The Federal Government disclosed that it had over the last four years disbursed a total of N1.04 trillion on various projects geared towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the country. This is coming amidst concerns that the country might not achieve the goals set by the United Nations given the enormity of work, slow pace of project execution, corruption and political interference in the management of the programme.

Focal persons for the MDG programme in the 36 states of the federation made presentations on the pace of the programme in their respective states. The public hearing was organised by the House of Representatives Committee on Millennium Development Goals to evaluate the programme and chart the way forward. The organizers expect a clear assessment of the implementation of the MDGs in Nigeria by the general public. 'The observations, criticisms and suggestions will form the bedrock of the implementation of MDGs in the remaining five years, as it will enable us to make amendments and improvements where necessary,' they said.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201007130147.html>

Ethiopia on track to halve the poverty rate by 2015, UN says

Ethiopia will probably meet the Millennium Development Goal of halving the poverty rate by 2015 assuming it maintains current economic growth levels, according to a report written by the United Nations. The government has "made an enormous progress in the provision of social services such as education, health, and infrastructure by spending a large share of its budget in the pro-poor sector," the report said. Still, economic growth remains vulnerable to poor weather and external financing because of the poor domestic savings rate.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi announced on 1 July that the government had approved a record 70% spend of its total annual budget on poverty and infrastructure development. This is the largest spending on these programmes by any African country.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,date:2010-07-13~menuPK:34461~pagePK:34392~piPK:64256810~theSitePK:4607,00.html#Story3>

Disadvantaged Groups

Ghana: Women demand gender- sensitive Constitution

National women organizers of the four political parties with representation in Parliament have proposed that the constitution be amended to guarantee at least 30% of Parliamentary seats, assembly members, board members as well as intake into tertiary institutions to women.

The women's organizer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Ms Anita J. Desosu proposes a constitutional review to take into consideration having a reserved quota of parliamentary seats for women from different political parties. Ghana's Constitution must define an electoral system that is gender sensitive. Ms Desosu also said that the NPP's administration has demonstrated its continuous commitment to improving gender equality and equity by establishing the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC), the first in the history of Ghana to address issues of gender parity and empowerment.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201007130475.html>