

## Press review: 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 2010

The European Commission raises concerns about human right violations in Russia. In addition, Kyrgyz protesters demand greater transparency from their interim government. Elsewhere, EU election observers notice that an uneven playing field and irregularities undermined the credibility of Ethiopia's elections.

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### ENoP – EUROPEAN NETWORK OF POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS

#### INDEPENDENT ACTORS IN DEMOCRACY PROMOTION, DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND POLITICAL DIALOGUE

Av. De Cortenberg 118, B-1000 Brussels • Tel: +32 2 282 09 48 • Fax: +32 2 282 09 43 • Email: info@enop.eu • www.enop.eu  
 Network Coordinator: Arjen Berkvens • Network Deputy Coordinator: Andrea Ostheimer • Project Manager: Friederike Gaensslen



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## **EU Affairs**

### **EU to raise human rights with Russia amid visa-free hype**

The European Commission on Wednesday (26 May) is set to raise concerns about human rights violations by Russian police less than a week ahead of an EU-Russia summit where Moscow is pressing for visa-free travel to Europe.

"In the discussions with my Russian colleagues, I will also bring up the importance of respecting fundamental rights and the rule of law," home affairs commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom said. The discussions are part of the EU's regular talks with Moscow on how both sides can better co-operate on issues such as fighting drug and human trafficking. "Furthermore, Russia wants to move forward in their talks with the EU on visa facilitation agreements, something that we from the EU side regard as closely connected with a list of demands and criteria," the commission official added.

Moscow, for its part, has tabled proposals for a "Partnership for Modernisation" with the EU, focusing mainly on the lifting of visa requirements and a "technology transfer" from the West. EU diplomats regard the move as an attempt at "cherry picking", ignoring less convenient demands by Brussels concerning democratisation, the protection of human rights and the fight against corruption.

<http://euobserver.com/9/30138>

## **ENLARGEMENT**

### **New opposition leader brings excitement to Turkish politics**

The election of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu as leader of the main Turkish opposition CHP party was heralded by the press as a potential earthquake in the country's politics. Kılıçdaroğlu, a former civil servant, dubbed 'the Ghandi of Turkey' for his quiet but firm manner, was elected on Saturday by a landslide by delegates from CHP, the centre-left main opposition party in Turkey. Former leader Deniz Baykal resigned recently over a sex tape scandal.

"The CHP is passing through a tremendous change. A new leadership is emerging and there is a lot of excitement because of new faces and a new leader," said Hursit Gunes, a newly-elected party assembly member. "[Kılıçdaroğlu] proved that a new era has begun in Turkey, that the government is not without an alternative and the left can unify," said Vatan newspaper commentator Mustafa Mutlu. Kılıçdaroğlu, 62, said his priority would be combating unemployment and graft. He is expected to focus on restoring the party's left-wing credentials and winning back poor voters from AK. Kılıçdaroğlu pledged to enact a more democratic constitution and lower a 10% threshold for political parties to enter parliament. He said he supported Turkey's ambition to join the EU and asked Brussels to give a date for Turkish accession.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/new-opposition-leader-brings-excitement-turkish-politics-news-494504>

## **Bosnia tensions grow ahead of Balkan summit**

Officials from Bosnia and Herzegovina have traded accusations with representatives of the international community, who have been helping to manage the country since the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement. The development came just days ahead of a Western Balkans summit in Sarajevo on 2 June, intended to reaffirm the region's EU membership prospects.

The 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, negotiated with the USA, Russia and the EU, brought to an end a three-and-a half-year war in Bosnia that took the lives of more than 100,000 people and displaced 1.8 million. Since then, the country's management has been propped up by the West, through the office of the high representative of the international community. Local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina held in October 2008 confirmed deep ethnic divisions within the Balkan country, which is seen as a natural candidate for EU accession. EU leaders have repeatedly warned Bosnia and Herzegovina that continued political in-fighting between Serb, Muslim and Croat nationalists is driving the country away from the closer relationship with the Union to which its citizens aspire.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/bosnia-tensions-grow-ahead-balkan-summit-news-494481>

## **Development**

### **Kyrgyz Protesters Demand Greater Transparency from Interim Government**

About 100 protesters picketed the Kyrgyz parliament building in Bishkek today (24 May), demanding a detailed report on the interim government's activities for the last 45 days. The protesters also demanded more transparency in the interim government's financial operations.

The rally was sparked by a recorded telephone conversation allegedly between leading members of the interim government that appeared on the Internet and in other media over the weekend. The conversation included voices that strongly resembled interim government members Almazbek Atambaev, Temir Sariyev, and Azimbek Beknazarov discussing large sums of money allegedly being used in suspicious-sounding operations. Prosecutor-General Baitemir Ibraev told journalists today that the recorded conversation had been intentionally edited in a way to distort the meaning.

[http://www.rferl.org/content/Kyrgyz\\_Protesters\\_Demand\\_Greater\\_Transparency\\_From\\_Interim\\_Government/2051685.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Kyrgyz_Protesters_Demand_Greater_Transparency_From_Interim_Government/2051685.html)

### **Trinidad and Tobago elects first woman Prime Minister**

Trinidad and Tobago is to have its first woman premier after Prime Minister Patrick Manning was ousted in a snap election on Monday. Jubilant crowds gathered at the party headquarters of Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the Caribbean country's attorney general, who is set to become its first female Prime Minister. The winner needed a simple majority of seats in the 41-member parliament, where until now the PNM held 26 seats, with the rest going to the

UNC. Just over one million of the country's 1.3 million people were eligible to vote, and first estimates put turnout at around 60 percent.

[http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us\\_and\\_americas/article7135740.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article7135740.ece)

### **Ethiopia: EU observers discredit Ethiopia's parliamentary elections**

Ethiopia's elections were peaceful and well-organised but fell short of key international benchmarks of fairness because the playing field was not level for all the competing political parties, European Union (EU) election observers said here Tuesday.

'The elections was marked by a high voter turnout on a peaceful and orderly election, marred by the narrowing of the political space and an uneven playing field,' said Thijs Berman, the EU's Chief Election Observer, who noted that some irregularities also undermined the credibility of the elections. The country's electoral body was criticized for failing to put in place a national voters register which, in effect, made it impossible to tell how many voters were double-registered to vote at several stations. 'We had no idea to what extent this could affect the outcome we would like to exclude the possibility of double-registered voters,' Berman said

<http://www.afriquejet.com/news/africa-news/ethiopia:-eu-observers-discredit-ethiopia%27s-parliamentary-elections-2010052549875.html>