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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - CSCE/TURKEY

PLEASE NOTE: Please urgently send Paula Seager in the IS Press Office info about any activities that you are planning or have carried out recently on Colombia. If you persuaded an MP to write a letter, or you have a signed petition on Colombia - what ever it is, however small, please let me know and send me a copy. This info can help keep the human rights debate going in the Colombian media. Also, if you have a good relationship with any sports correspondents, please call me to discuss on Tel: +44 71 413 5564.

PLEASE NOTE: The index number sent out with the text of the Annual Report news release in News Service 123/94 was incorrect. The correct index number is POL/10/04/94. There is no need to change this number on copies that you will be sending out to media but please make a note of it for your records.

Thanks - Dina

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

****Turkey - 22 June**** - SEE NEWS SERVICES 118/94 AND 104/94

The CSCE item enclosed is part of a factsheet, AI Index: EUR 44/50/94, which is being sent out to lobbyists in the near future. It has just been finalised by the Legal Office and may be too late to help you, but it is a good summary of what the CSCE is, should you be asked about it by media. Paula

United Kingdom - 14 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 129/94

Pakistan - 27 July - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

Myanmar - 20 July - PLEASE NOTE THIS IS AN INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASE SEE NEWS SERVICE 99/94

India - 16 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 129/94

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Mozambique - 23 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 115/94

Lusophone Summit - 27 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 124/94 for item

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 0600 hrs GMT 7 July 1994 - SEE NEWS SERVICE 51/94

AI INDEX: EUR 44/WU 14/94
21 JUNE 1994

FACT SHEET ON CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (CSCE)

- The CSCE is an inter-governmental organization encompassing all of the states of Western Europe, Eastern and Central Europe, including states in the former Yugoslavia, Canada and the USA. It has 53 participating states. The CSCE was created almost 20 years ago during the Cold War to improve east-west relations. The CSCE deals with a range of issues including security and disarmament, human rights and cooperation in economic and environmental matters.

- Since 1989 and the disintegration of the communist governments in Eastern and Central Europe, the CSCE has made dramatic reforms so that it can deal with human rights problems more effectively and to make itself relevant to the new Europe - a Europe it has helped to shape for almost 20 years.

- All CSCE member states have made detailed commitments to respect human rights. They have said that nothing - not even war or other security threats - can justify torture. They have reaffirmed that the right to speak and write one's mind is a fundamental right upon which many other rights depend. These commitments are not legally binding on governments but they are politically binding because governments have voluntarily accepted them and it is generally considered they should be no less binding in practice than treaties.

- The CSCE now has the flexibility and mechanisms to act quickly in the face of systematic violations of human rights. At a meeting in Moscow, less than three years ago, the CSCE created a new procedure - the so-called Moscow mechanism (or Human Dimension mechanism). Under this procedure any CSCE country can invite an expert CSCE mission to investigate a human rights problem in the country. Alternatively, the country can be required to accept a compulsory mission if enough other states support such a move. The support of six states is needed if the state to be investigated has already been approached on a bilateral basis (the Vienna Mechanism) and has refused to invite a mission. In urgent situations where there is a "particularly serious threat to the fulfilment of the provisions of the CSCE human dimension", when no bilateral negotiations have taken place, the support of 10 states is needed to send a compulsory mission.

- A Moscow mechanism mission is composed of three experts chosen from a resource list consisting of up to six experts nominated by each participating state. If a state invites a mission, it selects all three experts from the resource list. If a compulsory mission is sent, the state being investigated selects one expert, the state initiating the investigation selects one expert and these two experts themselves select the third expert from the resource list. The state being investigated is obliged to give the experts total freedom of movement during the mission.

- The role of a Moscow mechanism mission is to investigate a particular human rights problem and help to find a constructive solution. The CSCE does not condemn governments. It seeks to work with member states in a spirit of cooperation. But the bottom line is that the CSCE has a collective duty to keep member states to their human rights commitments.

- The experts who go on the mission report, within a few weeks, to the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials (which meets every two months in Prague) or the Permanent Committee of the CSCE (which meets weekly in Vienna). This confidential report contains recommendations about how to solve the human rights problem. It is then up to one of these bodies to decide follow up action. Most expert reports are made public as soon as they are considered by one of these bodies, but they may be kept confidential.

- The Moscow mechanism has been invoked only four times: to investigate citizenship and language laws in Estonia; minority rights and inter-ethnic relations in Moldova; and twice in former Yugoslavia, to investigate such issues as unarmed attacks on civilians. However, several states have encouraged greater use of the mechanism so that the CSCE can effectively address human rights problems.

- Both the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ECPT), which examines the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in member states of the Council of Europe, and the United Nations Committee against Torture, which monitors implementation by member states of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, have published reports confirming torture is widespread in Turkey.