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- J. whereas during recent years human rights activists, opposition journalists, trade unionists and other opposition supporters have been intimidated, arrested and killed, creating a climate of political violence in the country,
- K. stressing that parliamentary immunity is designed to protect parliamentarians from possibly groundless proceedings or accusations that may be politically motivated,
1. Believes that lifting the parliamentary immunity of opposition legislators creates a dangerous precedent which weakens the legislature as an independent institution of the state and the heart of democracy;
 2. Believes that this action undermines the democratic progress already accomplished by Cambodia;
 3. Calls upon the government of Cambodia immediately and unconditionally to release Cheam Channy, who should not, as a civilian, be subject to military jurisdiction;
 4. Considers that the criminal charges brought by the leaders of the ruling coalition against opposition party members constitute a major setback for democracy in Cambodia, casting doubts on the government's commitment to genuine pluralistic democracy;
 5. Calls on the authorities of Cambodia to abide by their international commitments, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified in 1992;
 6. Urges the government of Cambodia to put an end to persecution of political opponents and human rights activists in their country;
 7. Calls on the National Assembly of Cambodia to restore immunity immediately to all three Members of Parliament and to ensure that members of the opposition are allowed to sit on its parliamentary committees;
 8. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States to raise this question with the Cambodian government and to consider imposing appropriate sanctions if the National Assembly and the government of Cambodia do not reverse their recent actions;
 9. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States, in anticipation of the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting to be held on 10 and 11 March 2005 in Jakarta, to raise these concerns about the current political situation and the threats to democracy resulting from attempts to silence the political opposition in Cambodia;
 10. Suggests that an EU ad hoc delegation visit Cambodia as soon as possible to evaluate the country's political situation;
 11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the UN Secretary-General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the parliament and government of Cambodia and the governments of the ASEAN Member States.

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Saudi Arabia

European Parliament resolution on Saudi Arabia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its earlier resolution on Saudi Arabia (adopted on 18 January 1996)⁽¹⁾ and its resolutions on the annual meetings of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva (2000-2005),
- having regard to the working visit to Saudi Arabia from 7 to 12 February 2005 by members of its Delegation for relations with the Gulf States, including Yemen,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 32, 5.2.1996, p. 98.

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- having regard to the ratification in October 2004 by Saudi Arabia of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and in particular Article 7 thereof on political and public life,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Saudi Arabia's first-ever municipal elections started on 10 February 2005 in Riyadh, and continued until 21 April 2005, constituting the first nationwide electoral process in the history of the country,
- B. whereas half of the members of the municipal councils will be elected, while the other half will still be appointed by the King,
- C. whereas women are excluded from polling, although the electoral law is clear on women's participation, using the Arabic word for 'citizen', which refers to both men and women in indicating those eligible to vote,
- D. whereas several Saudi Arabian authorities have declared that women will be entitled to vote in future,
- E. whereas women in Saudi Arabia continue to face many forms of discrimination in private and public life,
- F. particularly concerned at the conditions faced by migrant workers, especially women, employed as domestic servants,
1. Welcomes the first-ever nationwide electoral process in Saudi Arabia, witnessed by a European Parliament delegation and considered as a positive step towards social and political reform, but deeply regrets the fact that women are not allowed to participate in these elections;
 2. Reminds the authorities of their obligations under CEDAW, to which Saudi Arabia is a State Party, expresses its solidarity with those Saudis who look forward to the inclusion of all citizens in the electoral process, and calls on the authorities to take all appropriate measures to eliminate segregation and discrimination against women, and to gradually increase the participation of women in the political decision-making process on equal terms with men, and enable them to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
 3. Calls on the Saudi Arabian Government to lift restrictions on women's free movement, including the prohibition on driving; on their employment opportunities, on their legal personality and on their representation in judicial processes;
 4. Reiterates its call for the abolition of the death penalty and calls for an immediate moratorium on the carrying out of death sentences in Saudi Arabia where, according to Amnesty International, 31 executions took place in 2004;
 5. Calls on the authorities to take steps to upgrade the working conditions and treatment of immigrant workers, in particular of women;
 6. Regrets that there is still no freedom of religion in Saudi Arabia; encourages the authorities to pursue their efforts to foster greater moderation and tolerance of religious diversity;
 7. Underlines the importance of countering terrorism and fundamentalism whilst safeguarding basic human rights and civil liberties and, on this basis, would favour a strengthening of EU-Saudi relations;
 8. Calls, more specifically, for the EU and Saudi Arabia to support each other's efforts in achieving a satisfactory outcome for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
 9. Calls on the Council and the Commission to raise these issues during the next Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council;

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10. Urges the EU institutions to increase their presence in the region and to strengthen working relations with Saudi Arabia, by increasing resources to the Delegation in Riyadh and by planning an early visit to the Kingdom by the EU External Affairs Commissioner and/or the EU CFSP High Representative;
 11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Crown Prince Abdullah Ibn Abdul Aziz, the Saudi Arabian Government and the Secretary-General of the Center for National Dialogue of Saudi Arabia.
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