

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan

With regard to adoption by the Council of the European Union the conclusion on Uzbekistan on May 14, 2007, the MFA of the Republic of Uzbekistan states the following.

From the start the EU Council conclusion of May 23, 2005 with regard to tragic events, which had taken place in Andijan on May 12-13, 2005, and further conclusion of October 3, 2005, have been made without preliminary study of the state of affairs on the site and assessments of competent expert group or the diplomats of the European Union, as it is accepted in such cases.

The foundation to adopt the mentioned conclusions have served firstly the reports by particular human rights and non-governmental organizations, which later had not been confirmed, as well as the noisy antigovernment anti-Uzbek information campaign unfolded by the engaged mass media.

The outcomes of the visit to Uzbekistan of the delegation of EU experts in December 2006 led by a representative of Finland P.Oyninen, which included the specialists from the Great Britain, Germany, France, and Sweden, as well as the second visit of this delegation to the Republic headed by the FRG representative R.Schulze in April 2007, the results of their studies of materials of investigation and court hearing held by the Supreme Court of the Republic in full conformity with international and national norms of legislation, had revealed completely another picture of the events in Andijan in May 2005.

The irrefutable facts and materials of the court witness about that the profoundly thought out in advance and thoroughly prepared terrorist act had taken place in Andijan aimed at seizing the power and overthrowing the constitutional order.

During implementation of this act the terrorists captured a big amount of weapons and hostages, as well as the building of the city and regional administration, released more than 600 convicted recidivists from the prison. The arsons of the public and state buildings in the city, as well as the tortures and killings of hostages have been carried out.

The representatives of the mentioned EU expert groups were provided with all the inquired materials and sources, and the opportunity to meet and talk to the defense lawyers, kith and kin of the convicts, as well as the perpetrators and heads of

terrorists themselves such as K.Parpiev, Kh.Shakirov, I.Khojiev, S.Zaynabiddinov, and other.

In April 2007 the members of the European Parliament, while having visited Uzbekistan within the framework of participating in the Parliamentary cooperation committee session, have also had an opportunity to travel to Andijan, hold talks and conversations on the site with all persons and representatives of various informal organizations of their interest.

During the negotiations within the framework of the session of representatives of the Parliamentary cooperation committee the free exchange of views and discussions practically on all issues of mutual interest to the parties has taken place.

Along with serious critical remarks the attention has been drawn to the positive changes and shifts, which are taking place in various spheres of Uzbekistan's life. In particular, the attention was paid to the laws, which have been adopted by the parliament in April this year, on Constitutional reform and introduction of amendments into the Constitution of the country aimed at further democratizing the state governance and balancing all branches of power, cardinally liberalizing the executive and judicial and legal system, abolishing the capital punishment and introducing the "habeas corpus" institution from January 1, 2008, strengthening of the role and place of political parties in realization of cardinal reforms in the country.

And, what is especially important is that all these ongoing gradual and step-by-step reforms and processes of democratic renovation, which are the components of the currently realized Single Concept of establishing in Uzbekistan the democratic and law-governed state, sustainable liberal economy and foundations of civil society are gaining support by the absolute majority of the country's population.

Taking into consideration the mentioned, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan believes that the conclusion by the EU Council of May 14, 2007 is of ungrounded, biased nature and under the guise of the human rights rhetoric aims at continuing the use of the so-called EU sanctions as a tool of systematic pressure on Uzbekistan. It is obvious that such decision is counterproductive and cannot promote the realization of cooperation programs, which equally meet the interests of both EU and Uzbekistan.

Tashkent, May 15, 2007