

Chronology of Major Conflicts and Political Events

January 2007

The Spanish government announces that the peace process with the organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA) is well and truly dead. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nikola Spiric, a Bosnian Serb belonging to the Alliance of Independent Social-Democrats (SNSD), becomes the new Prime Minister, while in Serbia the ultra-nationalists of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) win the elections. The assassination of the Turkish journalist of Armenian origin and champion of human rights Hrant Dink stirs up the Turkish population, which comes out into the streets to demonstrate against excessive nationalism in Turkey. In Lebanon, confrontations between opponents and supporters of the government cause several deaths. For the first time since Algeria's independence in 1962, a President of the French National Assembly goes to Algeria. In Europe, Romania and Bulgaria join the EU and Slovenia becomes the twelfth EU country to join the Eurozone. Germany takes over the EU's rotating presidency for six months and Hans-Gert Pötering, leader of the European Popular Party and of the European Democrats (PPE-DE) becomes the new President of the European Parliament for a term of two years and a half. A new party of the far right appears in the European parliament, the party Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty.

Spain

- On 2 January, José Blanco, secretary of the organisation of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) declares that the peace process with the terrorist organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA) is not only suspended but well and truly dead. On 8 January Arnaldo Otegi, leader of Batasuna, the illegal political wing of ETA, appeals to ETA to

maintain its cease-fire. On 9 January ETA claims responsibility for the terrorist attack of 30 December 2006 at Barajas airport. On 13 January demonstrations for peace take place in various towns of the country, boycotted by the Popular Party (PP), the main opposition party, which had been very critical of the peace process with ETA. On 15 January Prime Minister Zapatero apologises to the whole of Spain for having announced an improvement in the peace process with ETA less than 24 hours before the Barajas attack of 30 December 2006.

- On 21 January there are confrontations between young people and police in the Basque Country and Navarre, following a court decision to reclassify three youth movements, Jarrai, Haika and Segi, as terrorist groups because of their links to ETA.

France

- On 3 January a Corsican separatist militant, Ange-Marie Tiberi, dies when his bomb goes off prematurely. Three men are arrested, including the President of the departmental Federation of farmers' trade unions Joseph Colombani. On 5 January Sarkozy announces an investment programme for Corsica of one billion over 7 years.

- On 14 January the minister of the interior Nicolas Sarkozy is elected with 98% of the votes of members of the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) as candidate for the country's Presidential elections. Participation is only 69%.

- On 22 January the priest and social activist Abbé Pierre dies at the age of 94. He had founded the Companions of Emmaus to assist the most destitute and excluded.

Italy

- On 9 January a preliminary hearing begins on the co-operation between Italy and America in the abduction of Imam Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasr (Abu Omar) in Milan in 2003.

- On 18 January the fragile government coalition of Prime Minister Romano Prodi suffers a setback when three of the coalition parties declare their opposition to Prodi's plan to refinance Italy's commitment in NATO operations in Afghanistan.

- On 24 January the European regulators cancel the charges against the Bank of Italy, accused of having impeded the acquisition of Italian banks by foreign ones, after the Bank of Italy modifies its rules in the matter of acquisitions.

- On 25 January the government announces new measures of economic liberalisation, including a reduction of the time required to open a business.

Slovenia

- On 1 January Slovenia adopts the Euro as the official currency, thus becoming the first of the ten countries that joined the EU in 2004 to adopt the single currency and the twelfth EU country to join the Eurozone.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 3 January the tripartite presidency of the country appoints Nikola Spiric, a Bosnian Serb belonging to the Alliance of Independent Social-Democrats (SNSD), to the post of Prime Minister.

- On 11 January the trial of General Dragomir Milosevic, who in 1994 commanded the Romanija Corps of Sarajevo in the Serb Bosnian army, opens in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). He is charged

with crimes against humanity and violation of the laws and customs of war.

- On 24 January Christian Schwarz-Schilling announces his resignation as High Representative of the United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Serbia

- On 21 January the election of a new parliament takes place following the withdrawal of the liberal party G17+ from the government coalition in protest at the government's failure to arrest General Ratko Mladic, a commander of the Serb Bosnian army wanted for genocide. This is the first parliamentary election since Montenegro became independent in May 2006. The Serb Radical Party (SRS), an ultra-nationalist party, is confirmed in its leadership with 81 seats, against 130 for the three democratic pro-European parties and blocs, the Democratic Party (DS), the Democratic Party of Serbia - New Serbia (DSS-NS) and G17+. The representatives of the EU had openly encouraged the electors to reject the ultra-nationalists of SRS and to vote for the pro-European parties.

- On 26 January the special envoy of the United Nations for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, presents to the members of the contact group (France, Germany, Italy, Russia, United Kingdom and United States) assembled in Vienna his recommendations on the final status of the disputed province of Kosovo.

- On 29 January the government dismisses the inspector general of police and old advocate of human rights Vladimir Bozovic, who declares that his dismissal is due to pressures on the government to capture Ratko Mladic. He is replaced by Ljubinko Nikolic.

Montenegro

- On 18 January Montenegro becomes the 185th member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Albania

- On 12 January, after weeks of dispute between the government and the opposition on the preparation of municipal elections, 12 political parties sign an agreement to hold those elections on the following 18 February, thus putting an

end to the crisis caused by the cancellation of those elections, which had originally been scheduled for 20 January. On 13 January the Albanian parliament amends the Constitution and the electoral law to bring those elections into line with European norms.

Greece

- On 10 January thousands of university teachers and civil servants go on strike to protest against the government's plans to privatise the universities. On 15 January the doctors working in public hospitals go onto the streets to demand improvement of their conditions of work and a reduction in working hours.
- On 12 January, in protest against the presence of American and NATO bases on Greek territory, Revolutionary Struggle, a left-wing revolutionary group, throws a grenade at the United States embassy in Athens, causing no casualties.

Cyprus

- On 9 January the authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) begin to dismantle the footbridge over Ledra Street in Nicosia, regarded by the Greek part of the island as an obstacle to efforts to reunify the commercial quarter of the town.

- On 22 January the ministers of foreign affairs of the EU decide to accelerate the establishment of direct trade relations with the TRNC.

Turkey

- On 19 January the Turkish journalist of Armenian origin and defender of human rights Hrant Dink, editor of the bilingual Turco-Armenian weekly *Agos*, is assassinated as he leaves his office in the centre of Istanbul. Hrant Dink had been prosecuted several times for insult to Turkish identity under Law 301 of the penal code, for criticising Turkey's refusal to admit the Armenian genocide. He had already received death threats from Turkish nationalists. Thousands of demonstrators take to the streets to protest against what they perceive as excessive nationalism, and on 23 January 50,000 people attend the funeral of Hrant Dink, to which the Turkish authorities invited leading Armenian political and religious

figures. On 25 January 5 people are arrested. On 26 and 31 January two other suspects are arrested.

Syria

- On 10 January the Syrian writer Akram Bounni is refused permission to go to Brussels to attend a sitting of the European Parliament devoted to human rights in Syria and the relations between Syria and the EU.

- On 27 January Syria adopts a series of laws to promote foreign investment. *Lebanon*

- On 23 January thousands of opponents of the regime demonstrate in several towns at the call of the Shiite group Hezbollah and its Christian ally, Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement. During these demonstrations, clashes occur between opponents and supporters of the government, causing three deaths and some hundred injured. On 25 January clashes break out between supporters of the two groups in the Arab university of Beirut and spread to neighbouring institutions. These clashes result in three deaths. The secretary general of Hezbollah, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, calls for calm. On 31 January the *Herald Tribune* reports that Iran and Saudi Arabia are making diplomatic efforts to put an end to the political crisis in Lebanon.

- On 25 January an international conference of donors in Paris raises a total of 7.6 billion dollars to help reconstruction in Lebanon following the war between Hezbollah and Israel in July and August 2006.

Jordan

- On 24 January three men are condemned by the State Security Court to sentences of from 7 to 15 years' imprisonment for planning attacks against American targets in Jordan.

Egypt

- On 1 January Ayman al-Zawahiri, the number two man in the organisation Al-Qaeda, accuses Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen of collaboration with the Americans and Israelis.

- On 13 January security officers arrest Huwaida Taha Mitwalli, a journalist of *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, a London-based

newspaper, while he is making a documentary on the practice of torture in Egypt for the Al-Jazeera television network. The following day a State prosecutor accuses Mitwalli of injuring national interests and of possessing and distributing false images on the internal situation of the country liable to harm the dignity of the country. This arrest follows the publication of a video showing the torture of prisoners in Egyptian detention centres.

- On 14 and 24 January, in what looks like a growing campaign of repression against the Islamic organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood, the security forces arrest respectively 6 and 7 members of the organisation.

Libya

- On 23 January the General People's Congress, Libya's highest legislative and executive authority, proceeds to a major ministerial reshuffle and replaces the ministers of finance, economy and justice.

- On 31 January Libya's minister of the interior Salah Rajab decides, following the session of the Council of Arab ministers of the interior assembled in Tunis, to demand a visa for entry to their territory from all Arab nationals, with the aim of fighting against the infiltration of terrorist elements and combating clandestine immigration.

Tunisia

- On 3 January 12 people suspected of belonging to an Islamist group die in clashes with the police in the town of Soliman. Fifteen people are arrested. On 12 January the minister of the interior and of local development Rafik Belhaj Kacem declares that these people are terrorists, suggesting that they have links with Islamist extremists in Algeria.

Algeria

- On 10 January France and Algeria declare that they will need an additional delay to sign a treaty of friendship, intended to strengthen their relations. From 19 to 22 January, for the first time since the country's independence in 1962, a President of France's National Assembly, Jean-Louis Debré, goes to

Algeria. He makes a plea for rapprochement, compromised by the polemic over the colonisation.

- On 28 January the Algerian journal *Liberté* reports that the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) has changed its name to Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb.

Morocco

- On 4 January, the official press agency MAP reports that the police have broken up a terrorist network, which had international links and which sought to recruit and send volunteers to Iraq.

- On 15 January the High Court of Casablanca gives a three years' suspended sentence to two journalists, Driss Ksikes and Sanaa Elaji, for making jokes about sexuality, Islam and politics in an article.

European Union

- On 1 January Germany assumes the rotating presidency of the EU for six months and is allocated the task of reaching an agreement on the content of the constitution of the European Union.

- On 1 January Romania and Bulgaria become members of the European Union, bringing the total number of members to 27. On 15 January 35 Romanian and 18 Bulgarian members of the European parliament are formally elected, raising the number of members of the European parliament from 732 to 785. Thanks to the new Romanian members from the right, a new party, Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty makes its appearance in the European Parliament, and the French member from the National Front, Bruno Gollnisch, is elected head of it.

- On 16 January Hans-Gert Pöttering, the leader of the European Popular Party and of the European Democrats (PPE-DE), is elected to the post of President of the European Parliament till the end of its term in 2009.

- On 26 January Spain and Luxembourg hold in Madrid a ministerial meeting assembling the 18 member states that have already ratified the European Constitution, together with Portugal and Poland. Under German pressure, there is no follow-up to this meeting.

February 2007

The Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb sets off 7 bombs near police stations around Algiers, with 6 victims. In Lebanon, on the eve of the second anniversary of the death of the former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, bombs go off in two buses in the Christian village of Ain Alaq, causing three deaths. The special envoy of the United Nations in charge of the negotiations on the final status for Kosovo presents his plan for the province of Kosovo, which is immediately rejected by the Serbian President. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) declares that the massacre in Srebrenica in 1995 should be classified as genocide. In Italy, the President refuses the resignation of the Italian Prime Minister, who has lost a vote in the Senate on an important question of foreign policy. At the end of February the government coalition carries a vote of confidence in the Senate. The campaign of repression carried on by the authorities for several months against the Muslim Brotherhood continues in Egypt and results in the arrest of 73 members in the month of February. In Europe the Ministers of the Environment of the EU commit themselves to reducing 20% of their greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

Portugal

- On 11 February 59.25% of the electors vote in favour of de-criminalising abortion, permitting women to abort up to 10 weeks of pregnancy. Despite participation in the referendum below 50%, which was the minimum required for the vote to be binding, the Prime Minister José Sócrates declares that abortion will be legalised.

Spain

- On 12 February the Supreme Court reduces from twelve to three years the prison sentence on José Ignacio de Juana Chaos, former head of the "Comando Madrid" of the terrorist organisation ETA, who had been on a hunger strike for 98 days. On 24 February the Association of Victims of Terrorism (AVT), which is close to the opposition Popular Party (PP), organises a demonstration in Madrid

against the court's decision and demands the resignation of the Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero for having begun peace negotiations with ETA.

- On 12 February the former prosecutor of the Supreme Court Mariano Fernández Bermejo is formally appointed to the post of minister of justice.
- On 15 February the trial opens of 29 persons, mostly of Moroccan nationality, accused of being implicated in the Madrid attacks of March 2004.

France

- On 8 February two police officers are accused of failing to assist persons in danger in the case of two young Muslims electrocuted in a Paris suburb in December 2005. Their deaths had led to riots all over the country and the declaration of a state of emergency.
- On 19 February the two legislative chambers adopt a series of constitutional amendments including the inclusion of the abolition of the death penalty in the French constitution and the possibility of removing the President of the Republic from his functions for derelictions of duty manifestly incompatible with the exercise of his mandate.

Italy

- On 7 February the judge Sante Spinaci orders that the American soldier Mario Lozano stand trial on 17 April over the killing of the Italian secret agent Nicola Calipari when the latter was engaged in a mission for the freeing of an Italian hostage in Iraq. The US Defence Department declares that the soldier will not be handed over.
- On 16 February the judge Caterina Interlandi orders that 26 Americans, mostly CIA agents, and 5 Italians stand trial on 8 June in connection with the affair of abduction and torture of the Egyptian imam Osama Mustafa Hassan Nasr in 2003. The latter was freed on 11 February after spending four years in prison. On 28 February the American government declares that it will oppose all demands for extradition of CIA agents.
- On 21 February the Prime Minister Romano Prodi resigns after his government coalition loses an important vote in the Senate over Italian support for

NATO operations in Afghanistan and the expansion of the American military base located at Vicenza. On 24 February President Giorgio Napolitano opposes Prodi's resignation and invites him to submit his government to a vote of confidence in the two legislative chambers. On 23 February Prodi obtains an agreement of the 9 parties of his coalition on a programme containing 12 points of non-negotiable policies, including the military presence in Afghanistan. To gain the support of the Union of Democrats for Europe (UDEUR), the government's aim of legalising marriage between two persons of the same sex is abandoned. On 28 February Prodi's coalition carries a vote of confidence in the Senate.

Malta

- On 27 February the Maltese government submits its official request to enter the Eurozone from 1 January 2008.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina*

- On 9 February a new Council of Ministers is formed under the presidency of the Bosnian Serb Nikola Spiric, appointed to the post of Prime Minister by the tripartite presidency the previous 3 January.
- On 16 February Gojko Jankovic, leader of a military unit of the Foca brigade which was part of the Bosnian Serb army, is sentenced to 34 years' imprisonment for crimes against humanity by a court of the country.
- On 26 February the International Court of Justice (ICJ) declares that the massacre of Muslims perpetrated in 1995 in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica fulfilled the criteria constituting genocide. This is the first time that a State is judged for genocide under the terms of the 1948 convention of the United Nations, adopted after the Nazi Holocaust.

Serbia

- On 2 February Martii Ahtisaari, the special envoy of the United Nations in charge of the negotiations on the final status of Kosovo, presents his plan for the province of Kosovo in two press conferences in Belgrade and in Pristina. Without recommending independence, the plan is closer to the Albanian than

to the Serb demands, and recommends amongst other things that Kosovo should have the power to present its candidacy for international organisations. In other respects, the proposals provide for the future creation of an international civil and military presence in Kosovo so as to assist the local authorities in ensuring peace and stability in the region. This plan is well received by the Albanian party and rejected by the Serbian President Boris Tadic. On 21 February both parties meet again in Vienna to discuss this plan.

- On 10 February two Albanians die in a demonstration of 3,000 members of the independence group Vetevendosja in front of the buildings of the legislative authority in Pristina. The demonstrators demand a referendum on independence.
- On 16 February a court in Belgrade sentences Milorad Lukovic, the former commander of the special police, and Radomir Markovic, the former State chief of security, to 15 and 8 years' imprisonment respectively for the attempted assassination of the Serbian minister of foreign affairs Vuk Draskovic in October 1999.

Albania

- On 18 February the main opposition bloc, led by the Socialist Party of Albania (PSS), wins the majority of the 384 municipalities in the local elections.

Greece

- On 5 February the government of Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis survives a vote of no-confidence in the Vouli (single-chamber legislature).
- On 22 February 3 policemen are injured in demonstrations of students and teachers against the privatisation of universities.

Cyprus

- On 15 February the Greek Cypriot government makes an international call for tenders for oil and gas exploration along its coasts, against the opposition of Turkey, which is considering exploring the same areas and declares that the Greek part of the island has no right to sign agreements in the name of the Turk-

ish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

Turkey

- On 2 February a video showing some policemen treating as a hero the assassin of the journalist of Armenian origin Hrant Dink causes shock and consternation amid the Turkish population. Four policemen involved in this video are suspended. On 5 February the minister of the interior suspends the chief of intelligence police in Istanbul, Ahmet Ilhan Guler, for having failed to communicate essential information which he had received a year earlier on the planning of the assassination.
- On 13 and 18 February the Turkish army launches a raid against Kurdish insurgents in the town of Tunceli and the province of Bingol.

Syria

- On 8 February, at meetings with different representatives of the Syrian government, including Vice-President Farouk Shara, the minister of the interior Bassam Abdelmajied and the assistant minister of foreign affairs Faisal Mikdad, the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees António Guterres makes acknowledgment of the support of Syria for the Iraqis who had fled the violence in their country of origin, and calls for greater international involvement to ease the humanitarian burden weighing on the region.

Lebanon

- On 8 February the Lebanese army seizes a cargo of arms near the port of Beirut, destined for Hezbollah.
- On 13 February three people lose their lives and another 21 are wounded in explosions in two buses in the Christian village of Ain Alaq, north of Beirut and a few kilometres from the birth-place of the former President Amjn Gemayel, whose son, Pierre Gemayel, was killed in November 2006 while minister for industry. In spite of the attack, nearly 300,000 people gather on 14 February in the centre of Beirut to commemorate the second anniversary of the death of the former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. At this demonstration, his son, Saad Hariri, leader of the 14 March Movement, appeals for the unity of the country.

Jordan

- On 21 February, for the first time, a Christian, Aziz Mossadeh, is appointed to the Administrative Council of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood and principal opposition group.

Egypt

- On 15 February, as part of a campaign of repression conducted by the authorities for the past months against the Muslim Brotherhood, the leading opposition force in Egypt, the authorities arrest 73 members of the organisation. On 28 February a court orders the freezing of the funds of 29 members of the organisation suspected of financing it.
- On 16 February the World Health Organisation (WHO) confirms that an Egyptian woman died of the H5N1 bird flu, bringing to three the number of people who died from the virus in 2007 in Egypt and to 13 since 2006.
- On 22 February Abdel-Karim Nabil Suleiman, arrested in November 2006, is sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment for insulting Islam and President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak, in several articles published in his blog. He is the first blogger to be condemned for his opinions expressed on the Internet. International human rights organisations denounce this serious blow to freedom of expression.

Libya

- On 10 February the European commissioner for immigration, Franco Frattini, announces that Libya has the intention of co-operating with the European Union in the fight against the influx of clandestine immigrants into Europe, and that it agrees to receive for the first time a delegation of experts of the EU to study conditions for reinforced surveillance on the southern frontier of the country. The commissioner adds that in return Tripoli will be a participant in co-operation in the Mediterranean.
- On 10 February the minister of foreign affairs Mohamed Abdel-Rahman Chalgam announces following a meeting of members of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) that Libya has no intention of imposing entry visas to its territory for na-

tionals of Arab countries but will instead impose work and residence permits.

Tunisia

- On 17 February, in the context of a series of prosecutions of young people accused of being allied to the Salafist ideology, a court sentences 11 members of an Islamist group to three months and a half in prison for having held meetings without obtaining permission from the Tunisian authorities.

Algeria

- On 13 February 6 people, including two members of the security forces, die and 30 others are injured in the near-simultaneous explosion of seven bombs near police stations in towns to the east of Algiers. The Organisation of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, formerly the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), claims responsibility for these terrorist attacks.

Morocco

- On 26 February twelve ministries and government agencies, including the ministries of the interior and of justice, and nine independent organisations for the defence of human rights, adopt a five-year programme to promote respect for human rights among the population. It is based on cultural projects and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at changing mentalities, including those of the police and religious leaders. Once a year, a commission assembling representatives of the government and of associations for the defence of human rights is to meet to evaluate progress achieved.

European Union

- On 8 February, Joaquín Cortés is appointed first ambassador of the rights of the Roma. His task is to assist the member states of the EU in raising their economic and social status and combating discrimination against them.
- On 14 February the European Parliament adopts the report of Giovanni Claudio Fava on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners. Fourteen member states of the EU, including Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, are

accused of being implicated closely or more distantly in this affair.

- On 15 February the ministers of justice and internal affairs of the EU adopt a series of rules to be put in place within three years regarding the transfer of prisoners within the EU, so that these may serve their sentences in their countries of origin.
- On 20 February the ministers of environment of the EU commit themselves to reducing 20% of their greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, with 1990 as the benchmark year, and by 30% if there is an international agreement.
- On 21 February the European Commission (EC) imposes a record fine of 992.2 million Euros on 5 lift-building companies, found guilty of having formed a cartel.

March 2007

Algeria and Morocco are hit by terrorist attacks. In Egypt constitutional amendments, criticised by the opposition and human-rights organisations, are approved by referendum. The trial of the former Prime Minister of the disputed province of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, opens before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Serbia appeals to the United Nations to reject the plan for a resolution for the province of Kosovo composed by the mediator Martii Ahtisaari. In a positive step for the reunification of Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot authorities demolish the separation wall in Ledra Street, in the centre of Nicosia. For the first time since the isolation of Syria, following the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005, a highly-placed representative of the EU visits Syria. On 25 March Europe celebrates the 50th anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome. At the European summit in Brussels the EU member states adopt binding aims in the matter of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Portugal

- On 8 March, following the referendum on the subject in February, the Assembly legalises abortion in the first ten weeks of pregnancy.

Spain

- On 1 March the government accepts that José Ignacio de Juana Chaos, former head of the “Comando Madrid” of the organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA), serve the end of his prison sentence under house arrest. On 10 March thousands of demonstrators take to the streets of Madrid, at the call of the opposition Popular Party (PP), to demand the resignation of Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. On 26 March Juan José Ibarretxe, President of the Basque General Assembly, is prosecuted for “contempt” in the High Court of the Basque Country for having held a meeting the previous January with Arnaldo Otegi, the leader of Batasuna, the political wing of the terrorist organisation ETA.

France

- On 1 March a new treatment for malaria is revealed, the product of a collaboration between Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the French pharmaceutical company Sanofi-Aventis within the project “Medicines for neglected diseases” launched in 2003 by MSF.
- On 11 March President Jacques Chirac announces that he will not stand for a third Presidential term. On 16 March 12 candidates are officially registered for the elections, all having obtained at least 500 signatures of national or local politicians. On 22 March Nicolas Sarkozy resigns as minister of the interior so as to enter the Presidential campaign.
- On 22 March a Paris court rejects the accusation of three Muslim organisations that the publication of the Danish caricatures of the Prophet Mahomet in the satirical journal Charlie Hebdo incited hatred towards Muslims.

Italy

- On 2 March the coalition government of Romano Prodi wins a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies (lower house).

Slovenia

- On 31 March the mandate of Mitja Gaspari as governor of the Bank of Slovenia (central bank) comes to an end

without any agreement being reached as to his successor. The Chamber of State (lower house) had not approved the candidates nominated by President Janez Dranovsek.

Croatia

- On 6 March 2007 the Stabilisation and Association Council (SAC) between the EU and Croatia holds its third session. The SAC states amongst other things that Croatia continues to fulfil the political criteria of Copenhagen, but those new and sustained efforts need to be made for reforms and their implementation in a certain number of important domains, such as the judicial system, public administration and the fight against corruption. The SAC welcomes the fact that full and complete co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is continuing, but declares that supplementary improvements are necessary as regards prosecution for war crimes in Croatia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 28 February the government of the Republika Srpska apologises for the crimes committed during the Bosnian war between 1992 and 1995 and appeals to the Croat-Muslim Federation to do the same.
- On 30 March the Chamber of Representatives of the Croat-Muslim Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina approves a new government, under the presidency of Nadzad Brankovic of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA).

Serbia

- On 5 March there begins in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) the trial of the former Prime Minister of the disputed province of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, accused of war crimes and of crimes against humanity for acts committed when he was commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) during the separatist war in the province from 1997 to 1999.
- On 10 March, at the last meeting of the Serb leaders and the Albanian majority of Kosovo on the plan for a resolution for Kosovo, drawn up by the special envoy of the United Nations Martii Ahtisaari, Ser-

bia rejects the plan and appeals to the United Nations to do the same. At the closure of the meeting, Ahtisaari declares that there is no hope for the two parties to come to an agreement on the final status of the province. On 26 March he submits his plan to the United Nations Security Council. The United States and United Kingdom support his plan, against the opposition of Russia, which is Serbia's ally.

Montenegro

- On 12 March the EU and Montenegro initial a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, an important step towards the accession of Montenegro to the EU. The EU requires Montenegro to adopt a new constitution before the agreement can be formally signed.

Albania

- On 12 March the Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha reshuffles his government, three weeks after the municipal elections in which the electors showed their discontent. Gazmend Oketa becomes deputy Prime Minister and Ilir Rusmajli, the former deputy Prime Minister, becomes minister of justice.

Greece

- On 8 March 20 people are injured and another 40 are arrested in a demonstration of more than 20,000 students and academic staff in front of the Vouli (one-chamber parliament) in Athens against the privatisation of universities.
- On 12 March the European Commission brings Greece before the European Communities Court of Justice (ECCJ) for failure to implement the European legislation on the transport and slaughter of animals.

Cyprus

- On 8 March the Greek Cypriot authorities demolish the wall which cut in two Ledra Street, in the centre of Nicosia, and separated the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities since the Turkish invasion of the island. The Greek Cypriot minister of foreign affairs appeals to Turkey to make a gesture of its own, adding that the transit point will not be opened to civilians until Turkey withdraws its troops from the area. Both the

EU and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) welcome this decision.

Turkey

- On 7 March a court orders Internet Service Providers (ISP) to block access to a site for the exchange of YouTube videos, following the diffusion of videos insulting the founder of the Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. On 9 March this decision is lifted, after the American site decides to suppress the accused videos.
- On 8 March 31 women are arrested for having organised an illegal demonstration in support of Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) included on the European terrorist list. On 21 March the police arrest more than 200 persons at unauthorised rallies marking the celebrations for the Kurdish New Year (Newroz), at which the Kurds claimed independence.
- On 29 March the negotiations for Turkey's accession to the EU resume with the opening of negotiations on the second chapter, relating to business and industry.

Syria

- On 12 March Ellen Sauerbrey, American Assistant Secretary of State for population, refugees and migrations, goes to Syria and meets the deputy Prime Minister Faisal Miqdad and representatives of the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees, to discuss the question of Iraqi refugees in Syria. On 14 March, for the first time since the country's isolation after the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005, a highly placed representative of the EU, the High Representative of the EU for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Javier Solana, goes to Syria and meets the President, Bashar al-Assad, the Vice-President, Farouk al-Shara and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Walid al-Mu'allim.

Lebanon

- On 8 March, in a joint declaration, the leaders of the rival political factions declare that they will continue negotiations

to bring an end to the current political crisis.

- On 14 March security officers arrest 4 Syrians, members of a radical Palestinian group, in relation with the attack on two buses the previous 13 February in the Christian village of Ain Alaq, to the north of Beirut.

- On 27 March the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1748 (2007), extending till 15 June 2008 the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Investigation into the assassination in 2005 of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

Jordan

- On 7 March the trial opens in the State Security Court of 3 Jordanians accused of having planned the assassination of American President George W. Bush during his visit to Jordan in late November 2006.

Egypt

- On 19 March the People's Assembly approves constitutional orders which according to the government are intended to fight more effectively against sectarianism and terrorism. Among these amendments are the prohibition on forming political parties on a religious base, the end of supervision of elections by judges and new anti-terrorist measures giving large powers to the police to arrest suspects and keep their communications under surveillance. The opposition and human rights organisations accuse the government of seeking to undermine civil and political liberties and encouraging the violation of human rights. On 25 March a protest against the holding of a referendum the following day on the constitutional amendments takes place in Cairo and results in the arrest of 19 people. The referendum, boycotted by the opposition, takes place on 26 March, and on 27 March the minister of Justice Mamduh Mur'i announces that 75.9% of participants voted in favour of the amendments. The participation amounted to 27.1% of electors. The national council for human rights, a government body under the presidency of the former Secretary General of the United Nations Boutros Boutros-Ghali, reports numerous defects in the organisation

and holding of the referendum and criticises certain provisions of this reform.

Tunisia

▪ On 28 March some hundred North African and European businesses operating in the field of environmental management assemble in Tunis, within the framework of a partnership meeting on the subject "innovative opportunities for the conservation of the environment." They plead for the putting in place of a common and effective environmental policy aimed at reducing the damaging effects of industrial waste and polluting emissions on the environment and ensuring a durable development in the region. They commit themselves to an exchange of expertise and the seizing of partnership opportunities offered in the region.

Algeria

▪ On 3 and 4 March the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb carries out two terrorist attacks at Medea and in the province of Tizi Ouzou respectively. Ten Algerians and a Russian lose their lives in these attacks.

▪ On 22 March the most important fraud trial in Algeria's history concludes with the sentencing in absentia of Rafiq Khalifa, the owner of the Khalifa Bank, to life imprisonment.

Morocco

▪ On 5 March Mohammed Ben El Hadi Messahel, of Tunisian origin, is sentenced to 15 years in prison for membership of a terrorist network recruiting persons in Morocco for attacks planned in Europe, particularly in France and Italy.

▪ On 6 March the Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero holds a meeting with his Moroccan opposite number to discuss the project to build a railway between Morocco and Spain passing under the Strait of Gibraltar.

▪ On 11 March a suicide attempt in a cybercafé in Casablanca injures 4 people. An accomplice of the bomber, who died in the attack, is arrested.

European Union

▪ On 1 March the Agency for Fundamental Rights, successor of the Euro-

pean Observatory for Racist and Xenophobic Phenomena (EUMC), is officially inaugurated in Vienna.

▪ On 8 and 9 March the member states of the EU adopt at the European summit in Brussels binding objectives in the matter of climate and energy: reduction by 20% of greenhouse-gas emissions by 2020, with the emissions of 1990 as the base; a 20% increase of renewable energies in the EU's total energy consumption by 2020; a minimum proportion of 10% of biofuels in the total consumption of oil and gas intended for transport within the EU by 2020. The European Council also favours the EU's fixing the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2020 with 1990 as the base year provided that the other more economically advanced developed countries make a contribution adapted to their respective responsibilities and capacities.

▪ On 25 March Europe celebrates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, which in 1957 established the European Economic Community (EEC). In the informal European summit held in Berlin, a declaration is adopted in which Germany commits itself to reaching an agreement on the European Constitution.

Arab League

▪ On 28 and 29 March the Arab League holds its 19th summit in Riyadh. The Arab leaders decide to renew the proposal of March 2002 of the Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz to exchange "territories against peace" with the object of putting an end to the Israeli-Arab conflict. The Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi boycotts this meeting, and the President of Tunisia Zine El Abidine Ben Ali is represented by the Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi.

April 2007

Three suicide attacks, claimed by the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb, cause 33 deaths in Algiers while another attack is foiled in Morocco. In Syria the Baath Party and its allies of the National Progressive Front win the legislative elections. In Egypt human rights organisations denounce the frauds

in the referendum in March and the trial of 40 leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood movement opens before a military court. The National Assembly of Kosovo approves by a majority the plan on the status of Kosovo presented by the United Nations special envoy in Kosovo Martii Ahtisaari. In Turkey mass demonstrations are organised against the election of an Islamist to the presidency of the country. Abdullah Gül, the candidate of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in power and the only candidate entered in the Presidential election, does not obtain enough votes to be elected in the first round, and the opposition demands early elections. In Lebanon tensions erupt in the National Assembly at the session intended to approve the establishment of an international tribunal to judge suspects in the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005. Nicolas Sarkozy of the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) and Ségolène Royal of the Socialist Party (PS) win the first round of the Presidential elections in France. The ministries of the interior of the EU approve the creation of a rapid response force to aid member states confronted with a sudden influx of clandestine immigrants.

Portugal

▪ On 10 April President Anibal Cavaco Silva ratifies the law legalising abortion in the first 10 weeks of pregnancy, but recommends that measures be taken so that abortion remains a solution of last resort.

▪ On 26 April the former President Jorge Sampaio is designated by the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon as first High Representative of the United Nations for the alliance of civilisations.

Spain

▪ On 8 April a spokesperson of the terrorist organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA) declares in an interview published in the Basque paper *Gara* that the organisation maintains its commitment to peace and is ready to make important commitments in favour of non-violence, provided that an end is put to attacks against the Basque nation. He accuses the Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of lack of political will.

- On 10 April the police of the Canary Islands report that for the first time African immigrants trying to reach the Spanish coasts have thrown Molotov cocktails against a Spanish maritime surveillance patrol.
- On 27 April judicial prosecutions are brought against three American soldiers for the murder of the Spanish cameraman José Manuel Couso Permy, who died in the bombardment of his hotel in Baghdad by American forces in 2003.

France

- On 22 April Nicolas Sarkozy, of the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), wins the first round of the Presidential elections, with Ségolène Royale, the candidate of the Socialist Party (PS), as runner-up.

Italy

- On 17 April the trial in absentia begins in Rome of Mario Lozano, an American soldier accused of murdering the Italian secret agent Nicola Calipari in Iraq in March 2005, when he had just liberated an Italian hostage. The trial is finally postponed to 14 May.
- On 20 April the Prime Minister Romano Prodi announces that he will not present himself for the legislative elections of 2011. On 21 and 22 April, on the initiative of Romano Prodi, the Democrats of the Left (DS) and Margherita, respectively the leading and second parties of the government coalition Union, amalgamate and form the new Democratic Party (PD). The purpose of this amalgamation is to stabilise the centre-left government coalition.

Croatia

- On 18 April the member of parliament Branimir Glavas, who had lost his parliamentary immunity in October 2006, is arrested, accused of war crimes by a court in Osijek for having ordered the murder of 10 civilians of Serb origin in 1991.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 3 April the Appeal Court of the International Criminal Tribunal for the for-

mer Yugoslavia (ICTY) reduces from 32 to 30 years' imprisonment the sentence of Radislav Brđjanin, the former deputy Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska. On 4 April the ICTY sentences Dragan Zelenovic, a former Bosnian Serb policeman, to 15 years' imprisonment for raping and torturing Bosnian Muslim women in 1992 in the municipality of Foca, in eastern Bosnia.

Serbia

- On 15 April the Parliamentary Assembly of Kosovo approves by a majority the plan on the status of Kosovo presented by the United Nations Special Envoy in Kosovo, Martii Ahtisaari, who recommends independence under international supervision.
- On 10 April a Serbian court judging war crimes sentences 4 members of the paramilitary police unit "Scorpions" to prison terms up to 20 years, for the summary execution of 6 Muslim civilians of Bosnian origin in July 1995 near Trnovo. They had been arrested following the broadcasting in Serbian television in June 2005 of an amateur video showing the murders.

Macedonia

- On 16 April the trial opens of the former minister of the interior Ljube Boskovski and of Johan Tarculovski, a former police officer, before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). They are on trial for their role in the clashes that broke out in early August 2001 in the village of Ljubotno between the Macedonian security forces and rebels of Albanian origin, and which cost the lives of 10 Albanians.
- On 18 April a new political party, the National Albanian Movement for Illyria (LKSHI) is constituted. It has the aim of federalising Macedonia into two entities.

Albania

- On 24 April the Minister of Foreign Affairs Besnik Mustafaj resigns for health reasons. The Prime Minister Sali Berisha proposes the nomination to the vacant post of Lulzim Basha, hitherto minister of public works, transport and telecommunications.

Greece

- On 7 April 2007 The Economist reports that the Vouli (single-chamber parliament) has rejected the government's plans to reform the constitution to allow the creation of private universities.
- On 28 April the Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis dismisses the minister of employment and social security Savvas Tsitouridis for his responsibility in the scandal of state pension funds.

Turkey

- On 5 April the Turkish negotiators withdraw from negotiations with Gaz de France on the construction of a pipeline to transport the gas of the Caspian region to Europe, in protest at a proposed French law about the acknowledgment of the Armenian genocide between 1915 and 1923.
- On 14 April nearly 300,000 people take to the streets of Ankara to protest against the possible candidature of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whom they accuse of eroding secularism in Turkey, in the country's Presidential elections. On 24 April the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in power decides to present the current deputy Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs Abdullah Gül as candidate in the Presidential elections. Abdullah Gül, whose wife wears a veil, promises that he will defend the principles of secularism. On 29 April nearly 700,000 demonstrators in Istanbul accuse the government of wishing to set up an Islamic state and demand that the government withdraw its Presidential candidate. On 27 April, in the first round of Presidential elections, boycotted by the secularist parties, Abdullah Gül, the sole candidate contesting the Presidential election, does not obtain the two-thirds majority in the Grand National Assembly (GNA) assuring election in the first round. After the vote, the military supreme command warns the government that it will not hesitate to intervene if it considers that secularism is threatened. On 29 April the Council of Europe warns the army not to intervene. The opposition parties call for an early general election.
- In the course of the month, 32 Kurdish insurgents and at least 9 soldiers are killed in clashes.

Syria

- On 22 and 23 April, the Baath Party and its 6 allies in the National Progressive Front win the legislative elections with 172 seats out of 250. The 78 remaining seats are won by independent candidates.
- On 24 April a criminal court in Damascus sentences the advocate and defender of human rights Anwar al-Bunni, signatory of the Beirut-Damascus Declaration, to 5 years' imprisonment for "dissemination of false reports injurious to the State" and to a fine of 2,000 dollars, for having conducted activities in the Centre for the Development of Civil Society without obtaining prior permission. He had been arrested in May 2006, with other signatories of the same declaration.

Lebanon

- On 3 April the President of the National Assembly Nabbi Berri prevents the pro-government members of the Assembly from entering it, so as to prevent the holding of a session to approve the formation of an international tribunal to judge the suspects in the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005. The government of Faoud Siniora, together with the parliamentary majority led by the son of Rafiq Hariri, Saad Hariri, the Sunni leader of the "14 March Movement", accuse Nabbi Berri of protecting Syria, suspected of being implicated in the assassination. The pro-government members write to the United Nations to demand the establishment of that tribunal.
- On 23 April the kidnap and murder of Ziad Qablan, aged 25, and of Ziad Ghandour, aged 12, both of them connected with the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) of Walid Jumblatt, arouse fears of a return to sectarian tensions in Lebanon.

Jordan

- On 2 April the State Security Court sentences to prison 6 persons, including 3 Iraqis, one Syrian and one Libyan, accused of having planned an attack on the Queen Alia international airport in Amman in 2006 in co-ordination with Al-Qaeda. Four of them are sentenced to life imprisonment.

- On 21 April Jordanian security agents confiscate the records of the interview of Prince Hassan bin Talal, uncle of King Abdullah II of Jordan, on Al-Jazeera. Al-Jazeera declares that these records were confiscated because they contained proposals that could injure relations between Jordan and friendly countries.

Egypt

- On 10 April the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights and 5 other human rights organisations declare that participation in the referendum of 26 March was only 5% and not 27% as the government announced. They also denounce the frauds in the referendum.
- On 17 April the Egyptian authorities confirm the arrest of the Egyptian engineer Mohammed Sayed Saber Ali, an employee of the country's nuclear agency. He is accused of spying for Israel.
- On 26 April the trial of 40 leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood, including the number 3 of the organisation Khayrat al-Shater, opens before a military court. They are accused of directing an illegal group, of terrorism and of money-laundering.

Tunisia

- On 12 April a report published on the Internet site of Al-Hayat, based in London, declares that in the past two years nearly 1,000 Tunisians have been detained as part of the fight against terrorism. The majority are young people, accused of wishing to enlist in the Iraqi resistance.

Algeria

- On 11 April three suicide attacks claimed by the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb take place almost simultaneously in Algiers and cause 33 deaths and 220 injuries. The first attack was directed against the offices of the Prime Minister and the ministry of the interior, the second against a power station in the Bab Ezzouar district and the third against the police station of that district.
- On 18 April the Al-Jazeera television station reports that Algerian opposition members in exile in London, including members of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), illegal in Algeria, have announced

the creation of a new political party called Rachad. The aim of the new party is to make a radical change of the political regime in Algeria.

Morocco

- On 10 and 14 April three suicide bombers attempting attacks blow themselves up in Casablanca. A fourth is brought down by the police before being able to set off his charge. On 14 April the official press agency MPA announces that the leader of the group has been arrested. On 24 April the minister of the interior Chakib Benmoussa announces that 2 terrorist groups, responsible for the attacks in Casablanca in March, have been broken up after the arrest of their leaders and of 13 future suicide bombers. On 25 April he announces that 25,000 more soldiers will be deployed in Casablanca.

European Union

- On 19 and 20 April the ministers of justice and internal affairs approve at their meeting in Luxembourg a framework decision for combating racism, defining incitement to radical or religious hatred and the denial of certain genocides, including the Holocaust, as European crimes punishable by a prison sentence of up to three years.
- On 20 April the ministers of the interior approve the creation of a rapid response force composed of 450 frontier guards to help member states facing a sudden influx of illegal immigrants.

May 2007

Nicolas Sarkozy becomes the new President of the French Republic, while in Syria President Bashar al-Assad is confirmed in office for 7 years. In Serbia a pro-European government takes the reins of power and in Algeria the pro-government Presidential Alliance wins the legislative elections. In Turkey the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announces the early calling of an election to put an end to the political crisis. Abdullah Gül for his part withdraws his Presidential candidature as demonstrations continue against the islamisation of the country. The repression of defenders of human rights

continues in Syria. Italy and Syria become members of the new United Nations Council for Human Rights.

Portugal

- On 17 May the judge Rui Pereira succeeds Antonio Costa, who resigns, in the post of minister of the interior.

Spain

- On 2 May Batasuna, the illegal political wing of the organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA) declares that the exclusion of its supporters from the local elections would harm the peace process. On 16 May the Supreme Court forbids all the 246 candidates of the Basque Socialist Patriotic Union (ASB), to register as a political party in order to take part in the local elections of 27 May, on the grounds of their links with Batasuna. 133 candidates of Basque Nationalist Action (ANV) are likewise excluded from the elections. On 19 May 3,000 people demonstrate in Pamplona against the exclusion of the Basque separatist candidates. The elections are won in most of the towns by the Popular Party (PP) and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE).
- Between 10 and 13 May, 815 illegal immigrants land on the Canary Islands.

France

- On 6 May Nicolas Sarkozy, of the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), wins the second round of the Presidential elections with 53.06% of the votes. At the ceremony of transfer of power at the Elysée on 16 May, the new President of the Republic declares that the revitalisation of the French economy will be one of his priorities. On 17 May Sarkozy appoints François Fillon as Prime Minister, in succession to Dominique de Villepin. The following day a new government is installed. The socialist Bernard Kouchner becomes minister of foreign affairs and European affairs and Rachida Dati, of North African origin, becomes minister of justice.
- On 30 May 14 members of the National Corsican Liberation Front of the Anonymous (FLNCdA), including its presumed leader Antoine Marchini, are sentenced to prison terms of up to 12 years, for at-

tacks committed in Corsica between 2001 and 2002.

Italy

- On 12 May thousands of protesters rally against the government's proposed law to legalise marriage between two persons of the same sex.
- On 17 May Italy is elected by the United Nations General Assembly to membership of the United Nations Human Rights Council for a period of 3 years.
- On 27 and 28 May, the House of Liberties, Silvio Berlusconi's centre-right alliance, in opposition on the federal level, wins the local elections in 14 of the 19 main towns of the country. Berlusconi calls on the Prime Minister Romano Prodi to resign.

Malta

- On 16 May Malta obtains the support of the European Commission and the European Central Bank for its entry into the club of countries using the Euro.
- At the end of May, 27 would-be immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa survive for three days clinging to drifting fishing-cages, while the Maltese and Libyan authorities repudiated the responsibility for rescue. The victims of the shipwreck are finally rescued on 26 May by the Italian navy after a clamour from public opinion.

Croatia

- On 11 May the heads of state and of government of the countries of South Eastern Europe assemble on occasion of the 10th summit of the South Eastern Europe Co-operation Process (SEECP) to discuss how further to strengthen co-operation in the region. The President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, the Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn and the German presidency of the EU are also present.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 9 May the Appeal Court of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) confirms the sentence of the officers of the Serb Bosnian army Vidoje Blagojevic and Dragan Jovic for crimes against humanity and vi-

olation of the laws and customs of war for their acts committed in July 1995 against Muslim Bosnians in the region of Srebrenica. Nevertheless the Court dismisses the charges of complicity with genocide against Blagojevic and reduces his sentence from 18 to 15 years' imprisonment. On 25 May the condemned war criminal Radovan Stankovic escapes from his prison situated in the town of Foca. His trial had been the first to be transferred to a national court to lighten the work of the ICTY. On 31 May the senior commander in the Serb Bosnian army Zdravko Tolimir, wanted for genocide and other crimes committed in Srebrenica in 1995, is arrested on the Bosnian-Serbian frontier.

Serbia

- On 15 May the National Assembly approves in extremis a new government, composed of the three democratic pro-European parties and blocs: G17+, the Democratic Party (DS) and the Democratic Party of Serbia-New Serbia (DSS-NS). On 23 May Oliver Dulic of the DS is appointed to the post of President of the National Assembly. On 16 May the European Commissioner for enlargement Olli Rehn declares that, once the programme of the new government for co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is rigorously implemented, the negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, suspended in May 2006 after the Serbian government had failed to arrest General Ratko Mladic, will resume. On 16 May a spokesperson of the ICTY declares that according to its information Mladic is in Serbia. On 31 May a spokesperson of the ICTY announces that Zdravko Tolimir, a former Serb general of Bosnian origin and close to General Ratko Mladic, has been arrested on the Bosnian-Serbian frontier.
- On 23 May a special court for organised crime in Belgrade imposes prison sentences of up to 40 years on 12 persons implicated in the assassination in March 2003 of the former Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic.

Macedonia

- On 20 May the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), the third-largest par-

ty of Albanian ethnicity, decides to join the government coalition. This decision puts an end to the boycott of the Sobranje (single-chamber parliament) initiated by the main Albanian party Democratic Union for Integration (BDI) in January. On 29 May, the BDI formally returns to opposition in the Sobranje after the government promises that certain laws would only come into force if they were supported by the Albanians.

- On 22 May the former Macedonian minister and diplomat Srgjan Kerim is elected President of the United Nations General Assembly for its 62nd annual session, which begins in September.

Albania

- On 4 May the Christian Democrat Party (PDK), which holds only 2 seats in the People's Assembly, withdraws its support from the government coalition of Prime Minister Sali Berisha.

Greece

- On 7 May the European Commission announces that it is suspending its supervision over Greece's budget, declaring that Greece has made important steps towards reducing its deficit.

Cyprus

- On 3 May the Greek Cypriot Minister of Defence Nikos Symeonides dies in a hospital in Nicosia. On 14 May President Tassos Papadopoulos appoints Christodoulos Pashiardis, former spokesman of the government and under-secretary of the presidency, to the vacant post.

- On 16 May Cyprus obtains the support of the European Commission and the European Central Bank for its entry into the club of countries using the Euro.

Turkey

- On 1 May the constitutional court annuls the results of the first round of Presidential elections on 27 April. On 2 May the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announces the holding of early elections on 22 July, so as to put an end to the political crisis that developed with the nomination of the deputy Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs Abdullah

Gül as Presidential candidate of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). On 6 May Gül withdraws his Presidential candidature, after the main opposition party the People's Republican Party (CHP) decides to boycott again the first round of Presidential elections. On the same day the Grand National Assembly (GNA) formally puts an end to the Presidential election process. On 13 May nearly one and a half million people demonstrate in Izmir in favour of secularism and call on the parties to unify. The current secularist President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, whose term of office comes to an end on 16 May, is continued in office until the legislative elections of 22 July. On 31 May a constitutional reform is voted for, in opposition to the current President, to allow the ordinary electors, not the legislature, to elect their President directly.

- On 5 May two secularist opposition parties, the Party of the Mother Country (ANAP) and the Party of the Just Way (DYP) decide to form a single party, the Democratic Party (DP), to strengthen their chances of winning 10% of the votes in the coming legislative elections, the minimum required for representation in the GNA. The CHP and the Democratic Party of the Left announce that they will form an alliance in the coming legislative elections so as to improve their chances of defeating the AKP.

- On 12 May, in a terrorist attack a bomb goes off in a market in Izmir, wounding 15 people. On 22 May 6 people die and some hundred people are injured in a suicide bombing in a shopping centre in Ankara. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) denies all responsibility.

Syria

- On 3 May, for the first time since the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005, the minister of foreign affairs Walid al-Muallim meets Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, on occasion of an international conference on security in Iraq taking place at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt.

- On 10 May the physician and defender of human rights Kamal Labwani is sentenced by a Syrian court to 12 years in prison for having had contacts with a foreign power with a view to an aggression against Syria, an accusation which

had only been subsequently added to his act of indictment. Dr Labwani had been arrested on 8 November 2005 on his return from the United States on the pretext that he had disseminated lying or erroneous information. On 13 May two signatories of the Beirut-Damascus Declaration, the writers Michel Kilo and Mahmoud Issa, arrested in May 2006, are sentenced to 3 years in prison, held guilty of spreading false information, of weakening the national feeling and of incitement to religious and racial dissension.

- On 27 May the current President Bashar al-Assad, the only candidate standing for the presidency of the country, is confirmed in his post for 7 years by a national referendum. He obtains 97.62% of the votes and participation amounts to 95.86% of electors.

Lebanon

- On 30 May the United Nations Security Council adopts, by a limited majority, resolution 1757 (2007), which declares the entry into force, from the following 10 June, of the agreement between the Lebanese government and the United Nations on the creation of an international tribunal to judge the authors of the attack which caused the death of the former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005, together with the authors of some fifteen other attacks in the country since 2004. Adopted by a majority of 10 votes, with the abstention of Qatar, Indonesia, South Africa, China and the Russian Federation, the resolution is placed within the framework of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Jordan

- On 13 May, some forty Nobel Prize winners and other personalities, including the former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan and the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres, meet at Petra for the forum "Petra III: building a better world", the third to be organised jointly by the King Abdullah II Fund for Development and the Foundation for Humanity of Elie Wiesel, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. They discuss with Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian students the challenges facing young people in this region beset with conflicts.

Egypt

- On 17 May the United Nations General Assembly elects Egypt to the United Nations Council for Human Rights for a term of 3 years.
- On 24 May the committee for the affairs of political parties in Majlis al-Shura (the upper chamber) approves the creation of the new party Hizb al-Gabha al-Democrati (Democratic Front Party), founded by Osama al-Ghazali Harb, a former member of the political secretariat of the ruling National Democratic Party (PDN) and editor-in-chief of the paper *Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya*.

Libya

- On 29 May the British Prime Minister Tony Blair goes to Libya to discuss with Colonel Muammar Gaddafi a closer cooperation over intelligence and the anti-terrorist struggle.

Tunisia

- On 23 May the Al-Jazeera television network reports that 3 Tunisians have been sentenced by a court of first instance in Tunis to terms between 4 and 11 years of imprisonment for terrorism. At the same time 30 people, arrested in January in armed clashes between the security forces and Islamists that cost the lives of 12 militants and 8 policemen, are charged with terrorism and conspiracy against the internal security of the country.

Algeria

- On 17 May the pro-government Presidential Alliance, composed of the National Liberation Front (FLN), the National Democratic Rally (RND) and the Movement of Society for Peace (MSP) win the legislative elections with a total of 249 seats. The participation, at 36%, is the lowest since the country's independence in 1962. Al-Qaeda and other groups and parties, such as the Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) and the banned leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), had called for the boycott of the elections. The Islamists of the main opposition party of the previous parliament, the Movement for National Reform (MRN), lose 40 seats out of 43.

Morocco

- On 21 May King Mohammed VI appoints Ahmed Herzenni, a former political detainee, head of the Consultative Council on Human Rights (CCDH, public), replacing Driss Benzekri, also a former political detainee, who died the previous day. The King asks Ahmed Herzenni to work towards the realisation especially of the plan to promote human rights education, of the Citizenship Charter and medical cover for former victims of human rights violations in the Kingdom.

European Union

- On 16 May Chancellor Angela Merkel, the current President of the EU, and President Nicolas Sarkozy meet in Berlin to discuss the future of the Constitutional Treaty of the EU. While they agree on ratification of the new treaty by the parliaments, Angela Merkel, in contrast to Nicolas Sarkozy, wishes to preserve as much as possible of the original text. The British Prime Minister Tony Blair aligns himself with Sarkozy's position of having a simplified and cut-down treaty.
- On 16 May the European Commission publishes propositions to fight at the European level against the recruitment of illegal immigrants, accompanied by legal sanctions for companies and individuals who employ such staff.

June 2007

In Lebanon clashes in the Palestinian refugee camps between the army and Islamic militants result in the deaths of 172 people, while targeted attacks on anti-Syrians continue with the assassination of the member of parliament Wlad Eido. Relations of the victims of the massacre at Srebrenica in 1995 bring a suit before the Supreme Court of the Netherlands against the United Nations and the Dutch state for their responsibility in that massacre. The EU reopens negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia. In Spain the organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA) formally ends its cease-fire. The first round of negotiations between the Polisario Front, Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania over the future of Western Sahara opens under the auspices of the United Na-

tions. In France the Union for a Popular Movement maintains its majority in the National Assembly and a new government takes office. The Democratic National Party (DNP) in power in Egypt wins partial elections for the Consultative Council, criticised by the Muslim Brotherhood. In Algeria the President confirms the Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem in his post. Greece is hit by an unprecedented heat-wave which claims many victims.

Portugal

- On 21 June the law legalising abortion in the first 10 weeks of pregnancy is introduced, and is due to come into force on the following 15 July. The law imposes an obligatory three-day period of reflection for women wishing to abort and the option for doctors to refuse to perform an abortion for moral reasons.

Spain

- On 5 June the terrorist organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA) formally terminates its cease-fire, in response to "arrests, persecutions and acts of torture" committed by the government and to the banning of candidates with ETA links from standing in the municipal elections. On 6 June the government sends back to prison José Ignacio de Juana Chaos, the former head of ETA's "Comando Madrid." On 8 June Arnaldo Otegi, the leader of Batasuna, the illegal political wing of ETA, is imprisoned after an appeal court confirms his sentence of 15 months' imprisonment for glorifying terrorism in 2003. On 21 June the Civil Guard find at Ayamonte, near the Portuguese frontier, a car with Portuguese number-plates containing explosives.
- On 6 June the Civil Guard announce the dismantling of the urban guerilla Anti-Fascist Resistance Group of the First of October (GRAPO) and its political wing, the reconstituted Communist Party (PCE-r), after the arrest in Barcelona of 6 persons suspected of being the last members of an operational commando of GRAPO.

France

- On 10 and 17 June the elections for the National Assembly (lower chamber)

result in the keeping of a comfortable majority by the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) and an increase in the number of seats won by the Socialist Party (PS). The Democratic Movement (MoDem), François Bayrou's new centre party, is the great loser in the elections. On 19 June there is a government reshuffle. On 26 June Bernard Accoyer is elected President of the National Assembly.

- On 13 June a new proposed law on immigration is presented. This law requires that non-Europeans wishing to join their families in France should demonstrate a familiarity with French and with French values before leaving their countries. The family members in France will also need to sign a contract undertaking to integrate the new arrivals in French society.

Italy

- On 6 June the centre-left coalition of Prime Minister Romano Prodi, Union, narrowly survives a series of key votes in the Senate concerning the bad management of a banking scandal to which the minister of economy Vincenzo Visco is linked.
- On 9 June some tens of thousands of people demonstrate in the streets of Rome against the visit of the American President George W. Bush.

Malta

- On 1 June the bodies of 18 would-be immigrants are recovered from the sea around Malta.
- On 12 June, at a meeting of ministers of the interior of the EU in Luxembourg, the Maltese minister of the interior Tonio Borg calls for the study of a distribution between European countries of immigrants rescued along the Libyan coasts, in view of the multiplication of shipwrecks in that area of the Mediterranean. The European ministers of the interior show little enthusiasm for Malta's request.

Croatia

- On 12 June the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) sentences the former Croatian Serb leader Milan Martić to 35 years in prison for crimes against humanity and viola-

tion of the laws and customs of war, for acts committed in Croatia in the early nineties against Croats and other non-Serb civilians.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 4 June nearly 240 relations of victims of the Srebrenica massacre in 1995 enter a suit before the Supreme Court of the Netherlands against the United Nations and the Dutch state for their incapacity to prevent the massacre of Srebrenica, which had been declared a "safe haven" for civilians by the United Nations and was under the protection of the Dutch blue-helmets.
- On 29 June the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1764 (2007) confirming the appointment of the Slovak diplomat Miroslav Lajčák to the post of High Representative of the United Nations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in succession to Christian Schwarz-Schilling.

Serbia

- From 6 to 8 June, at their summit in Heiligendamm in Germany, the members of the G8 struggle with their disagreements over the future of the province of Kosovo. The proposal of the French President Nicolas Sarkozy to postpone by 6 months a resolution of the United Nations Security Council in favour of the independence of Kosovo is rejected by Russia. On 10 June the American President George W. Bush declares that the United States may recognise unilaterally the independence of Kosovo if Russia blocks the United Nations process. On 22 June the Serbian President Boris Tadić announces that Serbia is ready to commit itself to new negotiations on the future status of Kosovo.
- On 13 June, after the prosecutor general of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Carla del Ponte had welcomed the co-operation of Serbia with the Tribunal, the EU reopens the negotiations, suspended in May 2006, on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, with the new government of Prime Minister Vjislav Kostunica. The EU's commissioner for enlargement Olli Rehn declares that the negotiations will not be closed until there is a complete co-operation by Serbia with the ICTY, leading to the arrest and

delivery of all those charged before the ICTY.

- On 24 June a new political party is created, the Democratic Union of Croats (DZK). The party represents the Croat minority in the country.

Macedonia

- On 5 June the Sobranje (single-chamber parliament) passes a law creating a legal framework for co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).
- On 12 June, following the decision of the Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) to end its boycott of the Sobranje, Abdurrahman Memeti (PDP) is appointed to the post of minister for local government, in succession to Zoran Konjanovski.

Albania

- On 10 June the American President George W. Bush becomes the first American President to visit the country.
- On 20 and 27 June the People's Assembly fails to reach an agreement on the appointment of a new President to succeed the current President, General Alfred Moisiu.

Greece

- During the month of June Greece is hit by a heat wave reaching record temperatures of up to 46 degrees in certain regions. At least 11 people lose their lives in consequence of this heat and forest fires kill 2 firemen.

Cyprus

- On 15 June the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1758 (2007), extending "the mandate of the United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)" till 15 December 2007 and encouraging the two parties to put in place other measures of confidence, like the recent opening of points of passage between the North and South of the island.

Turkey

- At the beginning of June 100,000 Turkish soldiers take up positions along the

frontier with Iraq, where insurgents of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), included on the European terrorist list, have installed their bases. On 3 June the American Defense Secretary appeals to Turkey not to invade northern Iraq.

- Between 4 and 13 June at least 8 paramilitary policemen and 8 soldiers die in orchestrated attacks in the south-west of the country. On 11 June the funeral of 3 soldiers killed in clashes with PKK, rebels turns into a demonstration against the government for its inability to tackle Kurdish violence. On 12 June the PKK announces that it will cease its attacks in Turkey if the latter puts an end to its fight against the insurrection.
- On 15 June the outgoing secularist President Ahmet Necdet Sezer calls for the holding of a referendum on the government's proposal to reform the system for electing the President. He had vetoed the proposal on the previous 25 May, before the proposal was passed again on 31 May by the Grand National Assembly (GNA).
- On 26 June the EU opens accession negotiations on two new chapters, one concerning statistics and the other financial control. The opening of negotiations on a third chapter, economic and monetary union, is blocked by French diplomats.

Syria

- On 6 June the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declares that he wishes to enter into direct peace negotiations without preconditions with the Syrians.

Lebanon

- On 1 June clashes between the army and the militant group Fatah al-Islam in the Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr el-Bared result in the deaths of one soldier and at least 8 militants. On 3 June clashes break out also in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain el-Hilweh with members of the group of Jund al-Sham, and on 4 June 2 soldiers and 2 Jund al-Sham militants are killed. On 6 June 7 combatants of Fatah al-Islam surrender to the leaders of the Fatah at Nahr el-Bared. On 8 June the Lebanese army resumes its offensive against the Nahr el-Bared camp, after 2 days of calm. On 11 June two members of the Red Cross

and a soldier are killed there. On 21 June the minister of the interior announces that Fatah al-Islam has been defeated and that the operation in the Nahr el-Bared camp is concluded. 172 people have lost their lives in the clashes in the course of the month.

- On 13 June the member of parliament Walid Eido, a member of the Future Movement, the ruling anti-Syrian party, is killed in a car-bomb attack in the Manara district of Beirut. His son and 8 other people likewise are killed in the attack. On 14 June the Syrian ministry of foreign affairs publishes a communiqué in which Syria denies all implication in the assassination.
- On 24 June 6 members of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Finul) are killed in a car-bomb attack between the towns of Marjayoun and Khiam. No-one claims responsibility for the attack.

Egypt

- On 4 June Egyptian officials announce the liberation of 130 members of Islamic Jihad, who have signed agreements renouncing violence. These persons had been arrested for terrorist and anti-government activities and had been held in prison without charge.
- On 11 and 18 June the partial election of the Consultative Council (Majlis ash-Shoura), which has an advisory role towards the People's Assembly, results in the victory of the ruling Democratic National Party (PDN), which wins 84 of the 88 seats contested. President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak also nominates 44 members of the Council. The participation in the election is 23%, while the participation in 2004 was only 3%. On 11 June the Muslim Brotherhood, the main opposition movement, denounces irregularities committed against its candidates, said to have been prevented from campaigning. On 16 June *The Economist* declares that the police encircled polling stations in districts where the Muslim Brotherhood had a chance of winning. Nearly 800 members of the Muslim Brotherhood had been arrested after a campaign of arrests was launched against them by the government in late 2006.
- On 26 June it is learnt that Mohammed Sayed Saber Ali, an engineer in the

country's nuclear agency, has been sentenced to life imprisonment for espionage on behalf of Israel.

- On 28 June the government imposes on the medical profession a ban, both in public and in private establishments, on practising female circumcision, after the death of a 12-year-old girl. This practice has been illegal in Egypt since 1997, but was tolerated.

Tunisia

- On 7 June 7 Tunisians, suspected of having given logistical and financial aid to the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb and of being implicated in the attack in Algiers of the previous 11 April, are arrested in London and in Milan.

Algeria

- On 1 June Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem resigns after the legislative elections which took place in May. On 4 June President Abdelaziz Bouteflika appoints a new government, keeping Belkhadem in his post. On 3 June Abdelaziz Ziari, belonging to the National Liberation Front (FLN), which forms a part of the Presidential Alliance, is appointed to the post of President of the National Assembly (lower house). In the course of the month of June 19 rebels and 6 soldiers die in clashes between government forces and the rebels of the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb.

European Union

- On 12 June the ministers of agriculture of the 27 member states decide that the general limit of 0.9% of accidental presence of authorised genetically modified organisms (GMO) will be applied to biological products. The authorised level was hitherto 0.1%. From 21 to 23 June, at a summit in Brussels, the European Council agrees on a reformed treaty to replace the constitutional treaty, rejected in 2005 by the French and Dutch electors. While most of the member states support the position of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, current President of the EU, of preserving as far as possible the old treaty, the Czech Republic, Poland, France, the Netherlands and the United

Kingdom aim at introducing significant modifications to it. The 27 agree on eliminating the constitutional symbols of the treaty, such as the European flag and anthem, and on the fact that the new treaty will have to be ratified by the parliaments rather than being submitted to a referendum. To satisfy Poland it is decided that double-majority voting will not be introduced before 2017.

July 2007

The 5 Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor accused of deliberately infecting some Libyan children with the AIDS virus are extradited to Bulgaria after spending 8 years in prison in Libya. They are pardoned on arrival by the Bulgarian President. In Turkey the party of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) wins a crushing victory in the legislative elections, which were held early. In Albania Bamir Topi becomes the new President. New clashes break out between the Lebanese army and militants of the group Fatah al-Islam in the Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr el-Bared. Negotiations between the main political factions of Lebanon fail to put an end to the political crisis in which the country has been since November 2006. As part of an amnesty to mark the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Republic of Tunisia, the Tunisian advocate and defender of human rights Mohamed Abbou is set free. On 1 July Portugal takes over the rotating presidency of the EU.

Spain

- On 2 July the French police arrest on the Spanish frontier 3 persons suspected of being members of the terrorist organisation Euskadi and Liberty (ETA), in a truck carrying 140 kg of explosives. On 10 July the Spanish police arrests in Santander Aritz Arginzoniz Zubiaurre, an alleged member of ETA. On 26 July the French police arrest three other alleged members of ETA, including the logistics chief Juan Cruz Maiza Artola.
- On 4 July the European Commission announces that the telecommunications giant Telefónica has been fined 152 million euros for abuse of a dominant position.

- On 6 July the Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announces a ministerial reshuffle. On 9 July 3 new ministers are appointed ministers of culture, of health and of housing.
- On 20 July the judge of the National Court Juan del Olmo orders the police to confiscate the 400,000 print-run of the satirical magazine *El Jueves* for the publication of a cartoon offensive to the royal family, in violation of Spanish law.
- On 31 July forest fires on Tenerife and Grand Canary destroy nearly 35,000 hectares of forest.

France

- On 27 July the former minister of foreign affairs Dominique de Villepin is interrogated over complicity in a libellous accusation in the Clearstream affair, which goes back to 2004 and whose aim was to discredit various figures including the current President Sarkozy, accused of having received kickbacks via the Luxembourg clearing agency Clearstream over the sale of French frigates to Taiwan.

Italy

- On 3 July the European Commission declares that Italy is not respecting the Stability Pact, by failing to reduce its budget deficit by 0.5% per annum.
- On 20 July the Union, the centre-left coalition of Prime Minister Romano Prodi, comes to an agreement with one of the leading trade unions on pension reform, amongst other things raising the retirement age from 57 to 61.
- On 21 July the Moroccan imam Mostapha El Korchi and two other Moroccans, suspected of having links with Al-Qaeda and of using the mosque for recruiting and training international terrorists, are arrested by the police in the town of Ponte Felcino, near Perugia.
- Between 22 and 23 July 500 illegal immigrants arrive on the island of Lampedusa.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 1 July the Slovak diplomat Miroslav Lajcak formally takes over from Christian Schwarz-Schilling as High Representative of the international community in Bosnia-Herzegovina. On 10 July Miroslav Lajcak dismisses 36 police officers of

Serb origin, suspected of being implicated in the Srebrenica massacre of 1995, and confiscates their passports together with those of 57 others. On 12 July 30,000 people attend the funeral of 465 victims of the Srebrenica massacre, 12 years after the deed.

- On 9 July the trial of Rasim Selic, a former commander in the Muslim army of Bosnia-Herzegovina, opens before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). He is charged with violation of the laws and customs of war for the murder, torture and rape of civilian prisoners. On 17 July the criminal court of Sarajevo sentences to 30 years' imprisonment Niset Ramic, a Bosnian Muslim, for crimes committed against the Serbs during the war of 1992-1995.

Serbia

- On 9 July the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Lieutenant General Agim Ceku, insists, in an interview for the Financial Times, that the independence of Kosovo will not be proclaimed unilaterally without the support of the European Union and the United States. On 10 July the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon warns that delay in putting into effect the plan of Martti Ahtisaari, The United Nations special envoy in Kosovo, could have a negative impact on peace and security in Kosovo and in the rest of the Balkans. On 30 July the European Union's high representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Javier Solana, appoints Wolfgang Ischinger to represent the European Union in the negotiations on the future status of Kosovo.

Albania

- On 20 July the People's Assembly elects Bamir Topi of the Democratic Party of Albania to the country's presidency, after 3 failed attempts in June to agree on a name. The Assembly thus avoids having to hold early legislative elections. Bamir Topi, who takes office on 24 July, succeeds General Alfred Moisiu.

Greece

- On 1 July the Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis announces that the thou-

sands of hectares of forest destroyed by the wildfires which have hit the country lately will be replanted.

Cyprus

- On 10 July the tripartite coalition in power in the Republic of Cyprus is formally dissolved, after the withdrawal of the main coalition party, the Progressive Workers' Party (AKEL). Its secession follows the refusal of the other two parties of the government coalition to support the candidature of the secretary general of AKEL, Dhimitrios Khristofias, for the country's Presidential elections. On 14 July President Tassos Papadopoulos appoints 4 new ministers to replace the ministers of AKEL who have resigned.

Turkey

- On 2 July the trial opens of 18 persons, accused of being implicated in the assassination on the previous 19 January of the Turkish journalist of Armenian origin Hrant Dink, editor of the bilingual Turco-Armenian weekly *Agos*.
- On 5 July the international human rights organisation Amnesty International publishes a report on Turkey, welcoming the progress in its judicial system but exploring the continued use of torture and the impunity of policemen who practise it. Amnesty International likewise accuses the courts of accepting confessions obtained under torture.
- On 5 July the constitutional court approves the constitutional reforms permitting electors, and no longer the legislators, to elect the President directly. On 22 July, in the advanced legislative elections, the party of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), wins 341 seats out of 550 contested in the Grand National Assembly (GNA, one-chamber parliament). AKP wins 46.58% of the votes, against 34.28% in the general election in 2002. The main secularist opposition party, the People's Republican Party (CHP) wins 112 seats, losing 66 seats by comparison with 2002. The anti-European nationalist party, the National Action Party (MHP) enters the GNA for the first time with 70 seats. On 28 July MHP declares that it will not boycott the new Presidential elections.

Syria

- On 26 July an accidental explosion in an arms magazine in the north of the country kills 15 soldiers and injures 50 more.

Lebanon

- On 12 July fresh clashes break out in the Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr el-Bared between the Lebanese army and militants of the Islamist group Fatah al-Islam, despite the government's announcement in May that the militants had been defeated. After two days of fighting at least 10 soldiers have been killed and 2 civilians have been injured. On 15 July the Lebanese infantry enters the camp and recovers certain positions.
- In mid-July negotiations between the principal political factions of the country in France fail to end the political crisis existing in the country since November 2006.

Jordan

- On 30 July King Abdullah II accepts the resignation of the ministers for water and irrigation and for health, after the hospitalising of hundreds of people who had drunk infected tap-water at Mafraq.

Libya

- On 11 July the Supreme Court confirms the death sentence on 5 Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor, accused of deliberately infecting more than 400 Libyan children with the AIDS virus. On 12 July Cecilia Sarkozy, the wife of the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, goes to Libya to meet the six condemned people and the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. On 17 July the High Judicial Council commutes their death sentence to one of life imprisonment, after the families of the victims had withdrawn their demand for the death sentence following the conclusion of a compensation agreement. The Benghazi International Fund, financed by the EU, the United States, Bulgaria and Libya will pay 460 million dollars to the families. On 13 July Cecilia Sarkozy and the European commissioner for foreign relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner go to Libya to try to set the nurses free. On 23 July Libya agrees to extradite the nurses to

Bulgaria, on condition that the children be cared for in European hospitals and that the EU helps Libya to put in place a programme to fight AIDS. Ferrero-Waldner also promises access of Libyan agricultural products to European markets, a financial subsidy for the restoration of Libyan antiquities and the granting of visas to Libyan citizens for travel in Europe. On 24 July the nurses and the doctor arrive in Sofia, after spending 8 years in prison in Libya. On arrival they receive a pardon from the Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov. On 25 July Nicolas Sarkozy goes to Libya, where he signs several co-operation agreements in the domains of defence, health, education and civil nuclear power.

Tunisia

- At the beginning of July, 20 people originating from sub-Saharan Africa die by drowning along the coasts of Tunisia, as they try to sail to the Italian island of Lampedusa in a small boat.
- On 2 July the Tunisian advocate and human rights defender Béchir Essid is easily elected for three years to the post of President of the Council of the National Order of Tunisian Advocates (CONA).
- On 24 July 2007, as part of an amnesty marking the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Republic of Tunisia, the Tunisian advocate and human rights defender Mohamed Abbou is freed from the El Kef prison, where he had been held since his arrest in March 2005. Abbou had been sentenced to three and a half years in prison for having denounced on the Internet the practice of torture in Tunisia.

Algeria

- On 10 July the French President Nicolas Sarkozy goes to Algeria where he meets his Algerian opposite number, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, before going to Tunisia. There he presents among other things his project for a "Mediterranean Union", which aims to create in the Mediterranean "an area of solidarity and co-operation" whose pillars would be the fight against insecurity, durable development, energy integration, joint development and concerted management of immigration. This is the first journey he has made outside Europe since his election in May.

Morocco

▪ On 11 July a court in Paris sentences 8 persons to between one and ten years imprisonment for their support to 12 suicide bombers who blew themselves up in May 2003 in Casablanca, killing 45 persons. The majority are of French nationality and are suspected of links with the Islamic Group of Moroccan Combatants (GICM).

European Union

▪ On 1 July Portugal takes over the rotating presidency of the EU in succession to Germany. Its main priority will be to successfully conclude the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC), which is to finalise the text of a reformed treaty to replace the constitutional treaty. The new Portuguese presidency also wishes to promote the Lisbon Agenda, whose aim is to make the EU the most competitive economic zone in the world, and to improve relations between the EU and Africa.

August 2007

Abdullah Gül becomes the first Islamist President in Turkey's modern history and Recep Tayyip Erdogan is confirmed in his post as Prime Minister, following the elections in July. In Greece the government declares a state of emergency in the face of widespread forest fires, while thousands of demonstrators demand the government's resignation. In Lebanon, following by-elections of the National Assembly to fill the seats left vacant by the assassination of 2 anti-Syrian members, the anti-Syrian government loses one seat to the pro-Syrian opposition. In Egypt the repression against the Muslim Brotherhood continues.

Spain

▪ Between 3 and 14 August a number of banks and court-houses are set on fire in the Basque Country. On 24 August 2 policemen are slightly wounded in a terrorist attack orchestrated by the organisation Euskadi and Liberty (ETA) in front of the barracks of the Civil Guard in the Basque town of Durango. On 26 August the minister of the interior Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba announces that he

and his Portuguese opposite number have agreed to form a common investigation team composed of policemen, judges and prosecutors to arrest members of ETA who are operating more and more from Portugal.

France

▪ On 11 August President Nicolas Sarkozy meets the American President George W. Bush at his family home at Kennebunkport, Maine, in the United States.

Italy

▪ On the night of 5 to 6 August an Islamic centre at Segrate is partially damaged by an arson attack. On the night of 15 to 16 August three fire-bombs are thrown at a mosque at Abbiatograsso, the second attack on the mosque in a month. On 21 August a halal butcher's shop is destroyed in Chiari.

On 16 August the Italian coastguard saves more than 400 African illegal immigrants off the island of Lampedusa.

Malta

▪ On 30 August 25 clandestine immigrants are drowned off Malta when their boat is wrecked, under the eyes of the crew of a Greek tug which was bringing them help and which was only able to rescue three survivors.

Slovenia

▪ On 30 August the ministers of health, transport and higher education, science and technology resign.

Croatia

▪ On 26 August Slovenia and Croatia agree to refer their frontier dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) based in The Hague.

Serbia

▪ From 10 to 12 August, following the stalemate of negotiations on the plan of the United Nations special envoy Martti Ahtisaari, who proposed a "supervised independence", the envoys of the EU, Russia and the United States (the

Troika) renew their diplomatic efforts to forge a compromise agreement on the future status of the province of Kosovo. On 30 August the Troika meets the Serb and Albanian leaders in Vienna, without reaching an agreement, the Albanians and Serbs standing fast on their positions.

Montenegro

▪ On 31 August Predrag Sekulic resigns as minister of culture, sports and media.

Macedonia

▪ On 6 August 2 grenades are thrown near a building of the Macedonian government, causing only minor damage. The authorities describe this incident as a terrorist attack.

Greece

▪ On 17 August the Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis announces an early election on 16 September, several months before the expiry of the parliament's term in April 2008, with the object of obtaining a strong mandate for the economic and social reforms that the government plans to implement.

▪ On 25 August the Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis declares a state of emergency after the forest fires ravaging the country have killed at least 64 people and destroyed nearly 3,500 houses and 270,000 hectares of forests and fields. After an appeal for international help by Karamanlis, 21 countries respond, including 6 European countries and Israel. Most of the fires are thought to have been started deliberately, and on 26 August the government therefore offers a reward of one million euros for any information leading to the arrest of arsonists. Thirty-two suspects are arrested and 7 persons are prosecuted. On 29 August 10,000 people demonstrate in the streets of Athens to criticise the way the government has handled this emergency and for failure to keep proper surveillance of the forests, thus encouraging arsonists.

Cyprus

▪ On 14 August the leaders of the two Cypriot communities agree to resume

talks to escape from the impasse over the process of reunification in the island.

Turkey

- On 6 August the outgoing President Ahmet Necdet Sezer confirms Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose Justice and Development Party (AKP) has won the advanced legislative elections in July, in his post of Prime Minister and invites him to form a new government. On 9 August Koksal Toptan, a non-Islamist moderate of AKP, is elected President of the Grand National Assembly (GNA). On 28 August the deputy Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs Abdullah Gül of AKP is elected to the country's presidency in the third round of elections in the GNA, boycotted by the main opposition party the People's Republican Party (CHP). Gül, who received 339 votes out of 550, becomes the first Islamist President of modern Turkey. In the first two rounds, which took place on 20 and 24 August, Gül did not receive the two-thirds of votes necessary for election. In the third round a simple majority was sufficient to win the Presidential election. On 29 August the new President approves the new government.
- During the month of August 12 soldiers and 36 insurgents die in clashes between the Turkish army and militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). On 7 August Prime Minister Erdogan and his Iraqi opposite number sign a memorandum of agreement to combat the positions of the PKK in northern Iraq, used as a rear base for the launching of attacks in Turkey.
- On 8 August, because of one of the worst droughts Turkey has ever experienced, the municipality of Ankara introduces a strict water-rationing plan.

Lebanon

- On 6 August by-elections for the National Assembly take place in the region of Metn and in Beirut to fill the seats left vacant by the minister and member of parliament Pierre Gemayel and by Walid Eido, a member of Saad Hariri's party of the Future, both members of the anti-Syrian camp and assassinated respectively in November 2006 and June 2007. Pierre Gemayel's seat – a seat ascribed to a Maronite (Catholic) – is won in the

Metn region by Camille Khoury, a candidate of the pro-Syrian opposition, supported by General Michel Aoun and a member of the Patriotic Free Current (CPL). Mohammed Itani, the candidate of the majority, a member of Saad Hariri's Current of the Future, wins Walid Eido's seat in Beirut.

- On 24 August the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1773 (2007), which prolongs the mandate of the Interim Force of the United Nations in Lebanon (Finul) till 31 August 2008.

Jordan

- On 21 August the deputy Prime Minister and minister of finance Ziad Fareiz resigns following the rejection by the government of his proposal to raise the price of petrol to meet the budget deficit. On 26 August the minister of labour Basim al-Salim takes over the office provisionally.

Egypt

- On 20 August a state security court sentences to life imprisonment 4 Egyptians for their role in the suicide attack in a bazaar in Cairo, which killed 3 foreign tourists in April 2005. Five other people are sentenced to prison terms between one and 10 years while 4 people are acquitted for lack of sufficient evidence.
- On 28 August *The Financial Times* reports that the repression of the main opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood, has continued in the month of August.

Libya

- On 1 August, in an interview with the newspaper *Le Monde*, Saif al-Islam, the son of the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, declares that the freeing of the 5 Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor had opened the way to the signing of an important arms agreement with France. On the same day the French President Nicolas Sarkozy declares that no arms agreement has been signed in exchange for the freeing of the nurses and the doctor. On 3 August the French minister of defence confirms that an agreement has been signed for the sale of Milan missiles to Libya. On the same day Bulgaria cancels Libya's debt of 57 million

dollars dating from the Soviet era by way of contributing to the Benghazi International Fund for aid to families of Libyan children infected with AIDS. On 7 August the lawyer for the Palestinian doctor Ashraf Gomaa affirms that the latter's confession of the acts he was accused of was made under torture. On 9 August Saif al-Islam confirms the allegations of torture, declaring that electricity was used to torture the doctor.

Tunisia

- On 5 August Ahmed Ibrahim is elected to the post of secretary general of the opposition party Movement for Renewal, created in 1993.

Morocco

- On 15 August a criminal court in Casablanca sentences to 8 months' imprisonment the journalist Mustapha Hor-matallah for publishing confidential documents concerning anti-terrorist operations. Mustapha Hor-matallah works for the weekly *Al Watan Al An*, whose publisher receives a suspended sentence of 6 months' imprisonment.

European Union

- On 2 August the European Commission indicates that the patrols of Frontex, the European agency in charge of operational co-operation on the external frontiers of the member states of the European Union, fighting against illegal immigration movements in the Mediterranean, have been suspended for lack of funds.
- On 9 August the European Central Bank (ECB) injects a record amount of 94.8 billion euros into monetary circulation in the Eurozone to remedy a liquidity shortage on the money market, connected with the subprime loan crisis in the United States. On the following day the ECB injects a further 61 billion euros.
- On 27 August the EU's agency for fundamental rights reports that violence and crimes with a racist connotation have increased in at least 8 countries of the 27 member states of the EU, including France. The reports also emphasises that unequal professional opportunities and ethnic discrimination are common problems in Europe.

September 2007

Some fifty people lose their lives in attacks in Algeria, claimed by the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb. In Lebanon political assassinations continue with the murder of the Lebanese member of parliament of the anti-Syrian majority Antoine Ghanem, while the National Assembly postpones the Presidential election following a boycott by the opposition. The party of the Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis, New Democracy (ND) wins the legislative elections for the Vouli, which for the first time since the end of the dictatorship of the colonels in 1974 sees the entry of an extremist party. In Morocco the Istiqlal party wins the legislative elections and its leader Abbas el-Fassi is appointed Prime Minister. The first round of negotiations between the Serbs and Albanians of Kosovo on the status of the province of Kosovo takes place in New York. The President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Mehmet Ali Talat, and the President of the Greek part of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, meet in Nicosia to relaunch a peace initiative under the patronage of the United Nations. Spain is hit by a number of terrorist attacks claimed by the organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA).

Spain

▪ On 1 September the minister of the interior Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba declares that 4 suspected members of the organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA), including Luis Ignacio Iruretagoyena Lanz, suspected of being ETA's explosives expert and of being implicated in the attack on the Barajas national airport in December 2006, have been arrested at Cahors, near Toulouse, in a joint operation of the French and Spanish police. The police likewise seized explosives, weapons and grenade-launchers. On 2 September ETA sets off a bomb on the N-232 near Fuenmayor. On 9 September ETA vows to continue its campaign of violence against the Spanish state, accusing the Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of being responsible for the failure of the peace negotiations. On the same day the police foil an attack in Logroño. On 20

September the President of the Confederation of Businessmen in Navarre (CEN) declares that since the end of its cease-fire ETA has increased the number of its extortions in the Basque region and in Navarre. On 25 September a bomb explodes in front of a police station in Zarautz, causing no injuries.

▪ On 8 September the bodies of 10 illegal immigrants are found off Grand Canary.

▪ On 28 September Rosa Díez, who had resigned from the ruling Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), creates a new political party called Union, Progress and Democracy (UPD). The UPD is a branch of the anti-ETA movement *Basta Ya* ("That's Enough") and advocates a strong central state to stand up against the regional movements on the rise in the country.

France

▪ On 18 September the mayors of Cherbourg, Calais and Dunkirk request help from the government to resist the tide of illegal immigrants wishing to enter the United Kingdom. On 20 September the National Assembly (lower chamber) passes a controversial amendment to the new immigration law providing that non-European foreigners wishing to join their family in France should submit to a DNA test in the event of doubt of their family relationship. This measure is to be introduced for a trial period of three months. On the same day President Nicolas Sarkozy calls for the imposition of yearly immigration quotas.

▪ On 18 and 19 September President Sarkozy presents detailed proposals to implement his electoral promises of making the French economy more competitive, of reducing the deficit in the matter of social security, and of cutting down the size of the public service. His controversial proposal of bringing uniformity to the retirement age and of ending the special treatment of those working in the fields of electricity, gas and the railways provoke lively protests.

Italy

▪ On 4 September the minister of health confirms the existence of an epidemic of infection in the country by the Chikungunya virus, after 151 cases are record-

ed between 4 July and 3 September near Ravenna, in the north-east of the country. Eleven patients are admitted to hospital and one person dies.

▪ On 13 September 1.3 million Italians boycott the purchase of pasta, to protest against what consumers' organisations consider an unjustified rise in prices. The producers justify the rise by the disastrous cereal harvest following the summer's droughts.

Croatia

▪ On 27 September the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) sentences the Serb colonels Mile Mrksic and Veselin Slijivancanin, who belonged to the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) to 20 and 5 years' imprisonment respectively, for war crimes committed in 1992 against Croats in the Vukovar region in Eastern Slavonia. The third accused person is acquitted. The sentence is condemned by the Prime Minister Ivo Sanader.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

▪ On 7 September, for the first time in its history, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) holds a session outside The Hague and goes to Sarajevo to hear the testimony of Ali Ahmed Ali Hamad, imprisoned since 1998, as part of the trial of Rasim Delicun, a former commander of the army of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

▪ On 13 September *The Guardian* reports that the High Representative of the international community in Bosnia, Miroslav Lajcak, has warned Bosnia that the EU will terminate the negotiations for joining it if the country's leaders do not reach an agreement on the creation of a single national police force. On 30 September the President of the Republika Srpska Milan Jelic succumbs to a heart attack at the age of 51.

Serbia

▪ On 6 September, in an interview for the *Financial Times*, the Serbian minister of foreign affairs, Vuk Jeremic, warns the international community that declaration of independence by the province of Kosovo would open a "Pandora's Box" of security problems in the Balkans. He also

declares his opposition to any partition of the province.

- On 14 September the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1775 (2007), which extends the appointment of Carla del Ponte as Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) until 31 December 2007.

- On 28 September the Serbian President Boris Tadic and his Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica meet President Fatmir Sejdiu of Kosovo and his Prime Minister Agim Ceku in New York for a first round of face-to-face negotiations on the status of Kosovo. In mid September the two parties had separately met with the Troika, set up during August and composed of envoys of the United States, the European Union and Russia.

Montenegro

- On 1 September 3 individuals attack the editor of the daily *Vijesti*, the biggest-selling newspaper in Montenegro, as he leaves a restaurant where the paper was celebrating its 10th anniversary. The Montenegrin journalists' trade union denounces the aggression, in which it sees "a fresh proof that the freedom of the Press is in danger."

Macedonia

- On 11 September President Branko Crvenkovski appoints Viktor Dimovski, currently ambassador in Serbia, to the post of director of the national agency for education.

Albania

- On 1 September the Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha announces that Albania has become the first country in the world without chemical weapons.

Greece

- On 16 September the conservative party of Kostas Karamanlis, New Democracy (ND) wins early general elections with 3 seats less than in the previous elections. For the first time since the end of the dictatorship of the colonels in 1974, an extremist party, the Orthodox People's Rally (LAOS), enters the Vouli. On 19 September the new gov-

ernment takes office. The minister of public order Vyron Polydoros, criticised for his bad handling of the forest fires in July and August, in which some sixty people died, is not kept on in his post. On 20 September the former minister of development Dimitris Sioufas is elected President of the Vouli.

Cyprus

- On 5 September the Greek Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Mehmet Ali Talat, meet at Nicosia under the aegis of the United Nations, for the first time since the agreement of July 2006 by which the two parties commit themselves to discuss their bilateral differences so as to relaunch the negotiations for the reunification of the island.

Turkey

- On 5 September the Grand National Assembly (GNA, single-chamber parliament) gives its vote of confidence to the new government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

- On 5 and 25 September respectively the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs David Miliband and the Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi indicate their support for Turkey's accession to the EU. On 24 September the French Secretary of State for European Affairs declares that the French President Nicolas Sarkozy supports a privileged partnership with Turkey rather than the integration of the latter in the European Union. He adds that Sarkozy will not oppose Turkey's negotiations for entry provided that the two options are kept in mind.

- On 19 September Prime Minister Erdogan calls for a change of the constitution, currently under revision, to permit women to wear the veil in universities.

- On 28 September the minister of the interior Besir Atalay and his Iraqi opposite number sign an agreement of co-operation to combat the members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), based in the north of Iraq. During the month of September 46 soldiers and 21 Kurdish insurgents are killed in clashes between the Turkish army and the PKK. On 30 September, after the killing of a leader of the PKK, 30 people are assassinat-

ed by the terrorist organisation PKK in the south-eastern province of Sirnak.

Syria

- On 6 September Israeli fighter planes successfully attack a site in north-eastern Syria, suspected of harbouring nuclear materials. On 11 September, in a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon, Syria's permanent representative in the United Nations accuses Israel of violating Syria's air-space.

Lebanon

- On 2 September the Lebanese army announces that it has taken control of the Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr el-Bared. In clashes on 2 September, 5 soldiers and 31 combatants of Fatah al-Islam are killed, including the leader Shaker al-Abssi, while 24 combatants are taken prisoner.

- On 19 September the anti-Syrian member of parliament Antoine Ghanem, a member of the Christian Kataeb party, is killed when his car blows up in the mainly Christian district of Sin el-Fil. Five other persons lose their lives and at least 60 people are injured in the attack.

- On 25 September the pro-Syrian opposition, including Hezbollah, boycotts the Presidential election, obliging the National Assembly to defer the election, for lack of a quorum of two thirds of the deputies necessary for the first round. The purpose of the election was to appoint a successor to the current President, General Emile Lahoud, whose mandate expires on 23 November.

Jordan

- On 2 September King Abdullah II approves a government reshuffle by the Prime Minister Marouf Bakhet.

- On 12 September the State Security Court sentences 16 people to between 20 months' and 5 years' imprisonment for having recruited individuals to fight against the American army in Iraq.

Egypt

- On 13 September a court in Cairo sentences 4 newspaper publishers,

Ibrahim Issa of *al-Dustur*, Wail al-Abrashi of *Sawt al-Ummah*, Adil Hamuda of *al-Fagr* and Abd al-Halim Qandil of *al-Karama*, to one year's imprisonment for libel against President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak and his son Gamal Mubarak.

Libya

- On 10 September Seif al-Islam, son of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, announces the launch of an ambitious project aiming to attract ecological tourism and create sustainable development in the coastal region of the "Green Mountain."

Tunisia

- On 13 September Tunisia's first religious radio station, *Ezzeitouna* (the Olive Tree), under the patronage of the President's brother-in-law Zine el Abidine ben Ali, begins broadcasting on the first day of Ramadan.
- On 20 September the secretary general of the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), Maya Jribi, and her predecessor Néjib Chebbi, editor of the weekly *Al Mawkef*, begin a hunger-strike to protest against a threat, emanating according to them from the government, to expel them from their premises.

Algeria

- On 6 September a suicide bomber blows himself up in front of the al-Atk mosque in Batna, 45 minutes before the arrival of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, killing 22 people and wounding about a hundred. On 9 September another attack, this time in the coastal town of Dellys, kills 30 coastguards. On 21 September a bomb explodes in the Kabylie district near a police convoy accompanying some foreign workers and injures 9 people, including 2 Frenchmen and an Italian. The Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb claims responsibility for these 3 terrorist attacks.

Morocco

- On 7 September the Istiqlal party wins the elections to the Chamber of Representatives (lower house), narrowly beating the conservative and Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD). The

main party of the outgoing coalition, the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (SUPF) is the main loser in these elections with only 36 deputies, against the 50 elected five years before. The elections are marked by record absenteeism of 63%. On 19 September King Mohammed VI appoints Abbas el-Fassi, the leader of Istiqlal, to the office of Prime Minister.

- On 26 September demonstrations against the high price of bread leave some 300 people injured and oblige the government to abandon the rise in prices, connected with the explosion of grain prices.

European Union

- On 1 September, 9 of the 10 countries that joined the EU in 2004, including Malta and Slovenia, join the Schengen Information System (SIS).

- On 2 September the Belgian Gilles de Kerchove is appointed the European Union's co-ordinator of the fight against terrorism.

On 3 September the first ministerial conference of the European Neighbourhood Policy is held in Brussels.

- On 18 September the EU signs agreements with Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia to simplify the application procedure for visas for their nationals as from January 2008. In exchange the 5 countries commit themselves to reinforcing their frontier security and accept procedures for repatriation of their nationals.

- On 30 September 7 member states of the EU, including France, Italy, Portugal and Spain sign an agreement to set up a maritime operation and analysis centre to fight against drug-trafficking proceeding from Latin America and West Africa.

October 2007

Nearly a year and a half after its independence, Montenegro adopts its first constitution and a Stabilisation and Association Agreement is signed with the EU. The talks between the Serb and Albanian representatives of the province of Kosovo continue in Brussels and in Vienna. For the first time since the end of the war between Lebanon and Israel in 2006 an exchange of prisoners

and of bodies takes place between Israel and the fundamentalist movement Hezbollah. Hareg Zoheir, the number two in the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb, is killed by the Algerian army. In Morocco, a new government under the Prime Minister Abbas el-Fassi, leader of the Istiqlal Party, takes office. The Grand National Assembly (GNA) authorises incursions of the Turkish army into northern Iraq to get to grips with the insurgents of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). More than half the Turkish electorate approves the constitutional reforms permitting the electors to elect their President directly. In Spain 21 persons are sentenced for the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004. The European Council in Lisbon approves the text of the new EU treaty.

Spain

- On 4 October the police arrest 24 people who were attending a summit of Batasuna, the illegal political wing of the organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA), in the Basque town of Segura. They are accused of taking part in an illegal political meeting. In protest thousands of Basque nationalists take to the streets on 5 and 6 October. On 6 October Molotov cocktails are thrown in Pasaia against a building containing the office of the assistant mayor and the magistrates' court. On 9 October a bomb explodes under a car in Bilbao, seriously injuring the bodyguard of José Carlos Domingo Galíndez, a local councillor of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). On 12 October Molotov cocktails are thrown against a law-court in Durango and on 18 October the car of the President of the committee of municipal management in Ondarroa is set on fire.

- On 9 October the trial opens in Madrid of 30 men, mainly Moroccans and Algerians, accused of plotting a suicide attack against the National Court, which includes the office of Baltasar Garzón, a judge who has been investigating Islamic cells in Spain since the nineteen-nineties.

- On 16 October the government opposes the proposal, considered unconstitutional, by Juan José Ibarretxe, the President of the Basque regional government assembly, to hold a referendum on increased autonomy for the Basque country.

- On 31 October the National Court in Madrid sentences 21 persons for their implication in the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004, which killed 191 people and injured more than 1,800. Jamal Zougam, Othman el Gnaoui, both of Moroccan nationality, and the Spaniard Emilio Suárez Trashorras are sentenced respectively to 42,922, 42,924, and 34,715 years' imprisonment. Seven of the 28 accused are acquitted, including the Egyptian Rabei Osman Sayed Ahmed, better known as "Mohamed the Egyptian." He had been presented as one of the brains of the attacks and he is currently serving a prison sentence in Italy for membership of a terrorist group.

France

- On 1 October, for the first time, a French President takes part in the festivities marking the end of Ramadan. President Nicolas Sarkozy visits the grand mosque of Paris and declares that Islam is a part of France and that those who advocate violence in the name of Islam have no business in France's territory.
- On 17 October France is hit by a 24-hour strike in transport and other sectors protesting against the government's proposal to end the special regime of pensions in the public sector.
- On 23 October the Senate approves the new controversial law on immigration. It was approved by the National Assembly in September.
- On 29 October the commission on constitutional reform, set up by President Sarkozy and presided over by the former Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, presents its report, which contains 77 proposals for amendment to the Constitution of 1958, several of them aiming at strengthening the legislative power against the executive.

Italy

- From 8 to 10 October, in a national referendum organised by the leading trade unions, more than 5 million workers and pensioners approve the agreement on the reform of pensions and of work concluded between the trade unions and the government on 20 July. This agreement postpones the pensionable age from 57 to 61 years in the period from 2008 to 2013.
- On 14 October Walter Veltroni, may-

or of Rome and a former minister, is elected leader of the new Democratic Party (PD), born from the fusion the previous April of the Margherita Alliance and the Democrats of the Left (DS), the two main parties of Prime Minister Romano Prodi's government coalition Union.

- On 25 October a court in Rome drops the judicial prosecution of the American soldier Mario Lozano, wanted for the murder of the security agent Nicola Calipari in Iraq in March 2005, holding that it does not come within the court's jurisdiction.

Malta

- On 1 October the advocate Katrine Camilleri receives in Geneva the Nansen Prize 2007 awarded by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), for her work on behalf of asylum seekers.

Slovenia

- On 21 October the conservative Lojze Peterle, a former Prime Minister, heads the first round of the Presidential election with 28% of the votes.

Croatia

- On 12 October the Sabor (single-chamber parliament) passes a resolution condemning the sentence of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on the three men convicted on 27 September for the affair of Vukovar, judging that their prison sentence was too light. On 15 October, in a meeting of the United Nations general Assembly, the Prime Minister Ivo Sanader accuses the ICTY of not having respected the Geneva Conventions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 1 October, the day following the death of President Milan Jelic, the government of the Republika Srpska appoints Igor Radojic, President of the People's Assembly, to the post of interim President of the Republic.
- On 7 October the new party of the Independent List of Bosnia-Herzegovina is created in Sarajevo.
- On 19 October, after the authorities had failed in their new attempt to create a single national police, a precondition for the

signing of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU, Miroslav Lajcak, the High Representative of the international community, announces a series of measures aimed at simplifying the adoption of decisions in the central government. Lajcak fixes 1 December as the final date for the adoption of these measures, after which he will impose them in virtue of his powers. Milorad Dodik, Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska, describes these measures as unconstitutional.

Serbia

- On 12 October the minister of labour, employment and social policy, also in charge of Serbia's co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), announces that a reward of one million euros will be given for any information leading to the arrest of General Ratko Mladic, a war criminal wanted by the ICTY.
- On 14 October the representatives of Serbia and the province of Kosovo take part in a second round of direct talks in Brussels under the auspices of the United Nations. On 22 October a third meeting takes place in Vienna, in which the Troika (Russia, United States and the EU) presents a 14-point plan which does not mention the possible independence of Kosovo, but promises the Albanians of Kosovo that Serbia will not re-establish a physical presence in the province.

Montenegro

- On 15 October, on occasion of a meeting of ministers of foreign affairs of the EU in Luxembourg, Montenegro and the EU sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, an important step on the road to Montenegro's joining the EU.
- On 19 October, 17 months after the country's declaration of independence, the Parliament (single-chamber) ratifies the new constitution. On 22 October the constitution is officially promulgated. The pro-Serbian parties in parliament voted against this new constitution.

Macedonia

- On 21 October the former President of the Sobranje (single-chamber parliament) announces the creation of a new party, the Party for the Free Democrats

(PSD). The PSD is the second party to break away from the Social-Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM). On 20 October three Roma parties fuse to form the Party of the Democratic Forces of the Roma in Macedonia.

Greece

- On 17 October the authorities present a raft of new measures aiming to curb illegal immigration, among them an increase in sea patrols.
- On 18 October the Hellenic Commission of Telecoms and Posts (EETT), the regulator in telecommunications matters, imposes on the mobile telephone company Vodafone Greece a fine of 19.1 million euros for its role in the affair of telephone-tapping of Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis and highly placed persons in the government, of the army and the business world, in connection with the Athens Olympic Games of 2004.

Turkey

- On 5 October the minister of foreign affairs Bernard Kouchner meets his Turkish opposite number with a view to improving bilateral relations, following the declarations of the French President preferring a privileged partnership with Turkey to its joining the EU.
- On 7 October 13 soldiers lose their lives in clashes with militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in the province of Sirnak in the south-east of the country. Thousands of demonstrators take to the streets to denounce the escalation of violence. On 17 October the Grand National Assembly (GNA) approves a military incursion by Turkey into northern Iraq, from where the PKK insurgents are launching their attacks on Turkey. On 21 October, after Kurdish insurgents from Iraq ambush the Turkish army near Hakkari, killing 12 soldiers and taking 8 others hostage, the Turkish army bombs the PKK's positions in northern Iraq and kills 32 rebels. On 24 October 30 insurgents are killed in Iraqi territory and on 28 October 20 Kurdish insurgents are killed. The talks with the Iraqi authorities on 24 and 25 October do not satisfy Turkey, which refuses to set a time-limit for its operations until the PKK leaders are extradited to Turkey and their camps closed down.

- On 11 October Turkey withdraws its ambassador from the United States following the adoption the previous day by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the American House of Representatives (lower house) of a non-binding resolution describing the massacres of one and a half million Armenians between 1915 and 1917, under the Ottoman Empire, as genocide. To avoid the break-off of relations with Turkey, the supporters of the resolution decide to hold over the vote in plenary session.

- On 11 October Aram Dink and Serkis Seropyan, both of them publishers of the Armenian-language newspaper *Agos*, receive suspended sentences of one year's imprisonment for insult to the Turkish identity. This sentence follows the republication in *Agos* of the opinions of Hrant Dink, a journalist of the same paper, assassinated the previous January, on the Armenian genocide.

- On 21 October, in a national referendum, 68.95% of electors vote in favour of constitutional reforms – already approved by the GNA but blocked by the current President – permitting the electors, and no longer the legislative power, to elect the President of the country directly, reducing the President's term of office from 7 to 5 years (renewable) and the parliamentary term from 5 to 4 years.

Syria

- On 1 October President Bashar al-Assad declares that the target hit by an Israeli air-raid on 6 September was a military building under construction and denies that the place was being used as part of a nuclear programme.

Lebanon

- On 12 October the Supreme Court of Brazil refuses to extradite Rana Abdel Rahim Koleilat, whom the Lebanese authorities wish to interrogate in connection with the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005.

- On 15 October, for the first time since the end of the war between Lebanon and Israel in 2006, Israel and the Hezbollah movement exchange a prisoner and a number of bodies. The exchange is thought to have been negotiated by German diplomats with the aid of the International Committee of the Red Cross

(ICRC). The two soldiers whose seizure by Hezbollah had led to the clashes are not included in the exchange.

- On 22 October Nabbi Berri, President of the National Assembly, postpones a session due to have been held the following day to elect a new President to succeed Emile Lahoud, whose term of office ends the following 24 November.

Jordan

- On 7 October the State Security Court sentences 3 men to 5 years' imprisonment for plotting an attack against an important meat concern of Israeli provenance.

Egypt

- On 8 October thousands of demonstrators protest at El Arish, a town in the north of Sinai, against the lack of security in their town against Bedouin attacks. In this demonstration the offices of the National Democratic Party (NDP) are ransacked and some forty demonstrators are arrested.

Libya

- On 16 October Libya is elected by the United Nations General Assembly to a seat on the Security Council from January 2008.

Tunisia

- On 20 October the two Tunisian opposition members, Maya Jribi, secretary general of the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), and Mohamed Néjib Chebbi, founder of the party and editor of its weekly newspaper *Al-Mawquif*, end their hunger strike, begun on 20 September in protest against a judicial procedure of expulsion from their party's premises, ordered, according to them, by the government.

Algeria

- On 7 October the Algerian army kills Hareg Zoheir, the number two of the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb, in clashes in the east of the country. He was considered the brain behind the majority of the suicide attacks committed in recent months in Algeria.

Morocco

- On 15 October King Mohammed VI appoints a new government under Prime Minister Abbas el-Fassi, the leader of the Istiqlal Party which has won the elections. On 18 October el-Fassi declares that his government's priority will be to find international support for the resolution of the question of the Western Sahara, a resolution which must be based on the principle of the territorial integrity of Morocco. He also looks to an acceleration of political and institutional reforms.
- On 22 and 24 October the French President Nicolas Sarkozy makes an official visit to Morocco, accompanied by several ministers and business figures. An agreement is made, among others, that three French companies will take part in the building of a railway between Tangier and Marrakesh. The King also signifies his support for the French President's project of a Mediterranean Union.

European Union

- On 18 and 19 October the heads of state and of government of the EU member states, meeting in an informal summit in Lisbon, approve the text of the new treaty, due to replace the European constitution rejected in referendum by the French and the Dutch. The new system of voting by double majority will not come into force until 2017, in accordance with the demand by Poland. With the exception of Ireland, the member states will submit the treaty to a process of legislative ratification.
- On 22 October Microsoft announces that it will not appeal against the decision of the European Court of first instance to uphold the fine against it, decided by the European Commission in March 2004 for abuse of a dominant position on the market. Microsoft also announces that it will communicate to competitors the necessary technical information to make their products compatible with the Microsoft software, and at the price approved by the European Commission.

November 2007

For the first time since the end of the civil war Lebanon is without a President. Morocco withdraws its ambassador from

Spain following the visit by the King of Spain to Ceuta and Melilla. Kosovo rejects the proposal of Serbia to grant extensive autonomy to Kosovo within the Serbian frontiers. In Slovenia Danilo Turk wins the second round of the Presidential elections. Ivo Sanader in Croatia and Nader Dahabi in Jordan win the legislative elections, while in Bosnia-Herzegovina the Prime Minister Nikola Spiric presents his resignation in protest against the measures imposed by the High Representative of the international community in Bosnia. The European far-right party Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty is dissolved after the departure of 5 Romanian members. The EU calls on Turkey to repeal or amend article 301 of the penal code, which penalises insult to Turkish identity, to the Republic or to institutions or organs of state. France is hit by massive strikes in protest against the reform of the special retirement regimes.

Spain

- On 3 November it is learnt that 10 of the 20 people sentenced in the previous October for the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 have begun a hunger strike to protest against the length of their prison sentences.
- On 13 November two caricaturists of the newspaper *El Jueves* are ordered to pay a fine of 3,000 euros for insulting the Spanish Crown in a drawing published in a previous edition. On 19 November two Catalan nationalists are ordered to pay a fine of 2,700 euros each for slandering the Spanish Royal Family after burning some pictures of the King and Queen of Spain in a separatist and anti-royalist rally in Girona in September.
- On 19 November, for the first time, the Catholic Church in Spain apologises for the role it played during the civil war of 1936-39.

France

- On 6 and 7 November President Nicolas Sarkozy makes an official visit to the United States with the aim of strengthening the co-operation between the two countries, after their disagreement over the Iraq war in 2003.
- On 13 November France is hit by a massive indefinite strike, organised by the main trade unions in protest against the

reform of the special regimes for retirement in the public sector. On 23 November the leaders of the main trade unions agree to negotiate with the government and end their strike.

- On 15 November the constitutional council approves the controversial law on immigration, previously passed by the legislature. Nevertheless the council withdraws the provision concerning the compilation of population statistics on an ethnic basis, considering that practice unconstitutional.
- On 24 November the National Liberation Front of Corsica-Union of Combatants (FLNC-UC) claims responsibility in 16 recent attacks on public buildings and holiday houses in Corsica.
- From 25 to 27 November, following the deaths of two young people in controversial circumstances in the suburbs of Paris on 25 November, a new wave of rioting hits the capital. 130 policemen are injured, some of them suffering gunshot wounds. Some cars are also set on fire in Toulouse.

Italy

- On 1 November, following a series of crimes committed by Romanians in Italy, President Giorgio Napolitano signs a decree authorising the prefects to expel from the country any European citizen considered a threat to public security. On 7 November the Prime Minister Romano Prodi and his Romanian counterpart decide to establish a joint police force. The leader of the opposition Silvio Berlusconi calls for the closure of the frontier to Romanians.
- On 18 November Silvio Berlusconi announces the dissolution of his party Forza Italia (FI), which is to be replaced by a wider movement.

Malta

- On 19 November, Médecins du Monde denounces in a report the inhumane and shameful reception, notably in terms of access to health, given to migrants in Malta and denounces the Maltese policy of systematic detention of migrants, which can extend up to 18 months.

Slovenia

- On 11 November Danilo Turk wins the second round of Presidential elections. He had stood in the election as an independent candidate, but benefiting

from the support of 3 centre-left parties in opposition.

- On 19 November the government of the Prime Minister Janez Jansa carries a motion of confidence in the Chamber of State (lower house).

Croatia

- On 25 November the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), the party of the Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, wins the legislative elections with 66 seats out of the 153 in the Sabor (single-chamber parliament). The Croatian Social-Democratic Party (SPH), the main opposition party, wins 13 seats more than in the previous elections.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 1 November the Bosnian Prime Minister Nikola Spiric presents his resignation in protest against the measures imposed by Miroslav Lajcak, the High Representative of the international community in Bosnia, to ease the functioning of Bosnia's central government, undermined by ethnic rivalries. On 12 November the country's collective presidency accepts his resignation.
- On 7 November the Bosnian authorities announce that General Novak Djukic, wanted for his role in the massacre of 71 civilians in Tuzla in May 1995, has been arrested near Banja Luka.
- On 21 November the United Nations Security Council approves resolution 1785 (2007), authorising the extension of the mandate of the EU peace-keeping force in Bosnia for 12 months.

Serbia

- On 5 November direct negotiations between the delegations of Serbia and of the province of Kosovo continue in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations. On 22 November negotiations take place in Brussels. On 26 November a sixth round of direct negotiations opens in Baden, in Austria. The delegation of Kosovo refuses the Serb proposal for extensive autonomy for Kosovo but within the frontiers of Serbia. On 28 November the international community recognises the stalemate of direct negotiations between the two parties to reach a common agreement on the final status of the province of Kosovo.

- On 7 November the EU initials a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia, an important step towards the latter's joining the EU.

- On 17 November the main opposition party, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (DPK), wins 37 seats and becomes the main party in the Assembly of the province of Kosovo. Participation in the election is no more than 43%.

- On 28 November the United Nations Security Council, in its resolution 1786 (2007), appoints the Belgian Serge Brammertz as the new prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), for a term of 4 years from 1 January 2008.

Macedonia

- On 7 November the Macedonian police, in clashes near the town of Tetova, kill 6 people, including Ramadan Shiti, a Wahhabite extremist who had escaped from prison in the province of Kosovo, in Serbia. According to the police, these persons were members of a criminal group.

Albania

- On 14 November, Ilir Rusmajli resigns from his post as minister of justice following allegations of corruption in the prison services. On 9 November President Bamir Topi appoints Enkelejd Alibeaj to the post left vacant.

- On 22 November, on the recommendation of a commission of the People's Assembly (legislature), President Topi dismisses the prosecutor general Theodhori Sollaku and appoints Ina Rama to replace him. Ina Rama is the first woman to occupy that post. The commission had concluded on 5 November that Sollaku had links with organised crime.

Greece

- On 1 November thousands of students and persons of the academic world demonstrate in the streets of Athens against the privatisation of universities and for better financing of public schools.

- On 18 November the authorities declare a state of emergency in the north-east of the country, hit by major floods.

Turkey

- On 4 November members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) set free 8 Turkish soldiers, taken hostage the previous 21 October. On 5 November, so as to avoid a large-scale Turkish military incursion in northern Iraq, which could destabilise one of the few stable regions of the country, the American President George W. Bush proposes to the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to help Turkey in fighting against the PKK militants. On 13 November the Turkish army attacks the PKK positions in northern Iraq. Nine Turkish soldiers and at least 6 Kurdish insurgents are killed in the clashes during November.

- On 6 November the European Commission publishes its annual report on the progress recorded by Turkey in its negotiations for joining the EU. The report calls on Turkey, among other things, to accelerate its reforms, to increase the rights of the Kurdish minority and to repeal or amend article 301 of the penal code, which penalises insult to the Turkish identity, to the Republic, and to the institutions or organs of state.

- On 18 November Prime Minister Erdogan and his Greek counterpart inaugurate a 300-km-long pipeline which will transport gas from the Caspian Sea to Europe and reduce Europe's energy dependence on Russia. The pipeline is to be completed by 2012.

Syria

- On 27 November Syria, present at the international conference at Annapolis on the Middle East peace process, makes an appeal to resume peace negotiations with Israel, suspended since 2000.

Lebanon

- On 24 November, the date on which the term of office of President Emile Lahoud ends, Lebanon finds itself without a President for the first time since the end of the civil war in 1990. On 21 November the American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice demands that Syria ceases from interfering in the election of the Lebanese President and allows its neighbour to designate its new chief of state without resorting to intimidations.

Jordan

- On 15 November a new party is formed under the name of Unified Jordanian Front (UJF).
- On 20 November, in the legislative elections, the Islamic Action Front, the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and leading opposition party, is reduced from 17 to 6 seats, while pro-government independent candidates win the majority of seats. A new government takes office on 25 November, headed by the new Prime Minister Nader Dahabi. The Muslim Brotherhood movement rejects these election results.

Libya

- On 6 November the *Financial Times* publishes a recording in which the number two of Al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, announces that the Islamic Group of Libyan Combatants (IGLC) has joined the terrorist network.

Tunisia

- On 7 November Al-Jazeera announces that 7 political prisoners, including 4 leaders of the banned movement Ennahda, 2 members of the Ansar group and one Internet expert, have been set free on occasion of the 20th anniversary of the accession to power of President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali.

Morocco

- On 2 November, after Spain announces the visit of King Juan Carlos to Ceuta and Melilla, two Spanish enclaves in the north of Morocco, Morocco withdraws its ambassador in Madrid for "an unlimited period" and calls on Spain to cancel that visit. On 5 and 6 November King Juan Carlos goes to Ceuta and Melilla.

European Union

- On 13 November the European Court of Auditors refuses for the thirteenth consecutive year to approve the annual accounts of the European Union. The Court notes a diminution of errors in the payments of subsidies under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).
- On 14 November the far-right European party Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty is

dissolved following the departure of 5 Romanian members of parliament because of remarks by the Italian MP Alessandra Mussolini, a member of the same group in the European Parliament, on Romanian immigrants in Italy.

December 2007

During December at least 72 people, including United Nations functionaries, are killed in two car-bomb terrorist attacks in Algiers, claimed by the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb. The heads of state and of government of the 27 member states of the EU sign the Lisbon Treaty, which gives legal force to the EU's Charter on fundamental rights. The direct negotiations between the Serbs and Albanians of Kosovo, begun under the aegis of the United Nations to reach a political solution to the future status of the province of Kosovo, reach stalemate. The EU decides to send a civil crisis-managing mission to Kosovo after its declaration of independence. Turkey launches the largest operation of recent years against the bases of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), included on the European terrorist list, located in northern Iraq. The negotiations for Turkey's entry into the EU continue with the opening of negotiations on two new chapters. The tensions between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina over the creation of a single police force are dissipated, the Prime Minister resumes his functions and a Stabilisation and Association Agreement is initialled between the two countries. Syria arrests some thirty political opponents, members of the Damascus Declaration. France suspends diplomatic relations with Syria over the crisis in Lebanon. The list of political assassinations grows in Lebanon with a lethal attack on François al-Hajj. The Croatian Minister for the Interior Ivica Kirin resigns following the publication of photographs showing him hunting with a suspected of war crimes currently on parole.

Spain

- On 1 December 2 officers of the Civil Guard are killed in the French seaside resort of Capbreton by suspected members of the terrorist organisation Euskadi and Freedom (ETA). The 2 of-

ficers were carrying out a routine surveillance operation with their French counterparts. On 5 December two suspects are arrested. On 7 December thousands of people demonstrate in Madrid against ETA.

- On 19 December, after 8 years of investigation led by the judge Baltasar Garzón, the Supreme Court sentences 47 people to prison terms between 2 and 24 years for links with ETA. This is the largest trial against ETA in history. In response to the Court's decision urban violence breaks out on 22 December in the province of Navarre. On 24 December a bomb explodes near the offices of the Socialist Party of the Basque Country at Balmaseda.

France

- On 12 December, on the occasion of the first council for modernisation of public policy, President Nicolas Sarkozy unveils nearly a hundred measures, intended in the long run to reduce the State's payroll and deficit and to make France more competitive.
- On 13 December the Corsican nationalist Yvan Colona is sentenced to life imprisonment by a court in Paris for the murder in 1998 of the French prefect Claude Erignac.
- On 19 December Mourad Benchellali, Redouane Khalid, Khaled Ben Mustapha, Nizar Sassi and Brahim Yadel, five French citizens who had been imprisoned at the American military base of Guantánamo until their repatriation to France in 2004, are found guilty by a court in Paris of conspiracy for terrorist purposes. Imad Kanouni, the sixth accused, is acquitted.

Italy

- On 6 December Prime Minister Romano Prodi narrowly survives a vote of confidence in the Senate (the upper house) in connection with an urgent decree concerning the expulsion from Italy of European citizens who threaten public security. Some senators of the extreme left, forming part of the Union, the government coalition, opposed the measure, which they consider racist.
- From 10 to 12 December the roads, ports and frontiers are blocked by lorry-drivers in protest against their working

conditions and the rise in the price of petrol, thus gravely disrupting the transport of food and petrol in the country.

- On 15 December 20,000 people demonstrate at Vicenza against the plans to extend the American military base, located near the Dal Molin airport.

Slovenia

- On 22 December the new President Danilo Turk officially takes up his duties.

Croatia

- On 29 December the Minister for the Interior Ivica Kirin resigns following the publication in the Croatian media of photographs showing him hunting with General Mladen Markac, currently being prosecuted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for war crimes committed in 1995 in the Krajina region. General Mladen Markac has been on parole since December 2004. On the same day the ICTY declares that General Mladen Markac has violated the terms of his parole and requires Croatia to proceed to his arrest.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 4 December, after the government adopted a plan of action to integrate the two ethnically divided police forces, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU initial in Sarajevo a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, an important first step towards joining the EU. The reform of the police was one of the main obstacles to beginning the accession process. On 10 December Nikola Spiric is re-appointed to his post as Prime Minister. Nikola Spiric had resigned from his post in November in protest against the firm measures of the High Representative of the international community in Bosnia, Miroslav Lajcak, aiming at easing the functioning of Bosnia's central government, undermined by ethnic rivalries. His appointment is confirmed on 27 December by the country's collective presidency and on 28 December by the legislature.

- On 9 December Rajko Kuzmanovic, of the Party of Independent Social-Democrats (SNSD), is elected with nearly 42% of the votes to the post of President

of the Republika Srpska. He succeeds Milan Jelic, who died in September.

- On 12 December the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) sentences Dragomir Milosevic, a former commander of the Sarajevo-Romanija Corps (SRK) of the Serb army in Bosnia, to 33 years' imprisonment for a series of crimes committed against civilians during the last months of the siege of Sarajevo (1992-1995).

Serbia

- On 7 December, after 120 days of bilateral negotiations between the delegations of Serbia and Kosovo, the Troika, set up the previous August under a diplomatic initiative by the United Nations to reach a negotiated agreement over the future status of the Province of Kosovo by 10 December 2007, submits its final report to the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon, recognising the stalemate of the direct negotiations. On 10 December thousands of students of Albanian origin take to the streets of Pristina to demand an immediate declaration of independence by the province and to call on the international community to recognise the new state.

- On 14 December the member states of the EU meet in Brussels and agree to send to Kosovo a civil crisis-management mission, composed of 1,800 men, with the mandate of stabilising the province after its declaration of independence.

Albania

- On 2 December the government announces that families of victims of the Stalinist regime of Enver Hoxha between 1945 and 1985 will receive a compensation payment in 2008.

- On 27 December the People's Assembly (single-chamber parliament) votes to lift the parliamentary immunity of the minister of foreign affairs Lulzim Basha, suspected of implication in a corruption affair. Basha had himself asked the members to lift his immunity.

Greece

- On 12 December Greece is hit by a strike in the sectors of transport, banking and public administration. Tens of

thousands of people demonstrate in Athens and in Thessalonica against the government's proposals to reform the pension system.

Cyprus

- On 14 December the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1789 (2007) extending till 15 June 2008 the mandate of the United Nations peace-keeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

Turkey

- On 5 December the trial of the publisher Ragip Zarakolu, prosecuted for insult to the Turkish identity under article 301 of the penal code, opens in Ankara. He is accused of publishing a Turkish translation of a book of George Jernigan titled *The Truth will Make Us Free*, which tackles the question of the Armenian genocide between 1915 and 1923 under the Ottoman Empire.

- On 16 December Turkey launches with the aid of the United States its largest operation of recent years against the bases of the terrorist organisation Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), in northern Iraq. Nearly 175 Kurdish insurgents are thought to have been killed in the operation. The Iraqi government, which was not consulted, condemns this attack, which cost the life of an Iraqi woman. On 18 December 300 Turkish soldiers cross the Iraqi frontier and engage two groups of the PKK over 24 hours. Fresh air attacks are launched in northern Iraq on 22, 23 and 26 December. In protest at the operations against the PKK 95 vehicles are set on fire in Turkey. 72 people, mainly PKK sympathisers, are arrested in connection with these fires.

- On 19 December the EU opens negotiations for Turkey's accession in 2 new chapters: trans-European networks and consumers and health protection.

- On 29 December 19 people suspected of having links with the Al-Qaeda organisation are arrested in Aksaray, Ankara and Istanbul. Weapons, ammunition and false identity documents are also seized.

Syria

- At the beginning of December some thirty political opposition members, including Dr Ahmad Tohme, Jabr al-Shoufi, Akram al-Bunni, Dr Fida' al-Hurani and Ali al-Abdallah, are arrested by the au-

thorities. They had taken part in Damascus on the previous 1 December in the national council of the Damascus Declaration for national democratic change, a movement calling for democratic reforms in Syria.

- On 30 December the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, on a visit to Cairo, announces that Paris will no longer have contacts with Damascus "until we have proof of the will of the Syrians to allow Lebanon to designate a consensus President." The Syrian authorities deny any involvement in the current crisis in Lebanon. The Egyptian President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak calls on Syria to intervene so that the Lebanese Assembly may meet to elect a new President.

Lebanon

- On 12 December the head of military operations, Brigadier General François al-Hajj, is assassinated in a bomb attack in the Christian district of Baabda in Beirut. Some anti-Syrian political leaders accuse Syria of responsibility for the assassination, while the latter condemns it, noting that this assassination benefits Syria.

Egypt

- On 5 December the 27th session of the Council of Arab ministers of social affairs is held in Cairo. They discuss development in the Arab countries, the dynamisation of the Arab strategy for combating poverty and the monitoring of the implementation of the Arab declaration on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and of the Arab convention in the rights of handicapped people.

- On 5 December the 9th session of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Environment is held in Cairo, in presence of representatives of international organisations specialising in the domain of the environment. This session is devoted to the monitoring of the Arab strategy on land degradation, the fight against desertification and the preservation of natural resources.

Libya

- On 9 December the French President Nicolas Sarkozy announces the signing of a number of contracts with Libya to

a value of 10 billion euros, including in the domain of armaments and the construction of a civil nuclear reactor. From 10 to 15 December the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi undertakes an official visit to France. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Human Rights denounces the human rights situation in Libya. From 17 to 18 December the Libyan leader visits Spain.

- On 31 December *The Guardian* reports that Libya has signed an agreement with Italy authorising 6 Italian patrols, composed of mixed Italian-Libyan crews, to patrol in Libyan waters to combat traffic in human beings and illegal immigration.

Tunisia

- On 4 December Tunisian justice sentences to one year's imprisonment the journalist Slim Boukhdhir, one of the most critical voices against the Tunisian government, for violent altercation with the police. The previous month Boukhdhir had gone on hunger strike for more than a week to denounce the refusal of his application for a passport to enable him to travel abroad.

- On 29 December two Tunisian Islamists are sentenced to death for attempting a coup d'état. Eight other Islamists are sentenced to life imprisonment, seven to thirty years and 13 to prison terms between five and twenty years for membership of a terrorist group, disturbance to public order and paramilitary training. The accused declare that their confessions had been extracted by violence.

Algeria

- At the beginning of December the French President Nicolas Sarkozy makes an official visit to Algeria, where he signs a partnership agreement with Algeria to help it to develop its nuclear energy programme.

- On 11 December at least 72 people die in two car-bomb attacks in Algiers, claimed by the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb. The second bomb goes off near the buildings of the United Nations in Hydra, a residential quarter, killing 17 United Nations functionaries.

Morocco

- On 28 December the anti-terrorist court in Sale sentences seven people to

prison terms between one and 15 years for their role in the attacks in Casablanca in May 2003.

European Union

- On 8 and 9 December, seven years after a first summit in Cairo, Europeans and Africans meet in Lisbon to found a strategic partnership based on peace, security, governance, human rights, trade and development. The British Prime Minister Gordon Brown boycotts the summit to protest against the presence of the President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, strongly criticised for human rights violations in his country.

- On 12 December the Presidents of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pötering, of the Council, the Portuguese Prime Minister José Socrates, and of the Commission, José Manuel Durao Barroso, sign and solemnly proclaim the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in Strasbourg. This charter had been proclaimed on 7 December 2000 in Nice without having juridical force. On 13 December the heads of state and of government of the 27 member states sign the Treaty of Lisbon. The Treaty of Lisbon refers to the Charter, thus making it juridically binding.

- On 21 December the new countries which joined the EU in 2004, with the exception of Cyprus, become members of the Schengen Zone.

Gibraltar and Western Sahara

Gibraltar

- On 11 October the Gibraltar Social Democrat Party (GSD) wins with 49.33% of the votes a fourth consecutive term in legislative elections held early.

Western Sahara

- On 17 April the *Financial Times* reports that an unpublished report of the United Nations dating from 2006 declares that the human rights of the inhabitants of Western Sahara, administered by Morocco, are being systematically violated.

- On 30 April the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1754 (2007) prolonging the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in West-

ern Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 October and calls on Morocco and the Polisario Front to open direct discussions, for the first time for 32 years, on the future of the territory disputed between them since 1975.

- On 18 and 19 June the representatives of the Polisario Front, Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania meet in New York for a first round of discussions, under the auspices of the United Nations, on the future of Western Sahara. The personal envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Peter Van Walsum, presides over the discussions. Morocco is represented by the minister of the interior Chakib Benmoussa.
- On 10 and 11 August a second round of negotiations takes place in New York.

Morocco and the Polisario Front agree in saying that the status quo has become unacceptable.

- On 31 October the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1783 (2007) prolonging the mandate of MINURSO until 30 April 2008.
- From 14 to 20 December the Polisario Front holds its 12th congress at Tifariti, 370 km. east of Laayoune. At this congress the members re-elect Mohammed Abdelaziz, President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, to the post of secretary general of Polisario, an office that he holds since 1976. On the same day Abdelaziz appoints the government proposed by the Prime Minister Abdelkader Taleb Oumar.

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