

General Chronology of the Mediterranean

The general chronology presented here assembles details of the most relevant events that have taken place in each of the states of the Mediterranean region between July 2002 and June 2003. The episodes are organised according to the months in which they happened, and each month is headed by a schematic selection of news items; and accounts are given of the most significant events in the different countries. Furthermore, the establishment of the African Union is included, as well as the monthly section that includes a segment about the European Union, whose power and initiatives have a decisive influence on the Mediterranean area.

July 2002

In what is believed to be a new act of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), thirty-eight people die when a bomb explodes in Algeria. The neighbouring country of Morocco frees more prisoners from the Polisario Front, and descends into shaky relations with Spain due to the occupation by Moroccan soldiers of the tiny Spanish Perejil/Leila Island. In France, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Internal Affairs visit Corsica in an attempt to re-launch the island's process toward autonomy. The EU announces an important revision of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which they will specify in the coming months, and at the same time Bosnia and Herzegovina serves as the setting for the United States' refusal to be submitted to the recently created jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. In Turkey, Bulent Ecevit's government

continues to weaken and early elections are announced.

Spain

- On 16th July, in the French department of Les Landes four people are arrested and accused of belonging to ETA. In Paris, a court sentences ex-commander of ETA, Francisco Javier Garcia Gaztelu, alias Txapote, to ten years in prison for the planning of terrorist acts.
- On 18th July, the French police, in collaboration with the Spanish Civil Guard, arrest eight alleged members of the urban guerrilla group, the First of October Anti-fascist Resistance Group (*Grupo de Resistencia Antifascista Primero de Octubre* or *GRAPO*), including their suspected leader, Fernando Hierro Txomon.

France

- A man linked to extreme right-wing groups fires shots at President Jacques Chirac, on 14th July, during the Bastille Day celebrations in Paris. There are no injuries and the gunman is arrested.
- Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin and the Minister of Internal Affairs Nicolas Sarkozy visit Corsica on 26th and 27th July in order to present their plan for decentralisation to local leaders, in an attempt to re-launch the process of autonomy for Corsica that was initiated by the Jospin administration and later immobilised by the Constitutional Council in January.

Italy

- The Minister of Internal Affairs Claudio Scajola resigns from his post

on 3rd July, after the scandal provoked by his insinuations about the assassination of the government labour consultant, Marco Biagi.

- On 23rd July, President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi denounces the conflict between Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's political duties and his power over the media. The President calls for legislation that will assure its pluralism and impartiality.

Croatia

- After a crisis in the coalition government, the reformist Prime Minister Ivica Racan resigns on 5th July, publicly expressing his wish to set up a new cabinet and continue to move forward with key reforms until the general elections set for 2004. On 30th July, the Chamber of Representatives (the lower chamber of the bicameral legislature) approves the formation of a new government led by Racan.
- On 12th July, the UN Security Council approves resolution 1434 (2002), thereby extending the term of the UN Mission of Observers in Prevlaka, the disputed peninsula between Croatia and Yugoslavia until 15th October.
- On 31st July, Fikret Abdic, a Bosnian Muslim «warlord» and former contender to the Bosnian presidency, is sentenced to twenty years in prison by a Croatian court after being found guilty of committing crimes against humanity during the war in Bosnia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- At the beginning of July, the future of the SFOR and the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) appears bleak, with the US threaten-

ing to abandon peacekeeping operations in Bosnia due to a disagreement about the recently created International Criminal Court. On 12th July, the US is able to temporarily safeguard its peacekeeping troops from any investigation or processing by the new court. This step allows the UN Security Council to extend the mandate of the SFOR and the UNMIBH until 31st December.

- On 2nd July, in Pale, Republic of Srpska, SFOR troops raid the home of Rodovan Karadzic, Serbian-Bosnian leader who served during the war and who stands accused of war crimes by the ICTY.

- On 8th July, the ICTY confirms that Bosnian Serb Miroslav Deronjic has been transferred to their Detention Unit in The Hague, after being arrested the previous day by SFOR troops in Bratunac. He is accused of crimes against humanity and of violations of the laws and customs of war.

- On 10th July, Bosnian Serb Radovan Stankovic is transferred to the Hague Tribunal, after having been arrested the day before near Foca by the SFOR. He is accused of crimes against humanity and of violations of the laws and customs of war.

- On 31st July, Milojica Kos is released early from the ICTY Detention Unit in accordance with an order from the President of the tribunal, Claude Jorda, given the day before. Despite having been found guilty of crimes against humanity, torture and violations of the laws and customs of war, he was freed due to his «willingness to reintegrate into society; his determination not to re-offend; his good physical and mental health; his exemplary behaviour during detention; his attachment to his family; and his probability of finding employment». This is the second such order made by the tribunal.

Yugoslavia

- On 8th July, the district court of Prokuplje in Serbia sentences Ivan Nikolic to eight years in prison for killing two Albanian Kosovars in 1999. It is the first war crime case tried by a Serbian court.

- On 18th July, early elections are announced for 29th September in Serbia, the largest republic of the Fed-

eral Republic of Yugoslavia. This will shorten President Milan Milutinovic's term so that he may be transferred to the ICTY, where he will be tried for war crimes committed in the Serbian province of Kosovo.

- On 18th July, Serbian the legislature approves a law establishing a new intelligence agency with the purpose of fighting organised crime.

- In Montenegro, Prime Minister Filip Vujanovic fails in his attempt to form a new government, resulting in the dissolution of the legislature on 19th July, and legislative elections are planned for 6th October. Vujanovic had seen a loss of support from two parties in favour of independence due to his agreement to replace Yugoslavia with a new dual state: Serbia and Montenegro.

- On 22nd July, Mirosljub Labus, currently the Deputy Prime Minister, announces that he will stand in the presidential elections.

Macedonia

- On 4th July, Stojan Andov, President of the Sobranje, the unicameral legislative body, fixes elections for 15th September. The last elections were held in October and November of 1998. The assembly, in accordance with the Ohrid accords of 2001, approves the use of the Albanian language in the legislative sessions.

Albania

- On 24th July, Alfred Moisiu takes over as president, replacing Rexhep Mejdani. On 25th July, Pandeli Majko of the Socialist Party of Albania (PSS) resigns as Prime Minister and Moisiu immediately names Fatos Nano as new executive leader. On 31st July, the Popular Assembly, the unicameral legislature, approves the formation of the Nano government.

Greece

- Police arrest fourteen members of the 17th November terrorist group, including its suspected leader, Alexandros Yotopoulos, and assure that with this arrest they have dismantled the group, which was founded after the military junta's repression of student dis-sidence in November 1973.

Cyprus

- On 10th July, two commanders and three officials of the Greek-Cypriot air force die in a helicopter crash in which they were realising defensive exercises.

Turkey

- On 2nd July, a group of armed men assassinate Ahmet Cevat Sevigli, the Kurdish mayor of the south-eastern city of Kayablagar, at his home.

- The deteriorating health of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit continues to dominate the political agenda, while the coalition in power keeps losing support. On 31st July, the Great National Assembly decides to move the elections forward by almost eighteen months, to be held in November.

Lebanon

- On 11th July, three members of the intelligence service of the Lebanese army are killed near the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, the largest in the country. They are murdered while on a mission to arrest Lebanese national, Badih Hamada (Abu Ubayada), suspected of being involved with Palestinian Islamic activists. The suspect is eventually turned in by a delegation of religious leaders.

- On 30th July, the UN Security Council approves Resolution 1428 (2002), therefore extending the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) until 31st October 2003.

Jordan

- On 3rd July, the Executive Director of the IMF approves a 97.2 million Euro loan to Jordan in support of its economic program.

- The *Financial Times* issue of 5th July reports that Jordan has prevented a plot to attack American and Israeli interests in the country. The article states that collaborators in the plan were arrested sometime between April and June in Amman, and that the group was led by the Jordanian Palestinian, Wail al-Shalabi.

Egypt

- Saadeddin Ibrahim, the leading human rights activist who criticised the

government for their lack of commitment to democracy, is sentenced to seven years in prison on 29th July, after being found guilty of embezzlement, falsification and receiving foreign funds without authorisation.

Libya

- Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi promises to lay out economic aid plans for the countries he visited after attending the inaugural ceremony of the African Union in Durban, South Africa on 9th July (Uganda, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Swaziland).

Algeria

- On 5th July, during the celebrations of forty years of independence, a car bomb explodes in the market of Larba, 20 kilometres south of the capital Algiers, killing at least thirty-eight people and injuring more than eighty. The attack is attributed to the GIA, whose leader, Rachid Abu Tourab, may have been killed by the army on 28th July.

Morocco

- After months of uneasy relations between Morocco and Spain, a territorial dispute occurs and is responsible for worsening bilateral relations, when Moroccan soldiers occupy the Perejil/Leila Island on 11th July, and the Spanish army retake it on 17th July.

European Union

- On 1st July, the rotating presidency is formally shifted from Spain to Denmark after the six-month period is ended. It is hoped that this new mandate is prepared for the EU enlargement and the development of plans in order to reform its institutions.
- On 10th July, the European Commissioner of Agriculture and Rural Development, Franz Fischler, announces an ambitious revision of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) aimed at prioritising the production of safe and healthy alimentary products and protecting the environment and animal welfare; a reorientation that has sparked criticism from France and Spain, due to the fact that it threatens their interests in the sector.

- The pressure on the Stability and Growth Pact of the European Union, which controls the single currency, increases due to the plan announced by the Italian government of reducing taxes at expense of the budget deficit.

African Union

- The African Union (AU) replaces the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and is officially launched in Durban, South Africa on 9th and 10th July, with ceremonies officiated by the heads of states and governments from the majority of the fifty-three countries that make up this organisation, which has a structure similar to that of the EU. The only states of the African continent that are not represented by the African Union are Morocco, due to the fact that the AU recognises Western Sahara as a country, and Madagascar, as it was not recognised by the OAU. During the last session of the OAU, held on 8th July, various leaders and the General secretary of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, praised the decision to create a new organisation with new principles, which include the promotion of democracy and economic development as goals for the region.

August 2002

Spain takes a decisive step toward illegalising the political party Batasuna, considered by the government to be the political wing of the terrorist organisation ETA. In the meantime, in Silvio Berlusconi's Italy, political measures move forward which could complicate the judicial processes faced by the Prime Minister. In the Balkans, Yugoslavia re-establishes diplomatic relations with Albania at the same time as territorial disputes worsen their relations with Croatia, which is also involved in disputes with Slovenia. Turkey moves forward with measures such as the abolition of the death penalty, in order to bring them closer to being allowed to enter the EU. In Jordan, the restriction on the freedom of the press is highlighted with the closure of the Aljazeera headquarter. Libya continues to open itself up internationally, as it plays host to the first ministerial visit from the United Kingdom since 1983.

Spain

- On 4th August, ETA sets off a car bomb next to a Civil Guard barracks in Santa Pola, Alicante, killing two people and injuring thirty-four.
- On 26th August, led by the Aznar administration, the Spanish parliament reverts to the recently passed Political Parties Law in order to demand that the Supreme Court make Batasuna illegal. On the same day, judge of the National Court Baltasar Garzón orders the closing of the party's offices, cultural centres, establishments and web pages and declares the suspension of all their activities.
- On 27th August, the autonomous police corps have to result to using force in order to clear and seal off the headquarters of Batasuna in the three Basque capitals, in accordance with Garzón's decree.

France

- On 2nd August, there is a grenade attack on the police barracks in Solenzara, in the southern part of Corsica. The previously unknown National Liberation Armada (ALN) claims responsibility.
- On 4th August, the leader of the separatist alliance Corsica Nation, Jean-Guy Talamoni, calls for the French government to bring Corsican politicians imprisoned in continental France closer to the island. According to Talamoni, this should help to re-establish the process toward autonomy. The process experienced its latest setback on 1st August, when the outlawed FLNC rejected the government's new autonomist proposals.
- On 6th August, the Council of Ministers bans the extremist right-wing group Radical Unity, due to its relationship with Máxime Brunerie, the assassin who failed in an attempt to shoot President Jacques Chirac on 14th July in Paris.

Italy

- On 2nd August, the Senate (the higher chamber of the Italian legislature) approves a law that will allow defendants to request a new trial if sound indications exist that the judges are impartial. According to the opposition, this law will contribute to a delay or

even an acquittal in the case of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who is to appear before a court in Milan at the end of 2002, in a case involving the bribery of judges. The opposition continues to denounce the incompatibility between Berlusconi's post as Prime Minister and his commercial interests as a television media tycoon.

Croatia

- At the beginning of the month, diplomatic relations between Croatia and Yugoslavia worsen when the Croatian government demands that Yugoslavia remove their troops from the area around the disputed island in the Danube where Yugoslavian soldiers recently opened fire on Croatian civilians. It is the most serious border dispute between the two countries since the end of the war over Croatian succession from Yugoslavia in 1995. Relations between Croatia and Slovenia also deteriorate during August, due to an incident involving a Croatian patrol boat and Slovenian anglers in the disputed waters of the Piran Gulf.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 2nd August, the executive of the IMF approves an aid loan for the governmental economic program.
- On 21st August, violence breaks out while Bosnia and Yugoslavia play a friendly football match in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo.

Yugoslavia

- On 11th August, the international force in Kosovo (KFOR) arrests Rustem Mustafa, a former commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), suspected of murder, torture and illegal arrests. Thousands of Kosovars protest against the arrest and there are confrontations with the UN forces.
- On 22nd August, joint Russian and US forces seize enough uranium to make three nuclear bombs at a nuclear reactor near Belgrade.
- As anticipated, on 23rd August, the President of Yugoslavia, Vojislav Kostunica, announces that he will run for President of Serbia (the largest of the two republics of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). The elections are set for

29th September. Kostunica's greatest rival will be Miroslav Labus, currently serving as Deputy Prime Minister. The office of President of Yugoslavia will be dissolved when the federation is remodelled and becomes the union of Serbia and Montenegro.

- On 26th August, after more than a month of delays, the trial of former Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, reopens in the ICTY. Before the summer holiday period, a medical report showed that Milosevic was at risk from a heart attack.

Albania

- On 23rd August, it is announced that Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will restore diplomatic relations with regard to their embassies. Diplomatic relations became unstuck during the 1999 conflict in Kosovo.

Cyprus

- On 8th August, two journalists are sentenced to six months imprisonment by a Nicosian court for having insulted the presidential authority in articles that appeared in 1999 in *Avrupa*, the opposition's newspaper that was later renamed *Afrika*.
- On 27th August, the sixth round of peace talks begins in Nicosia between Greek Cypriot President, Glafkos Clerides, and Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denkash.

Turkey

- On 2nd August, the Great National Assembly declares the abolition of the death penalty during peacetime, one of the reforms necessary for the country's entrance into the EU.
- On 9th August, a labour reform bill is passed that forces workers to give notice of one month before leaving a union, and that allows them to demand severance pay for unfair dismissal. The previous day had seen the resignation of the Labour Minister, Yasar Okuyan, who stepped down in protest of the new legislation.
- On 10th August, the Independent Minister of Finance Kemal Dervis resigns, another deserter in the deteriorating government of the battered Bulent Ecevit.

- On 30th August, the pro-European General, Hilmi Ozkok, is appointed Chief of Staff of the Turkish armed forces, another sign of the country's efforts at connection with the EU.

- Prisoners continue their hunger strike in protest of the government's attempts to introduce new penitentiary regimes. The strike began in 2001 and by the end of August has claimed fifty-five lives.

Lebanon

- On 29th August, a Hezbollah attack injures three Israeli soldiers along a disputed section of the Lebanese-Israeli border. The group had been almost inactive since April.

Jordan

- On 7th August, the government shuts down the offices of the Arab television station Aljazeera, for having provoked «dissidence» with the broadcasting of voices criticising past monarchs.
- On 15th August, in a televised announcement, King Abdullah announces that the elections scheduled for the end of 2002 will not take place until the spring of 2003 due to «difficult regional circumstances».

Egypt

- On 4th August, the administration formally accuses twenty-six people, three of them British subjects, of attempting to overthrow the government in order to establish a new Muslim order.
- On 15th August, the US government announces that it will not give any additional aid beyond the two billion dollars guaranteed each year by the 1978 Camp David accords, as a form of protest at the recent incarceration of Saadeddin Ibrahim, human rights activist who holds both Egyptian and US citizenship.

Libya

- On 7th August, UK Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien travels to Libya in the first ministerial visit since 1983. During his stay, Mike O'Brien talks with Muammar al-Gaddafi and other Libyan authorities. Reports say that Gaddafi made the promise to help in the inter-

national fight against al-Qaeda, the international terrorist network under the leadership of Osama bin Laden, and the representatives debated the steps that Libya would be obliged to take in order for UN sanctions to be lifted.

- On 23rd August, the London newspaper *Al-Hayat* reports that Abu Nidal, the Palestinian guerrilla leader who died on 16th August in Iraq, told colleagues that he had organised the Lockerbie attack.

September 2002

Spain continues to have uneasy relations with Morocco. The Basque regional leader, Juan José Ibarretxe, presses the plan to make the region a free associated state. In Italy, an immigration nightmare is brought to life when a boat capsizes and thirty-six people drown. In the international relations field of the Mediterranean region, tensions between Libya and Israel increase a notch, while relations seems to improve between Greece and Turkey despite the deadlock in the peace talks in Cyprus. Turkey bans the most popular candidate, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, from running in the upcoming elections. Elections are held in Yugoslavia, Macedonia and Morocco.

Spain

- On 8th September, local authorities in San Sebastian permit an officially prohibited nationalist demonstration, which triggers severe criticism from the central government.
- The government receives criticism from the opposition and some veteran leaders of its own party when, mid-month, it is revealed that an organisation dedicated to the memory of the dictator Francisco Franco receives eighty-three thousand euros in public funding.
- On 16th September, Juan Antonio Olarra and Ainhoa Múgica, two veteran leaders of the terrorist organisation ETA, are arrested in Bordeaux, France, after a lengthy police investigation. Olarra is believed to have been the military leader of ETA since 2001.
- On 24th September, ETA kills a civil guard and injures three others near Pamplona. A booby trap exploded as

agents were taking down a banner bearing the ETA symbol and anagram that threatened the Civil Guard. In Bilbao, just twelve hours earlier, two suspected members of ETA die while planning a car bomb.

- On 27th September, the regional Prime Minister of the Basque Country, Juan José Ibarretxe, launches the proposal of a popular referendum during the present legislative session in order to convert the Basque region into a free associated state to Spain. The aim is to achieve a new status allowing the Basque state to sign international treaties, have a direct presence in Europe, as well as freedom to associate with other Basque territories, and to enjoy actual, far-reaching political autonomy, their own judicial power, and so forth. Shortly thereafter, the central government demonstrates its complete rejection of the Ibarretxe plan. Business people from the Basque region and the European Commission also oppose the plan.

France

- At least twenty-three people drown on 9th and 10th September, during flash floods in the Rodano Valley due to torrential rains and the consequential overflowing of the rivers.
- On 11th September, the French government approves an increase in spending on defence strategies, adding a billion euros a year to this section of the budget, which will increase from representing 1.8 percent of the GDP to 2.5 percent. The idea is to reduce the gap with the United Kingdom in terms of military capacity, with the aim of offering higher levels of cooperation in terms of European defence and security.
- On 11th September, the Minister of Justice Dominique Prevé and his Italian counterpart, Roberto Castelli, secure progress toward the extradition of former terrorists from the extreme left who were offered asylum in France under the so-called «Mitterrand doctrine».
- On 17th September, the separatist movements Corsica Nation (CN) and Independence propose the idea of a «local citizenship» in Corsica, under which those citizens would be given preference in access to employment and the acquisition of property on the

island. The outlawed FLNC claims responsibility in several recent terrorist attacks, which are added to the various bombings in September for which the *Resistenza Corsa* and National Liberation Front claim responsibility.

- On 18th September, the government approves an adjustment in the statutory thirty-five-hour working week by increasing the total number of overtime hours allowed from 130 to between 180 and 200 per year.
- On 19th September, a court in Melun, near Paris, sentences nine French nationals and a German to between four and fifteen years in prison for having been part of one the largest paedophile rings to be uncovered in France to date.
- On 25th September, a bar of the explosive pentrite is discovered on a Royal Air Maroc aeroplane on the Marrakech-Marseilles-Metz route.

Italy

- On 12th September, before an official trip to Israel, Gianfranco Fini, Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the far-right group National Alliance (AN), apologises for the promulgation of anti-Semitic laws in the 1930's under the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini.
- Also on 12th September, the police accuse fifteen Pakistanis, arrested by immigration services in Sicily in August, of conspiring to commit terrorist and subversive acts. They are believed to form a part of the terrorist network al-Qaeda.
- On 15th September, thirty-six people drown when a boat carrying illegal immigrants from Liberia capsizes. Police and the coastguard are able to save ninety-two people.
- On 30th September, the government approves a budget draft for 2003 that is to be debated in both houses of the legislature and that represents the quest for balance between the two government forces in keeping their promise to cut taxes and the need to demonstrate their fiscal rectitude to other members of the EU.

Croatia

- On 17th September, the ICTY opens proceedings against eighty-three year old General Janko Bobetko, who was

the chief of the Croatian army during the war of independence from 1991 to 1995, and who was regarded as a national hero. He is accused of crimes against humanity and violations of the laws and customs of war.

- On 23rd September, Prime Minister Ivica Račan announces that his government will not turn Bobetko over to the tribunal in The Hague, despite the fact that this could result in international isolation for Croatia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 3rd September, a report from a governmental body in the Srpska Republic (the Bosnian-Serbian entity of the federation) suggests that Bosnian Muslims have either imagined or fabricated the 1995 massacre in Srebrenica, with the objective of achieving international implication in their conflict with the Serbs.

- On 24th September, Zeljko Markovic, chief of the Public Security Centre (the Bosnian Serb police force) in Serbian Sarajevo, is assassinated in Sokalac.

Yugoslavia

- During the month of September, the trial of the former President of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic in the ICTY, after Milosevic has answered for the massacres and forced deportations of Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo, arrives at its critical point: the war crimes in Bosnia and Croatia. Milosevic denies having formed part of a «joint criminal enterprise» to create a Serbian state in Bosnia and Croatia, «destroying or expelling» inhabitants who were not Serbs. The former President of Yugoslavia accuses the US, the Vatican, the Croatian people and Muslims of «victimising the Serb people on a global scale». On 27th September, Milosevic makes a more concrete accusation: that the French secret service orchestrated the massacre of Srebrenica in Bosnia, an event that claimed the lives of over seven thousand Muslims, in order to turn world opinion against the Serbs.

- On 24th September, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe approves Yugoslavia's entrance into the organisation. They consider that

Serbia has made «considerable progress on the path toward democracy and political pluralism».

- On 29th September, elections are held in Serbia, the largest republic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Vojislav Kostunica, the candidate of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and current Federal President, assures victory over Miroljub Labus, the candidate of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) and former Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister, and who is backed by Kostunica's major rival, the Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic. However, since there is no absolute majority, Kostunica and Labus are set for a second round on 13th October.

Macedonia

- On 15th September, the people go to the polls to elect the representatives of the Sobranje, the unicameral legislative body, and in the results, Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski's administration (VMRO-DPMNE) is defeated. The majority of seats (sixty) go to the Together for Macedonia coalition led by the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM). The Democratic Union for Integration, which stems from the National Liberation Army (NLA), wins sixteen seats, emerging as the largest ethnic Albanian party. With the aim of maintaining the peace, the UN deploys 3,500 police and soldiers as well as nine hundred observers from the OSCE.

Greece

- Bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey seem to improve slightly as a consequence of several meetings between ministers and high-level officials from both countries.

- Starting on 3rd September, various consumer groups organise massive boycotts in protest of abrupt price increases since the launch of the Euro in January. On 18th September, the government announces a series of measures to set fixed prices for basic products and prevent unjustified price increases.

- On 6th September in Athens, after fourteen of his colleagues are arrested, Dimitris Koufoudinas, the suspected

sub-commander of the 17th November group and one of the most wanted men in the country, turns himself in.

Cyprus

- On 6th September, despite the crisis meeting in Paris backed by the General Secretary of the UN, Kofi Annan, negotiations between the Greek Cypriot President, Glafkos Clerides, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktaş, come to a standstill.

Turkey

- In a new blow to Turkey's EU aspirations, on 18th September, Amnesty International publishes a study stating that the Turkish state continues, routinely and systematically, to use torture, despite human rights legislation that prohibits it.

- On 20th September, the highest Turkish electoral authority rules that Recep Tayyip Erdogan, former Mayor of Istanbul and leader of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), will not be permitted to stand in the upcoming November general elections as a result of having recited a poem considered seditious against the secular government, and inciting religious hatred. Erdogan, who according to the polls heads the most popular party, is seen by certain sectors, such as the justice system and the military, as a potential threat to the secular order of the country. However, Turkey will have to reform the penal code that was used to convict him in order to gain entrance to the EU. Erdogan, meanwhile, continues with his campaign.

- Prisoners maintain the hunger strike in protest of the government's attempts to impose new penitentiary regimes. Two prisoners die during this month, bringing the death toll to fifty-seven since the strike began in 2001.

Syria

- On 13th September, the newspaper *Middle East International* declares the end of the round of political trials that began with the arrest of numerous figures from the opposition in September 2001. The state security court, a military tribunal, has recently dictated a sentence of ten years imprisonment against economist Arif Dalila, and oth-

ers of five years for engineer Fawaz Tillu, five years for human rights activists Walid al-Bunni and Habib Isa, three years for physicist Kamal Labwani, and three years for professor Hasan Sa'dun.

Lebanon

- A confrontation between Lebanon and Israel over access to water in the former occupied territory in southern Lebanon increases tension between the two countries during the month of September. The dispute has to do with Lebanon's programme of pumping water to border populations by rerouting it from a river that flows into the Jordan and Lake Tiberias, the main source of Israel's water supply. Israel threatens, «to take measures» if the water level is affected. In attempt to calm the situation, the US sends two hydrologists to supervise the project.

- The edition of 2nd September of the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, reports that Syria condemns the entrance of between 150 and 200 Al-Qaeda operatives into the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, the Ain al-Hilweh, near Sidon. The newspaper also refers to the armed struggle that took place during August between Islamist factors and members of Fatah, and which was initiated by al-Qaeda's attempt to take over the camp.

- On 3rd September, US envoy David Satterfield calls for Syria to take control of Hezbollah in order to avoid an increase of the tension felt along the Lebanese-Israeli border. In addition, on 5th September, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage takes a firm stance by putting Hezbollah at the top of the list of terrorist organisations.

- On 4th September, Lebanese army units enter the Palestinian refugee camp of Jalil in Baalbek, a small and generally peaceful camp located in the Syrian-controlled area. Three Palestinians and a Lebanese soldier die in the raid, and weapons and ammunition are confiscated.

- On 5th September, the Lebanese authorities shut down Murr Television and Radio Mount Lebanon with the allegation of illicit broadcasting of propaganda during the elections in Metn.

Egypt

- On 9th September, the trial of ninety-four members of the Islamist group al-Wa'd comes to an end. The tribunal accuses them of planning assassinations and attacks against public buildings, and the court sentence fifty-one of the defendants to more than fifteen years in prison and acquits the remaining forty-three.

- Between 15th and 17th September, the eighth convention of the National Democratic Party (NDP) is held in Cairo. Highlights include the appointment of Egyptian President, Mohammed Hosni Mubarak's son, Gamal Mubarak, to the recently created post of policy secretary. Gamal Mubarak could carry on to succeed his father as president.

Libya

- On 12th September it is announced that the man found guilty in the Lockerbie bombing, Abdel Baset al-Megrahi, appeals against the received life sentence in the European Court of Human Rights.

- In mid-September, news spreads that Libya has renovated its 360 million dollar contract in order to supply oil to Zimbabwe in exchange for the use of the country's main resources. Furthermore, there are reports that Libya has taken part in the oil infrastructure in Mozambique, invested in Namibia and Malawi and acceded to the pay the debts and dues that are owed to the African Union (AU) by more than ten African countries.

Tunisia

- On 4th September, President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali publicly announces the restructuring of his administration.

Morocco

- On 22nd September, the Moroccan Minister Of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mohammed Benaissa, cancels his visit to Spain that was scheduled for 23rd September in protest over the supposed landing of a Spanish helicopter on the disputed Perejil/Leila island. The visit was intended to help in the improving of

lations, which are also strained with regard to immigration and the rights to fishing territories. The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ana Palacio, assures that the helicopter never actually landed, but simply flew close to the island in order to investigate Moroccan military operations.

- On 25th September, Mohammed Benaissa accuses Spain of repeatedly violating Moroccan airspace, as many as sixty-one times, according to the Minister, and their waters some twenty-six times, since July.

- On 27th September, elections are held for the lower chamber of the bicameral legislative, the Assembly of Representatives (Majlis al-Nuwab). There are newly drawn electoral districts with two to five representatives assigned to each one, and the parties present up to five candidates per district. Twenty-two of the twenty-six parties that run win seats. The new Assembly includes thirty-five women (10.8 percent of the total members of the house), which is basically due, to a quota assuring women a minimum of thirty seats. The main opposition group, the illegal and Islamist Adl Wal Ihsan (Justice and Charity), had called for a boycott of the elections. Voter participation was fifty-two percent, six points below the 1997 elections.

European Union

- On 13th September, a meeting is held between Ministers of Justice and Internal Affairs, in which they decide to support the European Commission's proposal to establish a common definition for the refugee situation. This agreement helps to pave the way for the EU to adopt a controversial plan to repatriate several thousand Afghani refugees.

- The first EU military mission (for the control of the peacekeeping operations in Macedonia, set to start in October) suffers significant setbacks in the middle of the month when they are unable to settle a dispute with Turkey over EU military access to NATO resources in the country.

- On 24th September, the European Commission abandons the deadline of 2004 for the balancing of budgets, as established in the Stability and Growth Pact, which governs the workings of

the Euro as the common currency. The decision, which has roused criticism from countries such as Holland, Austria and Spain, allows France, Italy Germany and Portugal two more years, until 2006, to balance their budgets.

October 2002

In October, there are strikes in Portugal and Italy, action against international terrorism in Lebanon, Morocco and France. Also in France, plans to decentralise the government continue, as do the Corsican separatist attacks. In the Balkans, international war crime tribunals advance, and elections are held in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia. There are also local elections in Algeria, where the problems in Cabilia intensify. The EU reaches an agreement on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), announces its largest expansion since the creation of the European Economic Community in 1957, and offers specific details on financing the enlargement. Libya leaves the Arab League.

Portugal

- On 16th October, Lusa, a Portuguese news agency, reports that the twenty-four hour strike called by the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers / National Intersyndical (CGTP/IN), has brought work in the public sector to a stop and forced hundreds of hospitals and schools to close.

France

- On 6th October, the Mayor of Paris Bertrand Delanoë suffers serious injuries when he is stabbed during a social event at the city hall. The attacker is a thirty-nine year old unemployed computer engineer with a criminal and psychiatric record, who declares that he acted impulsively and dislikes politicians and homosexuals such as Delanoë.
- On 14th October, police arrest Tunisian national Lazahr ben Mohammed Tilli in Marseilles. He is in possession of false identification documents and the telephone numbers of suspected Islamic terrorists in several European countries. Tilli is suspected of connec-

tions with the al-Qaeda networks that have recently been uncovered in Germany, France and Italy.

- On the basis of the governmental decree made public on 20th October, the Islamic organisation, Global Relief Foundation, is placed on France's official list of «entities whose financing relations are strictly controlled as part of the fight against terrorism».
- On 25th and 26th October, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Nicolas Sarkozy, visits the island of Corsica in order to launch the official government plan for decentralisation of power in the twenty-six French regions, which will then obtain autonomous control of transport, housing, health and education as well as some revenue services. A reform of the first article of the Constitution as well as citizen approval through a national referendum are needed in order to implement the plan.
- In the period drawing up to Minister Sarkozy's visit, there are as many as fifteen bombings on the island, in which one person is injured. During the course of his visit another attack occurs, similar to the previous incidents, for which no group claims responsibility. Furthermore, prior to the ministerial visit, the French government announces that in response to local demand for mainland prisoners to be moved closer to the island, a penitentiary for those prisoners serving less than ten years will be built in 2007 on the island itself. However, the announcement of this measure does nothing to appease the local Anti-repression Committee.
- On 30th October, a Paris court sentences Algerian nationals Smain Ali Belkacem and Boualem Bensaid to life imprisonment for the 1995 assassination campaign carried out in Paris in the name of the Algerian GIA.

Italy

- On 10th October, the Chamber of Deputies approves a judicial bill of law backed by Silvio Berlusconi. The opposition sees this as a manoeuvre on the part of Berlusconi to avoid having to appear in court on charges of the bribery of judges. On 29th October, a special commission examines the bill and approves that it be passed to the Senate without any sort of amend-

ment, so that once there it will be read for the second time without the expectation of a great deal of opposition.

- On 17th October, the Chamber of Deputies approves certain modifications to the Constitution, thereby removing the last obstacle for the return of the royal family. This marks the end of exile for the Prince, Victor Manuel and his son, Manuel Filiberto. The exile was imposed due to the family's collaboration with the previous dictator, Benito Mussolini.
- On 18th October, the General Confederation of Italian Workers (CGIL) calls a strike in protest of the economic policies set by the Berlusconi administration. More than a million people take part in the demonstration, which affects the running of the country, but does not succeed in bringing it to a standstill. Unlike the previous strike held in April, which was backed unanimously by the unions, this time the protest lacks the support of all of them.
- On 31st October, Fiat, Italy's largest industrial company, officially affirms that its automobile manufacturing firm is in crisis, and facing enormous financial losses, they will be forced to lay off more than five thousand workers. Once they have made this announcement, the company is eligible to apply for government aid.
- An earthquake measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale shakes the south of Italy on 31st October. In the village of San Giuliano di Puglia, the roof of a school collapses, killing an entire class of twenty-six children, none more than six years of age, as well as three adults. As a consequence, on 1st November the government declares a state of emergency in the region.

Croatia

- On 11th October, the UN Security Council passes Resolution 1437 (2002), extending the mandate of the UN Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) until 15th December. Croatia and Yugoslavia are disputing the province.
- On 23rd October during her visit to Croatia, Carla Del Ponte, Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY, once again requests that the Croatian government extradite former army chief of staff Janko Bo-

betko to the tribunal in The Hague. Del Ponte states that Croatia's behaviour has «not reached [the] stage of non-cooperation». However, she adds, «Justice must be carried out equally in the cases of all the accused».

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 2nd October, the former President of the Srpska Republic, Biljana Plavsic, who faces eight charges of war crimes in the ICTY for which she accepted responsibility in January 2001, pleads guilty to crimes against humanity. The prosecutor withdraws the other seven charges.
- On 5th October, general elections are held, in which the nationalists gain greater power in the executive branch in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These elections decide the president of Bosnia, the Bosnian Chamber of Representatives (the lower legislative chamber) the Chamber of Representatives of the Muslim Croatian Federation, the Popular Assembly of the Srpska Republic, the Presidency and Vice-Presidential of the Srpska Republic and the cantonal assemblies. These elections are the first to be organised locally without international supervision since the end of the civil war in 1995. The OSCE acts as an observer and assures that the voting is undertaken according to international regulations.
- On 11th October, the indictment of wartime Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, is declared open. He faces charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, the violation of the laws and customs of war, and violation of the Geneva Conventions.
- On 17th October, Milan Simic, a forty-two-year-old Bosnian Serb who voluntarily turned himself in to the authorities and pled guilty to two accounts of torture, is sentenced to five years in prison. On 21st October, the indictment is opened for the cases against Bosnian Serbs Drago Nikolic, Vujadin Popovic and Ljubisa Beara, accused of war crimes against Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica in 1995.
- On 29th October, the Minister of Defence of the Srpska Republic, Slobodan Bilic, and the army chief of staff, Novica Simic, resign from office due to a scandal involving the state aviation company Orao, which violated the UN

arms embargo on Iraq by selling military equipment to them. The scandal also makes its impact in Yugoslavia where the government removes the Deputy Defence Minister and the head of the state-run import-export company Jugoimport-SDPR.

Yugoslavia

- On 1st October, the Croatian President, Stipe Mesic, appears before the ICTY to testify in the case of the war crimes committed by former president of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic.
- On 10th October, international forces are forced to employ tear gas to disperse violent Kosovar Albanian protests against the return of Serbs to the province.
- On 13th October, Serbia holds the second round of the presidential elections, which are declared invalid due to the scarce participation of forty-five percent, below the required fifty percent participation. Even though Vojislav Kostunica obtained the majority of votes (sixty-seven percent), the elections will have to be repeated. This means another chance for Vojislav Seselj of the ultra-nationalist Radical Serbian Party (SRS), who came out as the third most voted candidate in the first round.
- On 20th October, Montenegro holds legislative elections, which were planned in July when Filip Vujanovic's cabinet lost the support it needed to continue in government. Milo Djukanovic's pro-independence Democratic List for a European Montenegro secures the victory and wins the support needed to continue in government with the obtainment of thirty-nine out of the seventy-five seats. The party in favour of the preservation of the federal union with Serbia achieves thirty seats.
- The majority party in the Assembly of Kosovo, President Ibrahim Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), win the local elections on 26th October in the disputed Serbian province of Kosovo. The turnout reaches fifty-seven percent among Albanian Kosovars, and twenty percent among Kosovars of Serbian descent, whose parties obtain power in four municipalities.

Macedonia

- On 14th October, NATO members decide to extend Operation Amber Fox until 15th December, following the confirmation that the Netherlands will continue to lead the mission. The EU would have liked to control the operations themselves, but the continual state of negotiations between Turkey and Greece render this impossible.
- On 15th October, the General Council of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) approves Macedonia's admittance into the organisation. The protocol signed by General Secretary of the WTO, Supachai Panitchpakdi, and the Macedonian Secretary of Economy, Besnik Fetaj, must be ratified by the Macedonian legislature (Sobranje) before 31st March 2003.
- On 18th October, the formerly communist Social Democratic Alliance for Macedonia (SDSM) and the ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration (BDI), the political reincarnation of the guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (NLA), announce the formation of a coalition government and the repartition of the fourteen ministries. Branco Crevenkovski, leader of the SDSM and former Prime Minister, will head the cabinet, which will not include former NLA guerrillas, of whom many occupy positions of leadership within the BDI.

Cyprus

- On 3rd and 4th October, the attempts by Kofi Annan, General Secretary of the UN, fail to renew peace negotiations between Greek Cypriot President, Glafkos Clerides, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash. Furthermore, the talks are suspended when Denktash is admitted to a US hospital for emergency open-heart surgery.

Turkey

- On 1st October, the Great National Assembly confirms that the general elections will be held on 3rd November, despite the fact that some parties had requested that they be postponed in order to recuperate votes.
- On 3rd October, the State Security Tribunal formally invalidates the death

sentence given to Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). Öcalan's death sentence, and those of twenty other activists, is replaced with life imprisonment.

- On 16th October an Istanbul court sentences ten police agents to between five and ten years imprisonment for acts of torture against juveniles in custody. The agents have already been given four sentences against which they plan to appeal. The case is taken over by the European Commission as an example of the slowness and inefficiency of the Turkish legal system.

- On 23rd October, Sabih Kanaoglu, Chief Prosecutor in Turkey, turns to the constitutional courts with the aim of banning the Justice and Development Party (AKP), whose leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was not permitted to participate in the September elections.

Lebanon

- At the beginning of the month, three supposed al-Qaeda members are arrested. They are suspected of trying to establish a refuge camp for members of Osama bin Laden's network who have escaped from Afghanistan.

- On 16th October, President Emile Lahoud officially opens a controversial water pumping station in the Wazzami River near the border with Israel, which responds by threatening to destroy the station and to increase its number of military flights over Lebanon.

Jordan

- On 28th October, Laurence Foley, a US diplomat, is killed in Amman by an unidentified assassin. Sixty-two year old Foley had worked as an administrator in the US Agency of International Development. His murder coincides with a rising tide of hostility toward the US in the region, due to the country's supposed inclination in favour of Israel and their plans to invade Iraq.

Libya

- On 24th October, the official news agency *Jana* reports that Libya has

withdrawn from the Arab League for no apparent reason. However, the 25th October edition of *The Independent* reports that several high-ranking civil servants have cited the League's inefficiency with the crisis in Iraq and Palestine.

Tunisia

- On 8th October, the television channel Aljazeera broadcasts a recorded message in which Ayman al-Zawahiri, member of al-Qaeda, claims responsibility for the April bombing of a synagogue on the Tunisian island of Djerba. Several German tourists were killed in the attack. He also claims that al-Qaeda was responsible for the suicide bombing in the Pakistani city of Karachi last May, which resulted in the deaths of eleven French naval engineers.

Algeria

- At local elections held on 10th October, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Prime Minister Ali Benflis' National Liberation Front (FLN) obtains political supremacy. In these elections of a low-turnout, the FLN gains control of 668 local assemblies out of 1,541 and wins half the seats in 323 others. They also gain control of forty-three out of forty-eight regional assemblies. During the voting the country saw confrontations between Berber activists and government forces in the Kabylia region. The *Arches*, a coordinating organisation that brings together representatives from the towns and tribes of the Berber region of Algeria, and which has led the revolt since April 2001, called for a boycott of the elections, which appears to have been successful in view of the extremely poor voter participation throughout the region.

Morocco

- On 9th October, it is announced that King Mohammed VI has named Driss Jettou, who until now has occupied the position of State Minister of Internal Affairs, Prime Minister. Jettou, who is not affiliated with any party, takes over from Aberraman Yussufi, whose Socialist Union of Popular

Forces (USFP) party was that which obtained the highest number of votes in the legislative elections of September.

- On 28th October, the Court of Appeal postpones the trial of suspected al-Qaeda members until 25th December. The defendants are accused of planning an attack on Western warships stationed in the Strait of Gibraltar.

European Union

- On 9th October, the European Commission announces that ten of the thirteen members who applied for membership have been accepted. They will be admitted into the Union from 2004 onward in the organisation's largest expansion since the creation of the European Economic Community in 1957. The ten countries to be awarded entry are Cyprus, Malta, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. The European Commission does not, however, clarify Turkey's status and for the moment no date is given for the initiation of negotiations, though the Commission does see fit to double the current 172 million euros in financial aid destined for this purpose.

- On 17th October, Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission, deals a tough blow to the Stability and Growth Pact, the mechanism that regulates fiscal policy and the common currency, by describing EU budget rules as «stupid». He adds that the rules regulating the Euro should be applied with more flexibility, and that more power should be given to the Commission in order to adjust the Pact.

- On 24th and 25th October, at the summit in Brussels, the EU heads of state set the budget for the enlargement process. Regardless of future occurrences, during the period 2004 to 2006 the budget will not exceed the maximum spending amount that was agreed at the 1999 European Council in Berlin, a total of 42.59 billion euros. The EU will award future members a total of 23 billion euros, to be divided between structural and cohesion funds. Furthermore, at the same meeting, France and Germany reach an unexpected agreement to contain agri-

cultural spending from 2006, a topic that had been deadlocked and that had previously proposed a threat to the enlargement process. In virtue of the agreement, the EU promises to maintain the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), something that the UK and the Netherlands question during the summit, although the agricultural subsidies will be frozen and even slightly reduced from 2006.

- On 28th October, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former President of France and the current President of the Convention responsible for proposing the future forms of EU institutions, made up of 105 members, makes public a draft of what is to be the European Constitution. Certain controversial aspects are shelved so that member states can take them up during the final stages of the negotiations to finalise to Constitution, set for June 2003. Despite the document's lack of specificity, the draft represents a step forward, since it represents a growing consensus concerning the proposal of adopting a Constitution.

November 2002

The UN presents a peace plan for Cyprus that will be the basis for the difficult negotiations between the two sides. Trouble brews in Spain with the sinking of an oil tanker. Portugal deals with another strike, and Italy faces difficult times with the disintegration of an important company, the continuation of the economic crisis, and the citizens' loss of faith in institutions. In Algeria, Islamist violence tarnishes the month of Ramadan. France takes action against international terrorism and holds a donor conference in Paris that produces considerable economic aid for Lebanon. Controversial elections are held in Turkey, and elections also take place in Slovenia.

Portugal

- Civil servants hold a strike on 14th November, causing schools, hospitals, courts and other public services to shut down throughout the country. The strike is called in protest against measures imposed by the government

aimed at satisfying EU demands for urgent action to reduce the budget deficit.

Spain

- The government faces harsh criticism for its response to the ecological disaster caused by ten thousand tons of fuel released from the *Prestige*, the oil tanker which sank on 19th November in the north-western waters of the peninsula.

France

- On 11th November, around a hundred immigrants board themselves up inside a church in Calais, on the north coast, and threaten to commit mass suicide if they are not granted shelter at the nearby refugee centre in Sangatte. Access to the centre has been closed to immigrants since 5th November. The lock-in ends on 14th November with the eviction of the immigrants, the majority of whom have applied for political asylum in France.

- On 17th November, the Union for Presidential Majority (UMP), the alliance of centre-right parties that won the presidential and parliamentary elections in the first semester of 2002, officially unites to form a single party, the Union for the Popular Movement, which keeps the initials of the alliance: UMP. Alain Juppé, currently in the post of Mayor of Bordeaux, and Prime Minister from 1995 to 1997, is elected as the leader of the new party.

- On 19th November, the French Supreme Court, the highest court of appeal, denies anti-globalisation leader José Bové's appeal against a six-month prison sentence for his attack on a field of genetically modified crops in 1999. Furthermore, Bové is condemned to serve a further eight months in prison for a more recent attack on another field of genetically modified crops.

- An apparent hijack attempt on an Air-France flight from Canada to Paris on 22nd November is followed, on 27th November, by a similar incident on an Alitalia flight on route from Bologna to Paris. The pilot is forced to execute an emergency landing in Lyon. The alleged hijackers were arrested, and there were no victims. On both

occasions the hijackers threatened to set off a bomb, which was later revealed to be a sham as no bombs existed. One man was of Moroccan descent and the other was a former Italian police agent with a psychiatric record, who had previously hijacked an Air France flight in March 2001, and had also taken control of an Italian train in 1998.

- On 24th and 25th November, in the Paris area, police arrest nineteen suspected al-Qaeda members. The antiterrorist operation, organised on the basis of information provided by authorities in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, is the largest to be implemented in France since the 11th September 2001 attacks in the US.

- On 25th November, air traffic and motorway travel is disrupted when lorry drivers and air traffic controllers hold a protest in demand of higher salaries.

- On 26th November, civil servants demonstrate in Paris and other cities against the privatisation plans of the government.

Italy

- In mid-November a crisis in the RAI, the Italian state media group, threatens to damage the reputation of Prime Minister Berlusconi when conflicts between his duties as Prime Minister and his position as a media tycoon are made patent. On 20th November, two of the five directors on the administrative council of the television agency resign, declaring that Berlusconi wields so much influence over RAI that it threatens freedom of expression in Italy. The rapidly-appointed replacements are closely connected to the government, and their appointment does nothing but exacerbate the situation.

- On 17th November, the court of appeal of Perugia shakes up the country's political sector by sentencing former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti to twenty-four years imprisonment for ordering the killing, in March 1979, of investigative reporter Mino Pecorelli. The tribunal also sentences Mafia boss Gaetano Badalamenti to twenty-four years for his role in the murder. Andreotti, who served seven terms as Prime Minister and was cleared of the

same charges in 1999, announces that he will appeal against the sentence. Prime Minister Berlusconi pronounces his disagreement with the ruling and considers it the judges' vengeance against former enemies.

Slovenia

- On 10th November, Slovenians head to the ballots in the election of their president. The current President, the independent Milan Kucan, is not permitted to run for a third term due to provisions in the Constitution. Since no one wins by absolute majority, the two candidates with the most votes from the first round, Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek (of the Liberal Democracy Party of Slovenia) and the independent Barbara Brezigar, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General, will come head to head in a second round scheduled for 1st December.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 8th November, the ICTY indictment opens in the case of the former commander of Bosnian Serb forces, Ratko Mladic, who is accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of the laws and customs of war.
- After the general elections held at the beginning of October, on 28th November Dragan Cavic, member of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), swears the oath of office as President of the Srpska Republic.
- On 29th November, the ICTY sentences Bosnia Serb Mitar Vasiljevic to twenty years in prison after finding him guilty of committing crimes against humanity and violating the laws and customs of war.

Yugoslavia

- On 17th November, an orthodox church in the western part of the disputed province of Kosovo is attacked and destroyed, only a few hours after the smashing up of another. The attacks occur a day before the General Secretary of the UN, Kofi Annan, is scheduled to visit Kosovo. Annan plans to meet with various Serb and Albanian Kosovar leaders during the

course of his visit, part of a larger tour through the Balkans.

- On 23rd November, there are reports that four former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) have been accused of committing war crimes against fellow citizens of Albanian ethnicity. One of the accused is Rustem Mustafa, whose arrest in August provoked huge demonstrations in the north-east of Kosovo.
- On 25th November, after the October elections in Montenegro, Milo Djukanovic resigns as President of the Republic of Yugoslavia, with the hope that the new legislature names him Prime Minister of Montenegro.
- On 25th November, the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) takes control of the Serbian zone of the divided village of Mitrovice. This feat, achieved three years after NATO troops expelled Yugoslav troops from Kosovo, is achieved thanks to an agreement between the UNMIK and the Yugoslav government, which allows the UN to take control of the whole of Kosovo.

Macedonia

- On 1st November, the new Macedonian government headed by Branko Crvenkovski, leader of the ex-communist Social Democratic Alliance for Macedonia (SDSM), is formally approved by the Saboranje, the unicameral legislature. Members of the Democratic Union (BDI), the political reincarnation of the ethnic Albanian guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (NLA), also form part of the new government.

Cyprus

- On 11th November, UN special envoy, Álvaro de Soto, presents a new peace plan to the Greek Cypriot President, Glakfos Clerides, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash, in Nicosia. The plan presented calls for the creation of an indissoluble association state, with a common government and two equal states, constructed in accordance with the Swiss model. The plan proposes a six-member presidential council, to be distributed proportionally according to the population of each state and a rotating

presidency to be changed every ten months. Furthermore, it calls for bicameral legislature and a supreme court composed of nine judges: three from each state and three non-Cypriots. Under pressure from UN officials, on 30th November the two leaders agree to use the UN plan as a basis for negotiations.

- On 25th November, the UN Security Council passes Resolution 1442 (2002), which extends the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for six more months. However, on 26th November, leaders from the Turkish Republic of northern Cyprus declare that the resolution is not valid and that their government does not consider itself subject to it since the resolution was passed with only the consent of the Greek Cypriot government.

Turkey

- On 3rd November, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the Islamist party founded in 2001 by the former Mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, wins the general elections with an absolute majority. They obtain 363 of the 550 seats of the Great National Assembly, the country's unicameral legislature. Aside from the Islamist party, only the Popular Republican Party (CHP) acquires representation in the Assembly by surpassing the ten percent of votes needed to win seats, and it constitutes the first time that there are only two parties in the Assembly since the multiparty democracy began in 1954. The Democratic Leftist Party (DSP) suffered the biggest setback, falling from 22.06 percent of the vote in the 1999 elections to 1.23 percent this year.

- On 8th November, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former President of France and the current President of the convention responsible for writing the European Constitution, stirs up a big debate when he states that Turkey should never be permitted to form part of the EU, and that its admittance would signify the end of the Union.

- On 13th November, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, leader of the AKP, promises to introduce new human rights reforms, including a «zero tolerance» policy on torture. Erdogan promises to revise

the Turkish Constitution with the purpose of adapting it to the human rights standards established by the EU, and trusts that in December Turkey will be able to begin negotiations for its future membership in the EU.

- President Ahmet Necdet Sezer entrusts Abdullah Gul, an important member of the AKP, with the formation of the government. Gul, an experienced economist and member of the last cabinet, has been chosen by the leader of the AKP – Recep Tayyip Erdogan – since Erdogan himself has been prohibited to serve as Prime Minister by the courts. On 28th November, the Great National Assembly confirms the appointment, although Gul is not expected to remain at the post for long due to the fact that the AKP is making efforts to reform the constitution so that Erdogan may serve as Prime Minister.

Lebanon

- On 21st November, an US nurse, Bonnie Weatherall, is killed in Sidon, a coastal town in the south of Lebanon. No group claims responsibility for her killing. Weatherall worked for a church and an evangelical Protestant school in a militant Sunni Muslim environment.
- On 23rd November, a total of eighteen countries and financial institutions meet in Paris for a donors' conference to raise aid for Lebanon. The donors agree to give 4.3 billion dollars in economic aid to the country, which has severe national debts.

Jordan

- On 10th November, the Jordanian security forces storm the city of Maan, in the south, in a failed attempt to arrest local Muslim leader, Mohammed Shalabi, better known as Abu Sayyaf. Authorities affirm that Sayyaf is suspected of organising gangs that are dedicated to armed robbery, drug trafficking and arms trade. He is also suspected of being involved in the January unrest in Maan after a juvenile died in police custody. During the military operation, three civilians and two police officers die, dozens of gang members are arrested and a large quantity of weapons are confiscated.

- At the end of November, the US Peace Corps, an independent federal agency that specialises in rural development projects, pulls out of Jordan due to the increased risk to US personnel in the country, leaving behind sixty local volunteers. The decision follows the US State Department's decision to reduce embassy staff in Amman after Lawrence Foley was killed in October.

Egypt

- On 14th November, Mustafa Mashhour, leader of the outlawed but officially tolerated Muslim Brotherhood, dies aged eighty-one. On 15th November some hundred thousand people attend his funeral in the Rabia al-Adawiya Mosque, north-east of Cairo.
- On 20th November, the UN Committee Against Torture declares that there they have found evidence of torture in arrests made by Egyptian security forces. The committee points out that many of these actions are protected under the emergency laws, which were approved after the assassination of Anwar al-Sadat, and which authorised wide use of detentions and arrests.
- During the month of November, Egyptian television begins to broadcast a series divided into forty-one episodes based on an anti-Semitic booklet, «The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion». The US State Department and the Israeli government request that the series be banned.

Tunisia

- On 5th November, the French counterintelligence agency, DST, arrests eight people near Lyon, who are supposedly linked with the April attack on a synagogue on the Tunisian island of Djerba. Many German tourists died in the attack, for which Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda has claimed responsibility.

Algeria

- On 21st November, nine civilians die in two different attacks carried out by Islamist activists in M'sila (250 kilometres southeast of Algiers) and el-Ancer (250 kilometres east of Algiers),

for which no one claims responsibility. The number of deaths caused by extremist activists since the start of the holy month of Ramadan, on 6th November adds up to more than thirty. Ramadan continues to be a period associated with an increase in Islamist violence in the country.

Morocco

- On 1st November, approximately fifty people die and about ninety are injured in a fire in the Sidi Moussa prison in El Jadida, 170 kilometres from Rabat. The cause of the fire is unknown, although there is speculation about an electrical accident.
- On 7th November, King Mohammed VI devises a new government headed by Prime Minister Driss Jettou. The new administration includes many figures that do not form part of any political party, including Jettou and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mohamed Benaissa. As part of the cabinet, the king also includes members of six parties with representation in the legislature.
- After several weeks of heavy rain, on the night of 24th November more than sixty people drown in torrential downpours that cause the rivers of southern Casablanca to overflow. On the following day, the flooding provoke a fire in the country's most important oil refinery, located in the area surrounding Mohammedia, in which two workers die.

European Union

- On 5th November, the EU calls for Portugal to lower their budget deficit to a level that conforms to the maximum of three percent required by the Stability and Growth Pact responsible for the regulation of the function of the common currency. Similarly, on 13th November, EU Commissioner of Economic and Monetary Affairs Pedro Solbes formally directs orders to France and Germany to control their rising budget deficits.
- On 15th November, leaders of the ten countries who are to be admitted into the EU in 2004 meet in Varsovia, Poland, in order to coordinate their positions in a period when negotiations have reached their most crucial point.

At the meeting, they agree to request more aid for the enlargement process, with the argument that with the current figures of planned aid, per capita, they would receive less than half of the amount received by the poorest current EU members. This issue is especially important for Poland. On 18th November, at a meeting of EU Foreign Affairs ministers in Brussels, the official date for the admittance of the ten future members is set for 1st May 2004.

- On 25th November, ministers of the fifteen member states reach an agreement for the creation of a single market of energy suppliers. With the hurdle of French opposition overcome, the member states agree to open their energy markets in July 2004 to companies, and to private users in 2007.

December 2002

The situation of instability continues in Italy, as do the strikes in Portugal, despite improvement in the macroeconomic indicators. The EU adjusts its estimations of the expense that the enlargement process will entail, specifies the timeline for the procedure, and tackles the issue of future negotiations with Turkey. As for Cyprus, the EU blocks the admittance of the Turkish nation due to their rejection of the revised UN peace plan. Croatia and Yugoslavia, still suffering problems with their open electoral processes, move closer towards an agreement regarding the peninsula of Prevlaka. Actions are taken in Jordan and France against international terrorism. France also receives good news in the form of a ceasefire on the part of one of the main separatist factions in Corsica. Tunisia incorporates women into military service, and Egypt appears willing to settle a dispute with the United States that stems from the arrest and sentencing of a human rights activist.

Portugal

- Prime Minister José Manuel Durao Barroso achieves unprecedented success in the challenge of reducing the budget deficit to 2.8 percent of Portugal's GDP. However, the serious measures taken by the government in

order to avoid EU sanctions are met with widespread public opposition and strikes, including a particularly well-supported one called on 10th December.

Spain

- On 3rd December, the terrorist organisation ETA detonates a car bomb in a car-park in Santander, a city along the northern coast of the Peninsula. No one is injured.
- On 17th December, near Madrid, Spanish police arrest two suspected members of ETA after open fire is exchanged and a civil guard is killed. A third suspect escapes.
- On 21st December, Ibón Fernández Iradi, member of ETA, escapes from the Bayona prison in France, after being arrested two days earlier in a nearby area along with eight other suspects.
- At the end of December, fishing associations in Galicia take legal action against the Aznar administration for not responding adequately to the fuel leakage from the *Prestige* tanker that sank at the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula. During the month of December, there are demonstrations and hunger strikes while the tanker, which sank in November, continues to leak fuel into the water. Galician fishermen fear economic ruin as valuable sources of fish and large quantities of shellfish have been contaminated.

France

- Over the course of the month, several suspected members of Islamist groups are arrested: three Algerians and a Maghrebi in Paris on 16th December, an Algerian on the Spanish border on 21st December, and four men of Maghrebi descent in Paris on 24th December. They are believed to have connections with the al-Qaeda network, as well as with Chechen terrorism, and to have made attempted attacks on Russian targets in Paris, in revenge for the failed action in Moscow in October when Chechen terrorists took control of a theatre full of hostages.
- According to reports on 5th December, the French telephone company Telecom, which has been running at

a loss and has accumulated several debts, and of which the government owns 55.5%, will receive a nine billion Euro government loan in order to carry out a three-year plan of financial reconstruction.

- On 12th December, the twelve juror commission appointed by President Jacques Chirac in July with the function of examining the rules that regulate the levels of criminal responsibility assigned to the Head of State, finds that the current president should enjoy total legal immunity. The decision, which must be passed by parliament, means that the president, whose second term ends in 2007, will be protected from all legal repercussions of his suspected corruption for as long as he remains in office.
- December brings what appears to be an important sign of Corsican recognition of the governmental policy regarding the region. On 13th December the main faction of the outlawed FLNC announces the effective suspension of its political military actions, thereby re-establishing the ceasefire signed in December 1999 and abandoned at the end of 2001.
- On 20th December, a Paris court rules that US multimillionaire George Soros is obliged to pay a fine of 2.2 million euros for wrongful use of privileged information about the takeover of the Société Générale bank in 1988. Soros immediately declares that he will appeal against the ruling.
- On 20th December, following the advice of the Minister of Internal Affairs Nicolas Sarkozy, representatives from the significant French Muslim community (consisting of about five million people) agree to create a national council in order to enable relations with the French state to be more fluid.

Italy

- On 6th December, the Senate (the higher chamber of the bicameral legislature) votes in favour of the controversial bill of devolution that broadens regional control over health, education and the implementation of policies. The separatist Northern League (LN) had threatened to withdraw from the coalition government if the law was not passed.
- On 23rd December the budget, modified considerably since it was

originally presented in September, it passed by both chambers. The revised budget includes an increase in spending on higher education, in reaction to the threat of resignation from seventy-seven university rectors made on 10th December if university spending was cut, as originally planned. In order to face the high deficit of the Italian public sector, the government decides to sell stocks in Telecom Italia and issue government bonds valued at 39.4 billion euros.

- During the trial of Berlusconi's partner, Marcello dell'Utri, the Prime Minister is once again accused of having received political and financial support from the Mafia. Antonio Giuffrè, a former Mafia boss, goes so far as to declare that Berlusconi has dealt personally with Mafia barons.
- The crisis that Fiat, Italy's leading car manufacturer, announced in October, continues with twenty-four hour strikes in protest of plans to make 8,100 people redundant.

Slovenia

- Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek, member of the Liberal Democracy Party of Slovenia (LDS), defeats Barbara Brezigar in the second round of presidential elections held on 1st December. Drnovsek takes the oath of office 22nd December, and the following day officially takes over for Milan Kucan. On 11th December, the House of State, the lower chamber of the bicameral legislature, approves the appointment of the current Minister of Finance, Anton Rop (also a member of the LSD), as the new Prime Minister to replace Drnovsek. Finally, a new government is approved by the State Chamber on 19th December.

Croatia

- On 10th December, Minister of Foreign Affairs Tonino Picula, and his Yugoslav counterpart Goran Svilanovic, sign a provisional protocol regarding the disputed Prevlaka peninsula. The agreement will allow the UN to conclude its work – a mission that has lasted a decade – once the mandate of the UN Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) is ended on 15th December. The peninsula in question

is situated in Croatian territory, but controls access to the Kotar Bay, Yugoslavia's most important deep-water port.

- On 13th December the legislature adopts a new constitutional law concerning the rights of national minorities. The law is intended to improve political representation for Serbs and other nationalities, and allow them the right to education in their own language. The approbation of this bill is one the requirements for Croatia's possible entrance into the EU.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- The Bosnian collective presidency designates Adnan Terzic, member of the (Muslim) Democratic Action Party (SDA), as the new President of the Council of Ministers of all Bosnians.
- Dragan Cavic, President of the Srpska Republic, names Dragan Mikerevic, member of the moderate Democratic Progress Party (PDP), as Prime Minister of the Bosnian Serb entity. Mikerevic had formerly been President of the Council of Ministers of all Bosnians and minister of European Integration.

Yugoslavia

- On 8th December Serbia fails, for the third time in three months, to elect a president for the replacement of Milan Milutinovic, whose term is due to end on 29th December. Once his term ends, Milutinovic, who has been accused of committing war crimes, will lose his immunity and it will be possible to extradite him to the ICTY. Miroljub Labus of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) withdraws from the new elections and Vojislav Kostunica, member of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), secures the victory, in a clear a defeat for radical nationalism. However, the ballot results are once again declared invalid due to a voter participation of less than forty-five percent.
- On 22nd December, presidential elections are held in Montenegro, but, just as happened in Serbia, the elections are declared not valid due to insufficient voter participation. The extremely low turnout is due, in large part, to the boycott called by the pro-

Yugoslav Popular Socialist Party of Montenegro (SNP) and the Liberal Alliance (LSCG). New first-round presidential elections are announced for 9th February 2003.

- On 30th December, President Milutinovic, accused of war crimes, is provisionally replaced by the President of the Serbian legislature, Natasa Mijacic. Once removed from office, Milutinovic immediately loses his immunity.

Greece

- Armed with a homemade rifle, a man shoots at the Mayor-elect of Athens, Dora Bakoyianni. She only suffers minor injuries, but her driver is seriously hurt. The attacker, a thirty-five year old man with a psychiatric record, is caught by police and later accused of attempted murder. He alleges that he was protesting against the policies of Prime Minister Costas Simitis.

Cyprus

- On 9th December, the UN presents a revised plan for the peaceful reunification of Cyprus. However, Rauf Denktash, leader of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, immediately rejects the new plan. The special UN envoy, Álvaro de Soto, tries to assure a peace accord before the European summit in Copenhagen, scheduled for 12th and 13th December, when Cyprus will be offered entrance into the EU. Emergency negotiations that de Soto is able to set up between Denktash and the Greek Cypriot leader, who does accept the peace plan, are later to come to nothing when Denktash is unable to attend due to poor health.
- On 13th December, Cyprus is invited to join the EU. However, it is specified that, since no peace agreement was reached, only the Greek part of the island will be able to join. This sparks immediate protests from the Turkish Cypriot community.
- On 26th December, around thirty thousand Turkish Cypriots demonstrate in the divided capital of Nicosia in favour of reunification. Denktash is accused of blocking negotiations and the demonstrators call for him to step down.

Turkey

- On 13th December, the EU commits to initiating negotiations for Turkey's admittance into the Union in December 2004, providing the country meets the requirements before that date. In response, Turkey gives the go ahead for a cooperation strategy between the EU and NATO, and promises to hold new trials for politicians jailed under laws restricting freedom of expression and to take measures to eradicate torture.
- On 27th December, the Great National Assembly, Turkey's unicameral legislature, grants its approval, on its second reading, of a set of constitutional modifications that should permit Recep Tayyip Erdogan, leader of the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP), to run in a new electoral process in February and to become Prime Minister. Thereby, Erdogan is no longer disqualified from office as a result of an alleged case of inciting religious hatred.
- On 30th December, various Chechen guerrillas, who in April 2001 took the staff of an Istanbul hotel and 120 guests hostage, are sentenced to between three and eleven years imprisonment. The defendants claim that they simply wanted to draw international attention to Russian operations in Chechnya.

Syria

- President Bashar al-Assad officially visits the United Kingdom from 15th to 18th January, the first such visit made by a Syrian leader. The leaders of the two countries, Assad and Tony Blair, put an emphasis on the need to achieve peace in the Middle East, and together they call for Iraq to disarm. Assad, however, is against any military intervention in Iraq, and with regard to terrorism, denies that there are Palestinian terrorists hiding in Syria.

Lebanon

- On 4th December, a Sunni Muslim mausoleum is destroyed outside Anjar, where the Syrian intelligence department of Lebanon is located. The attack, in which no one is injured, is attributed to Wahhabi extremists.

- On 5th December, Ramzi Nahra, described as a freelance agent of the regional intelligence service, and his nephew both die when a bomb goes off alongside the road that connects Ibl al-Saqi and Kawkaba. The Shiite group Hezbollah blames Israel for their deaths.

Jordan

- On 14th December, authorities announce the arrest of two men linked with the killing of US diplomat Laurence Foley at the end of October. The government states that both men, a Jordanian called Yasser Fathi Ibrahim and a Libyan national named Saad Salem bin Suwaid, are part of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network and were trained in Afghanistan. Furthermore, it is believed that they received orders from Jordanian Fadel Nazzal Khalayla, an al-Qaeda member who is wanted for organising terrorist attacks against tourists during the millennium celebrations.

Egypt

- On 3rd December, the highest Court of Appeal lifts a seven-year prison sentence pronounced in July against Saadeddin Ibrahim, and orders a re-trial for 7th January, 2003. Ibrahim is a human rights activist who holds both Egyptian and US citizenship, whose incarceration, after being found guilty of embezzlement, falsification and receiving foreign funds without authorisation, has marred relations between the US and Egypt.

Tunisia

- On 26th December, the Minister of Defence announces that women will be called for mandatory military service starting in 2003. Analysts declare that this manoeuvre highlights gender equality in this Arab country, which is known for its progressive attitude toward women's rights.

Algeria

- William Burns, US assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, announces that the government of the United States is in the process of authorising a proposal in Congress (the

bicameral legislature) to sell military supplies to Algeria for the first time, despite doubts concerning the situation of human rights there. Burns praised the way Algeria is fighting terrorism and predicted intense cooperation between the two countries on security issues.

European Union

- On 5th December, the EU transport ministers reach a final agreement on the «Single European Sky» law, which will unify air traffic control on the continent from 2005.
- On 12th and 13th December, in Copenhagen, Denmark, the EU approves the incorporation of ten new members: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. The accession treaties will be signed at the Athens summit in April 2003, and will have to be ratified by the member and candidate states prior to 1st May 2004. The EU decides to continue negotiations with Romania and Bulgaria, with a view to their admittance in 2007. Furthermore, in last-minute negotiations instigated by Poland, the total amount to be spent on the enlargement process is set at 40.8 billion euros, of which Poland will receive a billion euros in immediate aid.
- With regard to Turkey's request for admission into the Union, EU leaders decide that Turkey's progression toward meeting the European standards of democracy and human rights will be reviewed in December of 2004, and that negotiations for admittance into the Union will begin immediately in the case that the review yields favourable results. The countries, such as the United Kingdom, that are in favour of Turkey's admission see their aspirations vetoed by France, while the French obtain the assurance of Germany's crucial support for a less specific commitment to Turkey. The failure to find a solution to the Cypriot crisis is given great importance at the summit, and the part of the island that is under Turkish occupation remains blocked from admission into the EU.
- A long dispute with Turkey over the conditions under which a possible EU Rapid Reaction Force would have ac-

cess to NATO's planning and logistical means in future troop deployment comes to an end. NATO and the EU sign the final agreement of strategic cooperation on 16th December. The document explicitly declares a principle of reciprocity that prevents the EU from launching a military attack against any NATO member (such as Turkey, for example), and vice versa. The agreement guarantees that the EU will not deploy troops in Turkey's area of influence (Cyprus and the Aegean Sea), and also assures that allied troops will never act against an EU member state, such as the Greek part of Cyprus, who will be admitted into the EU on 1st May 2004. The solution to this issue also carries with it the changeover from the NATO peacekeeping troops to the Rapid Reaction Force in Macedonia at the beginning of 2003, and possibly also in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of that year.

- An agreement between the EU and the US, signed on 20th December, regulates the interchange of personal information about suspects of terrorism, such as telephone recordings and bank account details. Danish Minister of Justice Lene Espersen specifies that the information given by the EU will not support the imposition of the death penalty by US judges, and that any future extradition agreement between the US and the EU should allow the European states to refuse any extradition that could result in the use of capital punishment in the US.

January 2003

Actions are carried out against international terrorism in Spain and Italy, and in both these countries once again many immigrants drown attempting to reach their shores. More anti-terrorist operations are executed in Jordan and Egypt, where a free-floating exchange rate between the national currency and the dollar is declared due to the possible economic effects that would be caused by an attack on Iraq. Turkey re-establishes diplomatic relations with Iraq, and the United States and the United Kingdom put pressure on the country, with the purpose of securing its cooperation in the military campaign against

Iraq. Morocco negotiates a free trade agreement with the US, as relations with Spain see a slight improvement, and in Algeria there is a surge of Islamist violence.

Spain

- On 2nd January, seven people drown off the southern coast as they try to reach Spanish soil. The Spanish Civil Guard rescues thirty-five other people when their inflatable boat capsizes as they attempt to cross the Strait of Gibraltar from Morocco.

- On 3rd January, authorities release official statistics stating that the number of immigrants who try to illegally enter Spain by crossing the Strait of Gibraltar has dropped since a new vigilance system and tougher border restrictions were introduced in the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. The statistics also show that the number of immigrants who try to reach the Canary Islands has quadrupled since the year 2000.

- It is expected that the implementation of a new immigration law will instigate approximately one million citizenship applications from Latin America. The legislative changes, set for 11th January, allow the children and grandchildren of people who were exiled during Franco's dictatorship to apply for citizenship.

- On 22nd January, Ismael Berasategui Escudero, suspected member of the terrorist organisation ETA, is re-arrested in the French Pyrenees, after he escaped from a Paris prison by switching places with his brother during a visit in August 2002.

- On 24th January, along the north-eastern coast, sixteen Maghreb citizens are arrested, under suspicion of participating in terrorist activities linked to the al-Qaeda network. Authorities report that during the operation a large amount of chemical and explosive material was found. The event is connected to the arrest by British police of seven Algerian citizens in North London on 5th January.

France

- On 6th January, the trial opens against nine suspects of their involvement in the falsification of bank accounts. One of the accused is the

head of the Bank of France, Jean-Claude Trichet, whose aspirations to be president of the Central European Bank by mid 2003 are under threat by the accusations.

- On 6th January, official statistics reveal that the emigration of French Jews to Israel has doubled from 2001 to 2002, reaching the total figure of 2,326 people, the highest number in the past thirty years. According to Jewish leaders, this trend corresponds to the increase in violence against the French community of 1,200,000 Jews. The aggressors are usually young Muslims who are infuriated by Israeli treatment of Palestinians.

- The separatist movement *Resistenza Corsa* claims responsibility for the bombings that took place in Bastia on the night of 12th January. One bomb was detonated in a bar, which was badly damaged, and the other in a car, causing the destruction of a dozen cars in total. The attacks are seen as a rejection of the ceasefire that was declared in December 2002 by the main separatist faction, the FLNC.

- On 22nd and 23rd January, France and Germany celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the January 1963 signing of the Franco-German Friendship Treaty, with its declarations in favour of strengthening the cooperation between the two countries on an international scale, and with particular reference to such progress in their capacities as motors of the EU. President Chirac and Chancellor Schroder declare that they are of the same opinion about the need to prevent the war against Iraq.

- On 29th January, an appeal court absolves the former president of the French Constitutional Council and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Roland Dumas, of accusations that cost him thirty months in prison and 152,000 euros. He had supposedly received favours and gifts from the oil company Elf Aquitaine through his former lover, Christine Deviers-Joncour. The same court, however, denies the appeals of the other four people who were sentenced in the trial, although it does see fit to reduce two of their sentences.

Italy

- During the continuation of the trial against Marcello dell'Utri, a senator

from Forza Italia (FI) and a close political collaborator and business partner of Prime Minister Berlusconi, who is accused of helping the Mafia, more allegations come to light linking Berlusconi himself to this criminal organisation. At the beginning of January, Antonio Giufre, the most important Mafia supergrass since Tomaso Buscetta makes a declaration – via videoconference – before a Palemo court concerning the meetings between Berlusconi and the Mafia bosses during the 1980's, and affirms that in 1992 the Mafia switched their support from the demolished Christian Democracy to Forza Italia. Berlusconi and dell'Utri both deny these accusations.

- A Greek citizen is arrested for bringing illegal immigrants into the country, after a boat with thirty-five Kurdish Turks aboard it is shipwrecked in the waters off the south-east of Italy on 20th January. A total of twenty-nine people die in the accident and six survivors, including the man arrested, are rescued.

- On 28th January, Prime Minister Berlusconi's request to relocate his trial, in which he will be accused of the bribery of judges, from Milan to Brescia is refused. Under new legislation, passed by the centre-right coalition led by Berlusconi, defendants have the right to request that the trial be moved when there exists a legitimate suspicion that they will not receive a fair trial. However, the Supreme Court foils Berlusconi's manoeuvre, and rules that there are no indications of political partiality in the Milan court where he is to face trial.

- On 30th January, twenty-eight Pakistani nationals are arrested and accused of terrorism, when explosives, along with maps of NATO bases and of the UK and Italian consulates, are found in a Naples apartment. Furthermore, five Moroccans are arrested for possession of similar maps and explosives in the city of Rovigo, in northern Italy.

Croatia

- On 17th January, the Prime Ministers of Croatia, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia attend a summit in Zagreb. At the close of the summit, a group dec-

laration is adopted in favour of Croatia's admittance into the EU and into NATO. The government leaders also agree to increase cooperation in areas such as the economy, defence, infrastructure, the protection of minorities, environmental protection, culture and science.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- As of 1st January, the EU takes over from NATO in the responsibility of training and supervising the Bosnian police. The EU Police Mission (EUPM) is three times smaller than the NATO force and is composed of five hundred agents from EU member states, other European countries and Canada. Their mandate will last until 2005.

- On 13th January, after the general elections in October 2002, the Bosnian legislative body approves the administration of Adnan Terzic, of the (Muslim) Democratic Action Party (SDA). Lord Paddy Ashdown, the High Representative for Bosnia Herzegovina, approves the election of all the nominees, with the exception of the Democratic Serbian Party candidate for the position of Minister of Justice.

- On 16th January, the High Judicial and Fiscal Council employs two significant measures in the reformation of the judicial system: it appoints eight judges, who will compose a Bosnian supreme court, and establishes a fiscal Ministry.

- On 17th January, the Popular Assembly of the Srpska Republic, the Bosnian Serb entity, approves the recent appointment of Dragan Mikerevic, member of the moderate Party of Democratic Progress (PDP), as the new Prime Minister. Furthermore, the legislature approves the constitution of the multiethnic administration (eight Serbs, five Muslims and three Croats).

- On 27th January, the Chamber of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (better known as the Muslim Croatian Federation), elects Niko Lozancic, member of the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ), as its president.

Yugoslavia

- On 8th January, the parliament of Montenegro approves the proposed

cabinet of Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic. The administration includes members of both the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

- On 20th January, Milan Milutinovic, whose term as President of Serbia expired at the end of December, gives himself up to the ICTY, to face accusations of committing war crimes during the 1999 conflict in Kosovo. Milutinovic claims that he is innocent of all charges, arguing that he did not have any actual power that enabled him to influence the events that took place in Kosovo.

- On 30th January, Radomir Markovic, former head of security in Serbia, is sentenced to seven years in prison for his role in the assassination attempt against opposition leader Vuk Draskovic. The attempt occurred in October 1999, and resulted in the deaths of four of Draskovic's clerks. Two other defendants are each sentenced to fifteen years in prison.

- At the end of January, legislative bodies of the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro pass a constitutional charter for the new State of Serbia and Montenegro, which will replace the current Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The constitutional charter will also have to be approved by the already existent federal legislature.

Macedonia

- At the end of the month, the European Commission announces the end of its humanitarian operations in Macedonia. The Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Commission (ECHO) has been working in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and has made over 110 million euros worth of economic contributions.

Cyprus

- On 14th January, in Nicosia, the divided capital of Cyprus, between fifty and seventy thousand Turkish Cypriots mount a protest against the contrary position to negotiation of Rauf Denktash, the leader of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, in which the people demand his resignation.

Turkey

- Faced with the possibility of a war against Iraq led by the US, various high-ranking military officials and diplomats from the US and the United Kingdom visit Turkey in order to try and persuade the government to permit the deployment of up to eighty thousand US soldiers along the country's strategic border with Iraq. Kuwait is expected to be used as the principal gateway into Iraq for any ground attack, but even so, the US wishes to open a northern front that will serve as a stopover for US troops in Turkey.
- As the result of a supposed encounter of the former Iraqi ambassador with Mohammed Atta, one of the participants in the 11th September attacks, diplomatic relations between Turkey and Iraq were broken off. However, on 3rd January normal relations are re-established when a new Iraqi ambassador, Tali al-Dulaymi, is installed in Ankara.
- Prime Minister Abdullah Gul sets off on 4th January on a tour of the Middle East, with the purpose of visiting Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria in the hope of composing a peaceful solution to the crisis.
- On 8th January, seventy-five people die when a Turkish Airlines flight from Istanbul crashes, due to the dense fog in the approach to the airport in Diyarbakir, in the south-east of the country.
- On 10th January, Turkey gives US military officials permission to inspect ports and aviation fields. This is seen as the possible first step toward allowing the deployment of US troops.
- On 15th January, in Strasburg, the permanent Turkish representative in the Council of Europe, Numan Hazer, signs the sixth protocol of the European Convention of Human Rights, which prohibits the death penalty during peacetime.
- On 22nd January the Constitutional Tribunal refuses to acknowledge Recep Tayyip Erdogan as leader of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). However, the Justice and Development Party responds by unanimously re-electing Erdogan as leader for a second term on 23rd January. Furthermore, at the beginning of the month President Ahmet Necdet Sezer pass-

es constitutional modifications that permit Recep Tayyip Erdogan to stand in legislative elections and to serve as Prime Minister.

Syria

- On 8th January, a Syrian soldier dies in conflict between Israeli and Syrian troops. The event takes place on a line of ceasefire in Golan Heights, which is Israeli-occupied territory. Both parties accuse the other of initiating the clash.

Lebanon

- On 30th January, the UN Security Council passes Resolution 1461 (2003), extending the mandate of the UN military force in the south of Lebanon, the Interim Force in Lebanon (UNFIL), until July 31 2003.

Jordan

- On 5th January, the State Security Court confirms its verdict of guilty and the resulting death sentence for Ra'ed Hijazi, for having planned terrorist attacks in Jordan during the millennium celebrations. The decision arrives two months after an appeal court ordered a re-trial due to insufficient evidence when the case was tried in February 2002.
- On 21st January, the Appeal Court confirms the fifteen-year prison sentences given by the State Security Court against six people accused of organising terrorist activities and of belonging to an Islamist group called Tanzim al-Khalaya.
- On 22nd January, the State Security Court acquits ten men who were charged with conspiring to carry out terrorist attacks against US citizens living in Jordan. The men, led by Palestinian Jordanian Wail al-Shalabi, were arrested between April and June 2002 in various operations around the capital Amman.

Egypt

- On 5th January, Egyptian police announce the arrests of forty-three members of the fundamentalist Islamic group Islamic Jihad, which allegedly attempted to carry out terrorist attacks

against foreigners and against government representatives. According to police, the arrests of these men were carried out on 25th November 2002 in five different Egyptian provinces.

- On 29th January, the government anticipates the disastrous economic effect of a war in Iraq, allowing for the free-floating exchange rate of the national currency, the pound, with the dollar. A short time later, the national currency, exposed to foreign exchange market, depreciates sixteen per cent against the dollar.

Algeria

- The new year begins in Algeria with a resurgence of Islamist violence, which leaves over a hundred people dead within the first nine days of the month. Included among the dead are forty-nine paratroopers, who were ambushed in the southern Aures Mountains by the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), a successor group of the GIA. A few days later, the Algerian press reports another ambush in Kabylia. This time, eight soldiers die. The first days of January also brings civilian massacres: twenty people die in two separate attacks for which the GIA claims responsibility, while the national press reports the killing of ten members of the GSPC.
- On 29th January, Abdelmalek Benbara, member of the governing National Liberation Front (FLN) in the National Assembly (the lower chamber of the bicameral legislature), is found dead in the trunk of his car in Paris, France. Benbara, who represented Algerians residents in France, was declared missing at the beginning of the month.

Morocco

- On 21st January, negotiations with the US begin with the purpose of reaching an agreement on free trade in less than a year, if at all possible. Despite the fact that trade between the countries is quite limited, it is hoped that an agreement will help establish Morocco as an axis in the business world that will connect the region with Europe, the Middle East and the United States. During his mid-January visit, French delegate Minister of For-

eight Trade, François Loos, comments on this deal and warns that a free-trade agreement between Morocco and the United States would be incompatible with the strengthening of economic relations between Morocco and the EU.

- On 30th January, after a meeting with the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ana Palacio, King Mohammed VI announces that the Moroccan ambassador to Spain will return to his post. Morocco withdrew their highest official from Madrid in October 2002 when tensions were brewing over the control of a tiny island (Perejil/Leila), located in the Strait of Gibraltar, only two hundred metres off the coast of Morocco.

European Union

- On 1st January, Denmark transfers the EU presidency over to Greece in the six-month rotation of the position. The priorities of this new presidency include the signing of the accession treaties for the ten countries invited to join the EU, the drafting of an EU Constitution, advancement toward the goals proposed in the ten-year plan set in Lisbon in 2000, the strengthening of EU foreign policy, and security and the promotion of a shared, and balanced, asylum policy.

- On 14th January, President Chirac and Chancellor Schroder meet in Paris and draft a constitutional bill for the elections of the President of the European Council by the heads of state and for the President of the European Commission by the European Parliament. On 20th January, the Franco-German plan is presented to the convention responsible for mapping out a constitution for the EU, but draws harsh criticism from the representatives of the smaller countries. The preliminary plan, which is closer to the statist French position than to Germany's federalist intentions, also proposes the appointment of a Minister of Foreign Affairs for the EU.

- On 15th January, in Brussels, an EU database of the fingerprints of political asylum seekers (Eurodac) is initiated, in order to counteract the rising practice of «political asylum marketing», which entails applying for asylum in more than one EU country.

- On 21st January, the EU Finance ministers meet in Brussels and approve the implantation of steps against Germany's excessive budget deficit, giving them until 11th May to guarantee that the 2003 budget will not generate more than the three percent deficit set by the Stability and Growth Pact. France is also warned about their budget deficit and ministers decide to implement new measures, starting in January 2004, based on the exchange of banking information in order to avoid tax evasion across international borders.

February 2003

In the Balkans, the international trials for the punishment of war crimes continue. Furthermore, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is converted to the union of Serbia and Montenegro, where the elections that began in December have to yet to finish. Albania undertakes negotiations with the European Commission in order to reach an association agreement with the EU, who receives Croatia's application for membership and presents a draft of the first sixteen articles of the proposed constitution. Elections are held in Cyprus, where peace negotiations remain at a standstill despite international efforts. In Morocco, judicial sentences are given out to terrorists from the band al-Qaeda, while in Italy the courts reverse the latest charges against international terrorism. Spain experiences a huge popular mobilisation against the war in Iraq, that threatens with causing important divisions at the EU, and in Lebanon the withdrawal of Syrian soldiers is initiated.

Spain

- On 8th February, a police sergeant linked to the anti-ETA movement «Basta Ya» is assassinated in a café in Andoain by the terrorist organisation ETA. Approximately five thousand citizens gather outside the offices of Herri Batasuna (HB), which the government considers the political wing of ETA, to protest against the killing.

- On 13th February, Ignacio Garcia Arregui, former leader of ETA, who

was already serving a five-year prison sentence, is sentenced to ten more years for his responsibility in an assassination attempt against the King of Spain, Juan Carlos I.

- On 15th February, there are huge demonstrations in Spanish cities against the prospect of a US-led war in Iraq; crowds of over a million people are estimated in Barcelona and Madrid. The protests are also aimed at the Spanish President, José María Aznar, for his support of US President George W. Bush's military initiative.

- The Basque newspaper *Egunkaria*, the only paper published entirely in Euskera, the Basque language, is closed down on 20th February, due to its alleged links with the terrorist group ETA. Ten of the directors and editors are arrested and five are later freed on bail. Police affirms that the board of directors had informed ETA about police's operations and that the paper was, partially, financed by the terrorist group. Various members of the governing party in the Basque country, the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), describe the arrests as an attack against the Basque language and culture.

France

- On 4th February, President Chirac and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair meet in Le Touquet, in the north of France, for the traditional annual summit between the two countries. This year, the summit was postponed by Chirac, after a conflict with Blair at the EU summit in October 2002. There is strong disagreement between the two administrations about the dilemma over whether to support the hypothetical US-led military action against Iraq. Both countries agree in the objective of disarming Iraq; but France wants to give UN inspectors further opportunity to find the necessary proof, before they will support a new resolution of the UN Security Council that authorises military action against Iraq. On the other hand, Spain and the United Kingdom support the proposal for immediate military intervention.

- On 11th February, in what is seen as a move toward the creation of a two-party system in France, the government presents a proposal for an electoral reform law in order to raise the

barrier, with which representation is conceded to the parties. The reform project, which could materialise before the regional and European elections, is attacked by the smaller parties as well as by the main opposition, the Socialist Party (PS).

- On 17th February, a Paris court orders the liquidation of Air Lib, the second most important airline in France after Air France, for their inability to pay debts of over 100 million euros. Some 3,200 Air Lib workers will lose their jobs.

Italy

- During the month of February, railway lines used by US military convoys are blocked in protests against the imminent war against Iraq, and against the storage of US military equipment on Italian territory.

- On 12th February a judge orders the liberation of twenty-eight Pakistanis, who were arrested in Naples on 30th January, accused of terrorism. The judge considers the evidence against them insufficient for the incrimination of the defendants: explosives, detonators and maps found in the rented apartment where the arrestees lived. At the beginning of the month, the Pakistani Minister of Foreign Affairs officially intervenes in defence of the accused, and in protest of the treatment they have received from the police.

- An official investigation into the death of Italian businessman Roberto Calvi, who was found hanged in London in 1982, reveals that he was killed before being hanged. The conclusion of the investigation, presented at a hearing on 25th February, allows the suspects in the case to be processed after rescinding suicide as the cause of death. Calvi, known as «God's banker», fled Italy while his financial empire was being investigated, which could have had close links with the Vatican Bank and the Mafia.

- On 27th February, after various high-level executives have resigned, the two remaining members of the administrative council of RAI, the state television service, resign, explaining that it is impossible for them to carry out their duties due to interference on behalf of Prime Minister Berlusconi.

Slovenia

- Anton Rop, Prime Minister since December 2002, is elected President of the governing party, the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS), in the fifth congress of the party, which is held in mid-February in Celje. Rop replaces Janez Drnovsek, who was elected President in the elections held between November and December, 2002.

Croatia

- On 3rd February, the IMF agrees to provide Croatia a loan of almost 145 million dollars, destined for the support of its economic and financial programme until April 2004.

- On 21st February, the government formally applies for entrance into the EU. During her visit to Greece, Ivica Racan, the Prime Minister of Croatia, submits the application to the Prime Minister of Greece, Costas Simitis, during his visit to Greece, that holds the rotating presidency of the EU. Croatia hopes to be admitted into the EU in 2007, along with Romania and Bulgaria. The initiation of the negotiations for the country's entrance depends a great deal on their improved cooperation with the ICTY.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- In February, a cantonal court in Sarajevo sentences former Bosnian Minister of Internal Affairs, Alija Delimustafic, to four years in prison, after being found guilty of organising and carrying out the kidnapping of a Bosnian citizen in the German city of Munich in 1996.

- On 13th February, Niko Lozancic, President of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (better known as the Croatian Muslim Federation), appoints Ahmet Hadzipasic as the new Prime Minister of the Federation. The following day, the legislature approves Hadzipasic and his cabinet.

- On 27th February, the ICTY sentences Biljana Plavsic, former President of the Srpska Republic, to eleven years imprisonment. The prosecutors had requested fifteen to twenty years, but the judges reduced the sentence as a consequence of Plavsic's

admission of guilt and her expression of remorse.

Serbia and Montenegro

- On 4th February, the Federal Assembly (the bicameral legislature) agrees to replace the Federal Republic of Serbia with a weaker union of its two constituent republics: Serbia and Montenegro. Almost a year earlier, in March 2002, the leaders of Serbia, Montenegro and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had signed the Belgrade Accords with support from the EU in order to establish a new combined state under the name of Serbia and Montenegro.

- The creation of Serbia and Montenegro angers many Albanian Kosovars, who oppose the inclusion of Kosovo in the new union. On 7th February, a group of forty-two members of the Legislative Assembly (consisting of a total of 120 seats) demand an emergency session of the Assembly «for the purpose of approving a declaration of Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state». The UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) considers that «this is not the time for the conclusive resolution of the status of Kosovo». The Serb Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic, calls for a conference to be held concerning the status of the province, after warning that a declaration of independence on the part of the Albanian Kosovars would mean a violation of the 1995 Dayton agreements for peace in Bosnia.

- On 9th February, Montenegro fails for the second time to elect a president, due to the fact that voting participation is less than the fifty percent minimum required by law. As in the first election, the former Prime Minister Filip Vujanovic and Prime Ministerial candidate for Milo Djukanovic's Democratic List for a European Montenegro, obtains more than eighty percent of the vote, a similar outcome to the first elections. Before the re-initiation of the electoral process, the authorities plan a modification of the law with the purpose of repealing the minimum participation requirement.

- On 14th February, the ICTY confirms the accusation against Vojislav Seselj, leader of the ultranationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS). Seselj

turns himself in to the tribunal on 24th February, having emphasised his intention to «destroy this evil court». The accusation, of the suspect's alleged participation in a joint criminal enterprise, includes eight counts of crimes against humanity and six of violation of the laws and customs of war.

- On 18th February, three former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), who were captured by International Force in Kosovo (KFOR), are taken to the ICTY in The Hague, in the Netherlands. They are accused of committing crimes against humanity and of violations of the laws and customs of war, in 1998 in a UCK prison camp. It is the first time that members of the UCK have been arrested. A fourth defendant who escaped is re-arrested by Slovenian authorities and at the end of the month is also sent to The Hague.

Albania

- On 12th February, Albania begins negotiations with the European Commission in order to reach an agreement of association and stability, the first step toward integration into the EU.

Greece

- On 5th February, in Psychiko, on the outskirts of Athens, anti-terrorist police arrest Christos Tsigaridas, suspected leader of the far-left Popular Revolutionary Struggle (ELA), who is accused of the responsibility for two assassinations and over a hundred bombings over the past three decades.

- On 13th February Prime Minister Costas Simitis suffers his first political setback in six years when a bill that would prohibit members of parliament from holding other jobs is rejected. This means that eleven deputies from Simitis' governing party have either abstained from the vote, or have voted against the bill. The party, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) could therefore be facing a loss of political support.

Cyprus

- During the month of February, Rauf Denktash, leader of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern

Cyprus, is subjected to pressure from the UN to come to a peace agreement before 28th February, and maintains negotiations with the President of the Greek part of the island, Glafkos Clerides. Denktash calls for a second review of the UN's reunification plan, to which the UN agrees. In a change in policy regarding Cyprus, the Turkish government criticises Denktash for blocking the negotiations for the island's reunification.

- On 16th February, the presidential elections are held in the Greek part of Cyprus. Tassos Papadopoulos, leader of the opposition centre-right Democratic Party (DIKO), obtains an absolute majority in excess of fifty percent of the vote, having being assured of the backing of Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL) and the Social Democratic Movement (KISOS). Glafkos Clerides, in possession of the presidency since 1993, obtains just 38.3 percent of the vote, and is obliged to step down from his post without being able to complete the process for reunification of the island that was initiated under the auspices of the UN. Papadopoulos declares his intention to continue with negotiations and to maintain friendly relations with the Turkish Cypriots, in spite of his anti-Turkish nationalism.

- On 24th February, the United Kingdom proposes the abandonment of almost half the territory occupied by its military bases in Cyprus, in an attempt to break the deadlock in the peace negotiations, with regard to territorial issues. With the execution of this proposal, the Greek and Turkish authorities would obtain one hundred and fifteen square kilometres of additional territory, ninety percent of which would go to the Greek side.

- The general secretary of the UN, Kofi Annan, arrives in Cyprus on 26th February as part of an attempt to finalise the peace agreement with the revision of the plan proposed by the UN. However, no compromise is reached, and Annan therefore extends the deadline from 28th February to 10th March. Any agreement will have to be approved through referendum by both communities before the signing of the EU accession treaty in April. If no agreement can be reached, only the Greek part of Cyprus will be permitted admission.

Turkey

- Intense negotiations between Turkey and the United States continue during February. The US tries to persuade Turkey to permit the deployment of US and British troops, as the prospect of a war against Iraq becomes more imminent.

- On 5th February, the Great National Assembly (the unicameral legislature) decides against definitively approving any deployment until negotiations concerning compensation for the costs of the war and various aspects of political and military control become more specific. However, the negotiations reach a stalemate when Turkey demands a substantial increase in the aid package offered by the US, and insists on the participation of its own troops in control operations in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, in addition to the complete control of oilfields close to Mosul and Kirkuk. The Turkish government fears that a tide of Kurdish refugees into the country will increase the demands for independence from the ethnic group.

- On 6th February, the Great National Assembly approves an increased presence of US and British military personnel in some of the country's ports and airfields.

- On 21st February, the Turkish election board approves the candidacy of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, leader of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), for the elections scheduled for 9th March.

Lebanon

- On 19th February, Syrian troops based in northern Libya began to pull out of the area in what could denote the first step in the predicted withdrawal of some four thousand Syrian soldiers from the country.

- On 28th February, the National Assembly, the unicameral legislature, approves the budget for 2003, which includes dramatic cutbacks aimed at reducing the high deficit faced by the country.

Jordan

- On 9th February, King Abdullah II approves modifications to the coun-

try's laws, which will make it possible to set aside six of the 110 seats in the lower chamber specifically for female representation. It is an initiative without precedent in this country.

- On 16th February, Jordanian authorities close the weekly newspaper *al-Hilal* indefinitely and arrest three journalists for the publication of an article about the sex life of the prophet Mahommed and his six wives. All the defendants are found guilty and on 17th February are sentenced to between two and six months in prison.
- The Minister of Finance, Michel Marto, presents the budget for 2003 and predicts «an exceptional and difficult year», due in large part to the potential consequences of the impending war in Iraq, which would mean a sure loss in tourism influx and access to subsidised Iraqi oil.

Egypt

- On 23rd February, the Popular Assembly, the unicameral legislature, passes a presidential decree that extends the state of emergency legislation for three more years. The law was first introduced after the assassination of Anwar al-Sadat in 1981 and has served to broaden the coercive authority of the state, often clashing with the most fundamental standards of human rights.

Morocco

- On 21st February, an appeal court in Casablanca sentences ten Saudi nationals, and members of al-Qaeda, to ten years in prison, after finding them guilty of planning attacks against Western ships stationed in the Strait of Gibraltar. Five Moroccan accomplices are sentenced to between three and twelve months in prison.

European Union

- On 6th February 105 members of the EU, responsible for writing the proposal for a European Constitution, publicly present a draft of the first sixteen articles of a document that is expected to include about fifty. The proposals of over a thousand amendments to the first sixteen articles highlight the division between those in

favour of and those against a federal model for the EU.

- On 17th February, an emergency meeting of the European Council is held in Brussels. The meeting is directed at reconciling the deep divisions regarding the crisis in Iraq. A resolution of compromise is accepted, which does not resolve the differences between the member states in the issue of support for the US in its intention to take military action against Iraq. The United Kingdom and Spain lead those in favour of military action and the proposal is also defended by Denmark, Ireland, Holland and Portugal. France and Germany advocate exploration of the diplomatic route, and are supported by Austria, Belgium, Finland, Greece and Sweden. Furthermore, the division extends to the future member states, the majority of whom support the US. These states are cautioned by President Chirac about their position.

- On 28th February, despite the obvious advances made during the year, an agreement with the US concerning extradition and other criminal issues remains in deadlock. The standstill stems from objections raised by the French, who demand more solid guarantees that people extradited to the US will receive a fair trial and will not face the death penalty.

March 2003

In Serbia and Montenegro, the Serbian Prime Minister is assassinated. The public television crisis continues in Italy, and Prime Minister Berlusconi is accused of having connections with the Mafia. In Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan finally becomes President and the Kurdish party DEHAP is illegalized. The US finally achieves partial cooperation from the Turkish government concerning the military operations already underway in Iraq, after exerting heavy pressure on it and despite rejection from the Turkish legislature. In Egypt, the case against the human rights activist, the cause of tension between the US and Egypt, is settled. In Spain, the process of illegalising Batasuna is concluded and the tension heightens with the closing down of a Basque

language newspaper. Algeria receives its first visit by a French Head of State since obtaining independence in 1962. Elections take place in Syria, and in Malta a referendum is held that approves entrance into the EU by only a narrow margin. The EU launches its first military operation, of the peacekeeping mission in Macedonia.

Spain

- On 6th March Martxelo Otamendi, director of the Basque newspaper *Egunkaria* that has been recently closed down, claims to have been tortured by the Spanish police. Otamendi was retained in isolation, under antiterrorist legislation, for five days after the closing of *Egunkaria*. His declarations receive the support of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and of Pasqual Maragall, leader of the Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSC) and former Mayor of Barcelona. The Ministry of the Interior denies Otamendi's allegations, and maintains that such declarations are habitual tactics adopted by ETA.

▪ With the application of the recently approved Political Parties Law, on 17th March the Supreme Court agrees unanimously on the forced dissolution of Batasuna, as well as of its predecessors Euskal Herriarrok and Herri Batasuna for being in «collusion» with the terrorist group ETA. The *Abertzale* coalition of left-wing parties is the first political party to be outlawed in Spain since the death of the dictator Francisco Franco. The dissolution of the party implies the end of all political activity and the liquidation of all of the organisation's assets, a measure that had already been taken as a precaution in August by National Court magistrate Baltasar Garzón.

- Spanish President, José María Aznar, continues to back the US-led military operations in Iraq, despite the popular demonstrations against the country's support. An official poll taken at the end of March reveals that ninety-one percent of Spanish people oppose the war. Spanish troops are not sent into combat in Iraq, but nine hundred soldiers are sent to take part in «humanitarian tasks».

France

- On 6th March, a Paris court sentences Algerian Islamist Adel Mechat to six years in prison for conspiring to commit acts of terrorism during the European football championships in 2000.
- On 7th March a state prosecutor rejects the lawsuit brought by the Mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, for expenses incurred by Jacques Chirac while he was serving as Mayor of Paris between 1977 and 1995.
- On 10th March, a Paris court sentences Olivier Orsini in *absentia* to twenty years in prison for attempted murder during an armed attack on a police station in Corsica in 1996.
- The 17th March sees the start of the largest corruption trial in the history of France. Thirty-seven former executives of the oil company Elf Aquitaine are indicted for diverting over 400 million euros, during the late 1980's, for personal use and for payment of bribes.
- Also on 17th March, anti-terrorist police find indications of Ricin, a fatal poison, in capsules stored in a locker in the railway station in Lyon. Despite the fact that days later the capsules are deemed harmless, French Minister of Internal Affairs Nicolas Sarkozy links the poison to the «Chechen cell», integrated by alleged members of al-Qaeda, which was forced out of action in December 2002. On the same day, two suspected members of the cell are arrested on the outskirts of Paris.
- On 26th March, Minister Sarkozy confirms that the government is organising weekly flights in order to transport illegal immigrants back to their country of origin. People who have been resident in the country for several years are excluded from this controversial measure, provided they have not been convicted of any crime.

Italy

- On 2nd March, two suspected members of a branch of the extreme left group the Red Brigades are arrested in a train after fire was exchanged, in which a police agent is killed at the scene. One of the detainees also dies later in hospital.

- On 7th March Paolo Mieli, former editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, is chosen by the presidents of the legislative chambers to head the administrative council of the RAI, the state television agency. However, on 12th March, he declines the post, citing «technical and political difficulties», which might be related to obstacles planted by the government.
- On 7th March, the Mafia baron Salvatore Rinella is arrested in Palermo, Sicily.

Malta

- On 8th March, a non-binding referendum is held on the country's entry into the EU, in which 53.6 percent of the electorate vote in favour of entering the EU. With a participation of ninety-one percent, the referendum reflects the extraordinarily high citizen mobilisation with regard to this issue, which is highly significant for the future of the island. Furthermore, the result of the voting reveals the division of the island regarding the question of its admission. The main opposition party, the Labour Party of Malta (PLM), is against the admission, and effected an intense campaign prior to the referendum.
- On 11th March, Prime Minister Edward Fenech Adami, a member of the Nationalist Party (PN), which is in favour of the integration into the EU, sets general elections for 12th April.

Slovenia

- On 23rd March a groundbreaking referendum is held, with a participation above sixty percent, and in which almost ninety percent of voters approve the entrance into the EU and more than sixty-six percent approve entrance into NATO.

Croatia

- On 23rd March, retired General Mirko Norac is sentenced to twelve years imprisonment by a Rijeka trial for having committed war crimes against Serbians in Gospić in 1991. Norac is the highest-ranking official to be prosecuted for war crimes committed during the Serb-Croat war, between 1991 and 1995. Two other defendants

are sentenced to between ten and fifteen years in prison, and a fourth person is absolved.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 31st March, in the ICTY, two former Bosnian Croat paramilitary members are found guilty of committing war crimes during the ethnic cleansing campaign in Bosnia between 1993 and 1994.
- Also on 31st March, thousands of relatives of the seven thousand Muslim victims of the massacre of Srebrenica in 1995 gather in Potocari to attend a funeral ceremony for six hundred of the victims.

Serbia and Montenegro

- On 7th March, the legislative body of the State of recently created Serbia and Montenegro, selects Svetovar Marovic to replace Vojislav Kostunica as President of the union. Marovic, former president of the regional assembly of Montenegro, was the only candidate to run. On 18th March he is also chosen to head the new Council of Ministers.
- On 12th March, Zoran Djindjic, Prime Minister of Serbia since the beginning of 2001, is shot and killed in the capital city of Belgrade. The acting president, Natasa Micić, immediately declares a state of emergency, and the Deputy Prime Minister Nebojsa Covic is designated as the provisional substitute. Djindjic had previously survived an apparent assassination attempt in February when a lorry was on the point of charging at him in the airport of Belgrade. Djindjic, who had participated decisively in the fall of Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000 and in his extradition to ICTY in June 2001, played a fundamental role in Serbia's return to the democratic community of Europe. However, Djindjic's actions had gained him powerful enemies in mafia, paramilitary and extremist circles.
- On 16th March, the Democratic Party of the assassinated Djindjic chooses Zoran Zivkovic as the new Prime Minister, and the appointment is approved by the Serbian legislature on 18th March. Zivkovic, a close colleague of Djindjic and former Minister of Internal Affairs of the Federal Re-

public of Yugoslavia recently dissolved, commits to the continuation of the advancement of reforms as well as to fighting the criminal underworld and bringing suspected war criminals to justice.

- The government points to Milorad «Legija» Lukovic (the former head of the special operations unit, the Red Berets) and the mafia gang Zemun Clan as those responsible for the assassination of Djindjic. Several arrests are made before the announcement of the Serbian government on 25th March of the detention of the principal suspect believed to have carried out the killing. This man, Zvezdan Jovanovic, is linked to the Special Operations Unit, the «Red Berets», a force loyal to Milosevic. One of his accomplices, Sasa Pejakovic, is also arrested.
- On 28th March, police announce that they have discovered the corpse of Ivan Stambolic, the communist president of Serbia during the 1980's, who was kidnapped in August 2000 in Belgrade. On 30th March the Serbian government, who accuses the «Red Berets» of the kidnapping and assassination, calls for the arrest of Mirjana Markovic, the wife of former President Milosevic, as there are suspicions that she participated in the assassination plot.

Macedonia

- On 31st March, the EU launches its first military operation, in the taking over of peacekeeping tasks that NATO has been carrying out in Macedonia. The mission, called Operation Concordia, has a six-month mandate and forms part of the European Security and Defence Policy. This EU force is composed of 320 soldiers and eighty civilian workers, and is led by two commanders, of French and German nationality.

Cyprus

- On 10th March, the recently elected Greek Cypriot President, Tassos Papadopoulos, and the leader of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Rauf Denktash, meet with the General Secretary of the UN, Kofi Annan in The Hague, the Netherlands, in a final effort to reach a reu-

nification agreement for the island. However, the twenty hours of negotiations end without any agreement being reached, which means that only the Greek part of Cyprus will be permitted to enter the EU in May 2004. Once again, the failure of the reunification plan can be attributed to Denktash's continued opposition. Denktash lacks significant levels of popular backing due to his hard line position in the peace negotiations.

Turkey

- On 1st March the Great National Assembly, the unicameral legislature of the country, rejects by just three votes the motion that would permit the deployment of sixty-two thousand US soldiers in Turkey against the prospect of a military operation against Iraq. The government continues to be subjected to intense pressure by the US, in order for the issue to be returned to the Assembly. However, owing to the fact that a second rejection in the legislature could be disastrous for the government, which is facing a popular outcry against the war, the Turkish executive refuses to back down.
- On 9th March, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the leader of the ruling Justice and Development (AKP), is elected for admittance into the Great National Assembly, after he wins his seat with eighty-five percent of the vote in the partial elections in the eastern province of Siirt, in accordance with the constitutional modifications that allowed him to run. This electoral victory means that Erdogan replaces Gul as Prime Minister, and on 11th March the President, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, therefore requests that he form an administration, which is approved on 14th March
- On 12th March the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) rules that Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the outlawed Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), did not receive a fair trial in October 1999, and that the process should therefore be repeated. The court's decision is not binding.
- On 13th March, the constitutional tribunal of Turkey outlaws the Popular Democratic Party (HADEP) on the grounds that it has undermined the in-

tegrity of the country by «helping and inciting the terrorist PKK».

- On 17th March, the legislature adopts the budget presented by the government for the year 2003. The new budget, which is implanted after the country has renounced a multimillion dollar package in aid and loans from the US, is characterised by its austerity. The proffered package would have been in exchange for allowing the deployment of American troops on Turkish soil.
- On 20th March, the day that hostilities are launched against Iraq, Abdullah Gul, recently named Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, announces that the US has withdrawn its offer of six billion dollars in aid and twenty-four billion in loans offered to Turkey as compensation for the derivative costs of the war.
- On 20th March, the Great National Assembly passes a motion that opens Turkish airspace to US aviation for six months. The US is grateful for this measure and offers 9.4 billion dollars in subsidies and loans. The motion also authorises the controversial sending of Turkish troops to the northern Iraq, according to the government in order to prevent the entrance of refugees in Turkey. This decision raises fear in the US and the UK of a «war within a war», and is interpreted by many analysts as Turkey's attempt to assure its influence in northern Iraq and to avoid agitating the twelve million Kurds who live in south-eastern Turkey.
- On 24th March, Turkey attends a meeting of the Arab League held in Cairo, Egypt. The country acts as an observer for the first time.
- On 28th March, in an effort to meet EU human rights criteria, Turkey permits the re-trial of former Kurdish members of the great National Assembly, who were imprisoned in 1994 after taking the oath in the Kurdish language.

Syria

- On 2nd and 3rd March elections are held to decide the members of the Peoples' Assembly, the unicameral legislature. The ruling Baath Party's Progressive National Front and its six allies obtain 167 seats, while eighty-

three of the remaining seats are taken by independent candidates. Voter participation is 63.5 percent. In a speech before the Assembly, President Bashar al-Assad defends Palestinian suicide bombings and compares them with Israeli military operations.

Egypt

- On 18th March, the High Court of Appeal absolves human rights leader activist Saadeddin Ibrahim of a series of charges including embezzlement, falsification and receiving foreign funds without authorisation. This case has been the cause of strained relations between Egypt and the US, due in large part to Ibrahim's dual Egyptian-US citizenship.

Algeria

- French President, Jacques Chirac, makes an official visit to Algeria from 2nd to 4th March. It is the first formal visit by a French Head of State to Algeria since the country achieved independence in 1962. Chirac is received cordially, having increased his popularity among Arab peoples as a result of his opposition to the plans instigated by the US to declare war on Iraq. It is decided that the heads of state will meet annually from now on, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs will hold talks twice a year.
- On 6th March, an Air Algérie Boeing 737 crashes during takeoff at Tamanrasset airport in the Sahara desert. Ninety-seven passengers and the six crewmembers are killed. Only one passenger survives.

European Union

- On 21st and 22nd March, the regular spring session of the European Council is held, and the US-led military operation against Iraq, an issue over which the member states are deeply divided, dominates the gathering. Economic, social and environmental issues are also on the agenda. In particular, the members emphasise their desire to continue endorsing the Lisbon Strategy, with which the EU intends to become the most competitive economic area in the world by 2010. At the summit, the members express satisfaction

at the US President, George W. Bush's, backing of the Road Map, which aims to end the conflict between Israel and Palestine. They express regret over the failure of the UN's latest efforts to find a solution to the continued problems in Cyprus, and the Union firmly condemns the recent assassination of Zoran Djindjic, Prime Minister of Serbia.

April 2003

In Bosnia and Herzegovina one of the members of the collective presidency is forced to resign after he is linked to the violation of the arms embargo on Iraq. In Serbia and Montenegro, there is a mass round up and arrests after the assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister, and in Croatia the death of the former army chief of staff who was wanted for trial by international courts relaxes international pressure on the country. Turkey increases its support of the US in the military campaign against Iraq. In Cyprus, despite the deadlock in negotiations, the Turkish zone unexpectedly opens the Green Line, and the Greek zone responds by lifting its embargo. In France, the Regional Council of Corsica agrees to submit the government's decentralisation plan to a referendum; while in Italy, where anti-terrorist operations are underway, Prime Minister Berlusconi is on trial. In Syria, fears spread that the country will become the next military target of the US. Libya takes civil responsibility for the 1988 Lockerbie bombing in exchange for the UN lifting sanctions against the country and its removal from the US list of countries that promote terrorism. Elections are held in Malta.

Portugal

- In April, after serving a year in office, the first resignations are submitted by politicians of the coalition government, composed of the Socialist Party of Portugal (PS) and the Social and Democratic Centre - Popular Party (CDS-PP).

Spain

- On 6th April, the government's fight against the terrorist organisation ETA

is tarnished by a guilty verdict against four intelligence agents, including two former heads of the intelligence service, who are convicted of having leaders of Herri Batasuna, the political wing of ETA, under surveillance without a court order, according to the government.

- On 24th April, Batasuna appeals its illegalisation, a ruling handed down by the Supreme Court in the Constitutional Tribunal. At the beginning of the month, Minister of Justice José María Michavila requested that the EU add Batasuna to their list of terrorist organisations. ETA has been on the list since 2002.

- On 30th April, eight people are arrested on suspicion of being linked to the terrorist organisation ETA.

France

- On 2nd April, Algerian citizen Mahmoud Slimani is arrested in Modane, on the border with Italy. He is suspected of being part of the al-Qaeda «Chechen cell», which is active in France. In December 2002 nine suspected members of the cell were arrested.

- On 6th and 13th April, elections are held for the recently created French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM), a government initiative aimed at channelling relations between Muslim citizens and the state. Radical Islamist groups obtain significant representation. However, by virtue of an agreement among the various groups, the moderate rector of the Paris mosque is appointed President of the Council. Minister of Internal Affairs, Nicolas Sarkozy, affirms that the CFCM will not be permitted to propagate points of view that are contrary to the values of the French Republic, and warns that any religious leaders who advocate extremism will be expelled.

- On 10th April, the EU Court of First Instance confirms the decision made by the European Parliament in October 2000 to expel the leader of the far-right National Front (FN), Jean Marie Le Pen, for aggressions committed in France.

- On 17th April, in Bastia, Corsica, a sixteen-year-old boy dies and another is seriously injured when a device they were trying to make by following in-

structions found on the internet explodes. A few days later, on 24th April, a bomb explodes in Ajaccio in the Association of Moroccans of Corsica, in which no one is injured.

- On 18th April the Regional Council of Corsica approves the submission of the government plan of regional decentralisation to a popular referendum, that will be held on 6th July. They also draw up recommendations for modifying the plan. According to the plan, the current Regional Council and the two departmental councils of the island would be replaced by an assembly that will possess the power to raise local taxes and take charge of transport, housing, health and education, despite the fact that Corsica would continue to be divided in two departmental administrative units that correspond to the existing departments.
- On 29th April, the government presents a programme allocating 1.2 billion euros in order to increase the country's birth rate and facilitate mothers' re-entry into the labour market.

Italy

- At the beginning of the month four men suspected of having connections with international terrorism and possessing illegal identification are arrested in Milan and Parma. Police affirm that the men are linked to the extremist groups al-Qaeda and Ansar al-Islam. The suspects were apparently recruiting volunteers to fight against the US and the United Kingdom in the war in Iraq.
- On 18th April Prime Minister Berlusconi's trial begins in Milan. He is accused of bribing judges during a company takeover in the 1980's. Berlusconi denies the accusations and denounces the political bias of the Milan judges.
- On 28th April the Chamber of Deputies passes a new legislation, which is interpreted by many as an attempt to delay the sentencing in the trial of Cesare Previti, former Minister of Defence and Senator from Forza Italia. The new law allows defendants to obtain a forty-five day suspension of trial while negotiations to reach a final agreement are continuing. However, the sentence given to Cesare Previti will be announced before the new leg-

islation passes through the Senate, the higher chamber of the Italian bicameral legislature. Forza Italia announces that they are also drafting legislation to restore immunity for members of the legislature.

- On 29th April, Cesare Previti is sentenced to eleven years in prison after being found guilty of bribing judges in order to influence two company takeovers in the 1990's. Previti, who is one of Berlusconi's close colleagues in the political sphere as well as in business, declares that his sentence is part of a campaign of political persecution.

Malta

- In the general elections, held on 12th April, the ruling Nationalist Party (PN), headed by Prime Minister Edward Fenech Adami, is assured a victory of absolute majority in the Chamber of Representatives, the country's unicameral legislature. The campaign was focused on the debate over Malta's accession into the EU, in which the current prime minister considers admittance to be vital for the island's economy, while the opposition leader, Alfred Sant of the Labour Party (MLP), is against signing the EU accession treaty. The election results once again confirm the favourable position toward entrance into the EU manifested by the non-binding referendum held in March. However, the elections would have been compulsory if the option backed by the government had not received the sufficient absolute majority, as is stipulated in the Constitution.

Croatia

- On 2nd April, the bicameral legislature (Sabor) approves an electoral legislation reforms package for the upcoming general elections, which are to be held before April 2004. The most notable change is the increase in the number of seats reserved for ethnic minorities: from five to eight.
- On 5th April, police arrest Bosnian Croat military leader Ivica Rajic, on suspicion of committing war crimes.
- On 29th April, former Croatian army chief of staff, Janko Bobetko, dies in Zagreb, aged eighty-four. The ICTY had accused him of committing war

crimes, but many Croats considered him a war hero and the country had been subjected to international pressure after the government refused to extradite him to The Hague.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 2nd April, Mirko Sarovic resigns as the Serbian member of the Bosnian collective presidency, to which office he was elected in October 2002. He was implicated in the scandal involving the aviation company Orao, which violated the UN embargo on Iraq by supplying the country with military equipment.
- On 9th April Borislav Paravac is chosen as the new Serbian member of the collective presidency.
- On 10th April, on orders from the NATO, the SFOR arrests Nacer Oric, former commander of the Muslim Bosnian forces (Bosnia and Herzegovina's military corps) in Srebrenica. On the following day he is sent to the Detention Unit of the International Penal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, where he is accused of violating the laws and customs of war.

Serbia and Montenegro

- During the month of April, there is still evidence of apprehension as a consequence of the recent assassination of Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic. Many arrests are made over the course of the month, as the continuation of the drastic measures imposed after the killing against organised crime. Over seven thousand people, the majority of whom are described by the government as «known criminals», are arrested and interrogated. Charges are brought against over a thousand of them, including important current and former members of the state authorities and other spheres of power.
- On 3rd April, Serbia and Montenegro becomes the forty-fifth member of the Council of Europe. The country's Minister of Foreign Affairs signs the European Convention on Human Rights.
- The 9th April edition of the newspaper *The Independent* reports that Zvezdan Jovanovic, the man who supposedly assassinated Djindjic, told po-

lice that the assassination of the Prime Minister was the first in a series of planned attacks to topple the government and return power to the allies of the former Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic. Furthermore, Jovanovic had assured police that he was acting under orders of Milorad «Legija» Lukovic, leader of the mafia gang, Zemun Clan, who is on the run, and like Jovanovic, is a principal figure in the Special Operations Unit the «Red Berets», which served Milosevic.

- On 22nd April, after forty-two days in force, Serbia lifts the state of emergency that it declared as a result of the assassination of Djindjic. Prime Minister Zivkovic confirms that he will continue to combat organised crime by allowing the press to analyze and criticise government policy.

- On 29th April, the Serbian police present criminal charges against forty-five people in connection with the assassination of Djindjic. According to the accusation, the suspects are responsible for «encouraging terrorist political activities» and were involved in a «conspiracy to endanger constitutional order and security». The defendants include Vojislav Seselj, who obtained the second largest number of votes in the previous failed Serbian elections, and who has now been extradited to the ICTY. The former president, Slobodan Milosevic, is also accused of organising a criminal group that attempted to assassinate opposing politician, Vuk Draskovic, in June 2000, and of being implicated in the assassination of Ivan Stambolic, the communist President of Serbia in the 1980's.

Macedonia

- On 24th April, the former Prime Minister, Ljubco Georgievski, announces his resignation as leader of the opposition group Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE). Georgievski says the motive for his decision is the party's defeat in the September 2002 elections.

- On 30th April the IMF approves a motion to grant the economic programme of the country with an aid package of over 27 million dollars until 15th June 2004.

Greece

- On 14th April, twenty-one children die and twenty-four more are injured when a lorry loaded with construction supplies collides with a school bus full of children. The police arrest the lorry driver as well as the two owners of the vehicle, and charge them with manslaughter.

- On 16th April, while the EU is celebrating the highly important enlargement ceremony, thousands of demonstrators take to the streets to protest against the US-led war against Iraq. Riot police are forced to use tear gas when several hundred people break off from the peaceful march and hurl incendiary devices and missiles at the US and British embassy buildings. The police make 106 arrests.

Cyprus

- On 2nd April, after the failure of the peace plan endorsed by the UN with the objective of reuniting the island, Rauf Denktash, the leader of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of the Northern Cyprus, who is seen by a great deal of Turkish Cypriots as an obstacle in the way peace for the island, offers to return the locality of Varosha to the Greek Cypriots, which has been a deserted area since the Turkish invasion that divided the island in 1974. The Greek Cypriot President, Tassos Papadopoulos, rejects the offer, declaring that the UN plan, with its more complex territorial layout, is the model that should serve as the basis for any negotiation.

- Unexpectedly, on 22nd April, Denktash announces that travel between the two zones of the island will be facilitated with the opening of the Green Line that separates the two communities, with crossings limited to visits of one day only. On 23rd April, the first day of unrestricted travel, hundreds of Cypriots from both sides cross the old ceasefire line. For many Greek Cypriots it is the first time they have returned to the other side of the border, to see the homes they were forced to abandon thirty years before. In response, on 30th April, the Greek Cypriot government lifts the economic blockade on the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Turkey

- On 1st and 2nd April, US Secretary of State Colin Powell visits Ankara, the Turkish capital. Resulting from conversations with Abdullah Gul, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Powell obtains more support from Turkey, who permits the use of its territory for storage of US troops' fuel and food in northern Iraq. A damaged US airship and wounded American soldiers are also allowed to enter. The agreement does not require the approval of the Great National Assembly, the governmental body who recently impeded the deployment of US troops. Powell promises that northern Iraq will remain under control of the coalition, not under Kurdish control, and that Turkey will have a say in the future reconstruction of the country.

- On 6th April Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kamal Kharrazi, visits Ankara and speaks with Prime Minister Erdogan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gul. Gul visits Syria on 9th April, where he meets with his Syrian counterpart, Farouq al-Shar'a. Iran and Syria also oppose the formation of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq.

- On 10th April, the Kurdish Iraqi militia takes Kirkuk, an oil-rich city in northern Iraq. This event, along with the possible proclamation of an autonomous Kurdish Iraqi state, provoke fears of the intensification of demands for autonomy from the Kurdish minority living in Turkey. The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs describes the situation as «unacceptable», and US Secretary of State Colin Powell responds by assuring that the Kurdish troops will soon be replaced by the US military, a process that will begin on 11th April. Powell agrees to the motion of sending fifteen Turkish military observers to the region.

Syria

- After three weeks of the US-led military campaign, Saddam Hussein's regime falls in Iraq. Worries spread throughout the Middle East that Syria might become the next target of the US military. The hypothesis comes from a inundation of harsh warnings

launched by high US officials at Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his administration. In April, the United States accuse Syria of developing chemical weapons, of giving shelter to fugitives from the Iraqi regime and of protecting terrorism. However, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and US ally, Tony Blair, denies the existence of plans to attack Syria before the House of Commons, the lower chamber of the legislative body, and assures that he will pursue dialogue and beneficial understanding with Syria. On 20th April, the President of the United States, George W. Bush, appears to be more conciliatory and affirms that he has confidence that Syria will cooperate.

Lebanon

- On 15th April, Rafiq al-Hariri presents his resignation as Prime Minister, the office he has held since October 2000. The next day the country's President, Emile Lahoud, requests Hariri to continue provisionally as Prime Minister with the purpose of forming a new government. The new government is approved on 30th April by the National Assembly, the unicameral legislature.

Jordan

- On 2nd April, the arrest of four Iraqis is reported, who are allegedly linked to a plan to bomb an area in the capital city frequented by journalists and foreign diplomats. It is also reported that security forces have prevented a scheme to poison the water supplied to a base used by US soldiers in Jordan.

Libya

- On 29th April, Abd al-Rahman Mohammed Shalgam, the Secretary of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation, announces Libya's intention to pay compensation to the families of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, for which Libya assumes civil responsibility. In turn, Shalgam requests that the UN lifts sanctions placed on Libya and that the United States remove the country from its list of countries that promote terrorism.

Algeria

- In late April there are reports that since February a total thirty-one European tourists have been kidnapped in the Algerian Sahara. These people could be being held by Islamist rebels in the Illizi region.

European Union

- On 16th and 17th April, at an informal session of the European Council held in Athens, accession treaties are signed for the admittance of Cyprus, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and the Czech Republic into the EU on 1st May 2004. Despite the enthusiasm surrounding the enlargement process, deep divisions over the Iraq conflict are still evident. The EU leaders adopt a declaration affirming that the UN should play a central role in the state of affairs of post-war Iraq and that the EU should participate in the reconstruction of the country.

- On 24th April, the Convention of the Future of Europe presents new articles of the draft of the European constitution. The articles include the controversial Franco-German proposal, which calls for the heads of the member states to choose an EU president who would serve up to a five-year term.

- On 29th April, the heads of state of Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg meet in Brussels to urge EU defence cooperation in an international context that is marked by the US-led military operations in Iraq, to which the countries are opposed. The eleven remaining EU countries do not support the initiative. The leaders gathered in Brussels declare that they do not have any intention of undermining NATO, however their decision to establish differentiated centres of operation in order to plan military operations together is seen as a direct challenge to the position led by the United Kingdom, and in accordance with which the new defence structure of the EU should not compete with NATO or replicate its capacities.

May 2003

Filip Vujanovic wins the presidency in the third round of elections in the Re-

public of Montenegro. ETA's terrorism campaign continues in Spain, while the US agrees to include the outlawed political formation Batasuna on their list of organisations that give support to terrorist activities. The depleted public opinion of the Aznar administration is accentuated further when sixty-two Spanish soldiers die in a aeroplane crash in Turkey, where over a hundred victims also lose their lives in an earthquake. A second earthquake shakes Algeria, causing more than two thousand deaths and bringing great hardship to the population. Also in Algeria, President Bouteflika removes the Prime Minister from office, and seventeen tourists who have been held for more than two months by Islamic activists are freed. In neighbouring Morocco, a wave of terrorist attacks leaves forty-three dead, and the sentencing of editor Ali Lmrabet sparks wide controversy about the lack of human rights and freedom. The US Secretary of State visits Lebanon and Syria, where the possibility of being targeted by the US is beginning to dissipate. The EU declares that the Rapid Reaction Force is ready to undertake peacekeeping missions.

Spain

- On 7th May, George W. Bush, after speaking with President Aznar, accepts the inclusion of Batasuna (considered by the central administration as the political wing of ETA) to the US list of organisations that give support to terrorist activities. The decision means that Batasuna, which was illegalised in Spain in March, will not be able to receive political or material support from American citizens, and that its members will not be able to enter the United States or own commodities there. The decision is interpreted as compensation to Aznar on the part of Bush for his support in the war against Iraq.

- On 25th May, in the municipal and autonomous (in thirteen of the seventeen autonomous regions) elections, the ruling Popular Party (PP) obtains the majority of seats, but is surpassed by the Socialist Party (PSOE) in actual number of votes received. The Supreme Court had impeded a more than thousand candidates from standing in local

elections on 9th May, when it established a connection between ETA and 241 political groups, and the illegality of the formation Autodeterminaziorako Bilgunea (AuB), declaring that this is another name for the recently outlawed Batasuna.

- On 30th May, a car bomb explodes in Sangüesa, near Pamplona, killing two police officers and seriously injuring two other men. The attack is attributed to the terrorist organisation ETA, which over the course of the month has to deal with its own internal conflicts and the arrest of six suspected members in France on 10th May.

France

- On 4th May Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin calls teachers to hold firm in the conservation of the secular tradition in French education and announces that schools could be given the authority to expel students who wear a veil.

- On 6th May, after being extradited from the United Kingdom, Iraqi-born multimillionaire Nadhmi Auchi stands trial for corruption in the Elf Aquitaine oil company scandal. The trial is held in Paris and Auchi testifies about the alleged false commissions that were charged when he brought the Spanish company Ertol in order to sell it shortly afterward to the French firm Elf.

- On 12th May, the expulsion of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Front (FN) from the European Parliament is announced.

- On 13th May, the country is practically paralysed by the national strike called by the public workers, who oppose government plans to reform the state pension system. The protests continue with work stoppages in certain sectors and culminate in a demonstration in Paris on 25th May and by the decision of union leaders on 27th May to intensify the action in June.

- On 16th May, the former Prime Minister and current President of the governing Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), Alain Juppé, is called to trial in order to respond to charges of wrongful use of public funds, in the period when he was assistant to the then Mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, between 1988 and 1995.

- On 17th May, the main faction of the FLNC, the FLNC-Union of Combatants, claims responsibility for three recent attacks in their fight against «economic colonization». *Resistenza Corsa* takes responsibility for the 26th May bombing of a bar in Bastia frequented by North Africans, as well as three other similar incidents, offering these as evidence of their actions against «drug traffic and illegal immigration».

Italy

- On 5th May, Prime Minister Berlusconi appears in court on charges of bribing judges during the takeover of a state-owned company in 1985. Berlusconi denies the charges, declaring that he acted in the best interests of the nation, and accuses former Prime Minister and current President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, who in 1985 was director of the IRI, the entity that owned the company in question, of trying to sell the company at an artificially low price to a favoured bidder.

- On 24th and 25th May, citizens go to the polls to elect twelve provincial governments and new municipal governments in almost five hundred localities. The opposition, the centre-left Olive Tree Coalition, is significantly successful in Rome, where their candidate obtains fifty-three percent of the vote. The centre-left wins in five provinces while the centre-right wins four. The three that remain are to be decided at the beginning of June.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 14th May, in the ICTY, the trial begins of four Bosnian Serb officials accused of being involved in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre: Vidoje Blagojevic, Dragan Jokic, Dragan Obrenovic and Momir Nikolic. The prosecution negotiates a plea bargain with the latter two, who plead guilty.

- On 29th May, the commander of the Bosnian Serb army dies in Belgrade. He had been indicted by the ICTY but was allowed to return to Belgrade in September 2002 as a consequence of being ill, of the lung cancer that eventually killed him.

Serbia and Montenegro

- On 1st May, the ICTY confirms its indictment against former Minister of State Security, Jovica Stanisic, and his assistant Franko Simatovic. Both were arrested in Serbia for their involvement in the assassination of the former Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic.

- On 7th May, the US President, George W. Bush, gives his authorisation for the US to provide military assistance to Serbia and Montenegro. Bush considers the steps taken by the new administration after the Djindjic assassination to be «significant».

- On 11th May the third round of presidential elections takes place in Montenegro. The candidate who receives the most votes is the former Prime Minister, Filip Vujanovic, who also won the two previous rounds (in December 2002 and February 2003). The previous elections were ruled invalid because voter turnout did not reach the fifty percent required by electoral law, however after two annulled elections, the law was modified for the holding of the new vote. With a voter participation that reaches 48.5 percent in the third round, Vujanovic, of the governing the Democratic List for a European Montenegro, is therefore proclaimed President.

- On 21st May, former Slovenian President Milan Kucan testifies in the trial of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, which began in the ICTY in February 2002. Kucan states that he had no knowledge of the Serbian participation in the Slovenian war of liberation against the Yugoslav military forces.

Cyprus

- Tens of thousands of people continue to cross the border between the two parts of the island, which has been open since April, with economic activity derived from the open border situation, and taking advantage of new legislation passed on 10th May by the Chamber of Representatives (the unicameral legislature in Greek Cyprus), which permits Turkish Cypriots to cross the border by car. It is estimated that by mid May a total of forty percent of the population, made up of 250,000 Greek Cypriots and seventy thousand

Turkish Cypriots, have taken advantage of the open border to cross from one side to another.

- On 22nd May, the ban against Greek Cypriot citizens visiting Turkey, which has been hanging over them since 1963, is lifted.

Turkey

- On 1st May, an earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale rocks a mountainous region in eastern Turkey, causing 167 deaths and over a thousand injuries. In the city of Bingol, local police use violence to crush protests against the government in response to its insufficient reactions to the disaster. As a result, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan forces the local police chief to resign.
- On 26th May, seventy-five passengers and the crew of a Ukrainian Yakovlev-42D die when the aeroplane crashes into a mountain near Trabzon, in north-eastern Turkey. The aeroplane, which needed to refuel and had twice been unable to land due to dense fog, was flying from Kabul in Afghanistan on its way to Zaragoza, Spain. The aircraft was carrying sixty-two Spanish soldiers who had been on a peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan. In Spain, the families of the victims harshly criticise the government for renting an aircraft that failed to meet minimum security requirements.
- On 30th May, the IMF announces that the 500 million dollars that was foreseen to be disbursed in mid-June will not be paid out until Turkey meets the conditions set by the IMF. The IMF does not deem the improvement in the Turkish economy, which is due in large part to the country's cooperation with the US in the war against Iraq, to be sufficient. More specifically, the IMF considers that Turkey has not been able to remove the obstacles in the way of foreign investments, nor to simplify the social security system or develop a privatisation strategy for the state-owned telecommunications company.

Syria

- On 3rd May, US Secretary of State Colin Powell makes a brief visit to Syr-

ia in order to speak with President Bashar al-Assad. Powell's visit comes after three weeks of harsh warnings from the US administration against Assad's regime, which could be the next target of the US military. The outcome of the meeting is positive and the Syrian government changes its position on radical Palestinian factions, having declared that they will try to limit their activities and television appearances.

Lebanon

- On 3rd May US Secretary of State Colin Powell travels to Lebanon to meet with officials, including President Emile Lahoud, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, the President of the Lebanese legislature Nabih Berri, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean Obeid. Powell expresses the United States' concern about the continuation of Hezbollah terrorist activity, and with this in mind calls for an end to armed resistance on the Israeli border and for the deployment of troops to this area.
- On 5th May, a military tribunal in Beirut sentences eight people linked to the terrorist network al-Qaeda to between three and fifteen years imprisonment.
- On 7th May, in eastern Tripoli, a bomb explodes next to the home of a European missionary couple. The blast kills a neighbour and injures the couple's son.
- Between 12th and 14th May the Iranian President, Seyyed Mohammed Khatami, pays his first official visit to Lebanon. It is the first visit by an Iranian Head of State since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In a speech given in front of fifty thousand Shiite Muslims, Khatami implicitly praises Hezbollah and the continual resistance symbolised by Lebanon.
- The 19th May edition of *The Times* reports that Lebanese security services have arrested up to forty-five Islamic activists, and accused them of the recent series of attacks on Western targets and of planning the assassination of the US ambassador to Beirut, Vincent Battle.
- On 22nd May, the Israeli army announces the detention of a member of Hezbollah, who was discovered with military supplies in fishing boat on the coast of Haifa. Israeli authorities con-

firm that the boat was en route from Lebanon to Egypt, where the Hezbollah member would have been able to attempt entry into the Gaza Strip.

Algeria

- On 5th May, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika dismisses Ali Benflis from his office of Prime Minister and appoints Ahmed Ouyahia. Ouyahia served as Prime Minister from 1995 to 1998, and as a Minister of the outgoing administration since 2002. Reports indicate that Benflis' dismissal, who was appointed Prime Minister in August 2000, is due to differences encountered between him and Bouteflika concerning the 2004 presidential elections.
- On 9th May, the National Democratic Union (RND), presents its government, which is fundamentally composed of figures from the National Liberation Front (FLN), the party who obtained the most votes in the May 2002 legislative elections, and whose general secretary was the past Prime Minister.
- On 13th May, the Algerian Special Forces storm an Islamist activist camp in the Sahara, and free seventeen Western tourists who had been held there for about two months. According to the newspaper *Al Watan*, at least nine members of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat died during the military operation. Fifteen tourists remain missing at the end of May.
- On 21st May, an earthquake measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale shakes the region of the capital, Algiers, killing 2,200 people, injuring over ten thousand more, and reducing many buildings along the northern coast to rubble. On the following day there is another earthquake fifty kilometres from the capital, which results in the deaths of three people and injures around two hundred. Over the following few days, the people demonstrate their anger toward the government for its insufficient response to the disaster and for allowing the construction of unsafe buildings.

Morocco

- On 16th May, a group of twelve people blow themselves up simultane-

ously in five targets in the commercial capital of Morocco, Casablanca. Up to forty-three people die and a hundred are injured as a result of these attacks, which according to the government were carried out by a local fundamentalist Islamist group, al-Assirat al-Moustaquim (the Righteous Path). The attacks took place in a Spanish restaurant, a Jewish centre and cemetery, a hotel, and the Belgian Consulate. The similarities with the triple attack committed on 12th May in Riad lead the US government to believe that the attack is attributed to the latest actions of al-Qaeda, in collaboration with a local Islamist group who actually carried out the killings.

- On 21st May, Ali Lmrabet, editor of the weekly newspapers, *Demain* (the French version) and *Doumane* (the Arab edition), is found guilty of insulting King Mohammed VI in his publication of satirical articles and cartoons, and sentenced to four years in prison. This is first such ruling to be implemented in Morocco in the last thirty years.

European Union

- On 7th May, the European Commission urges France to bring its deficit to an end as soon as possible, and orders the French government to present deficit reduction plans by October.
- On 19th May, the Ministers of the Defence of the EU declare that the Rapid Reaction Force is ready to take on any type of peacekeeping operations, despite the admitted existence of insufficiencies that could compromise the corps' in their swiftness of actions, in their defence capability itself if a conflict were to intensify, or in the case of facing more than one mission at a time. On the other hand, on 27th May, with the signing of a contract with Airbus for the manufacture of 180 airships, European plans are clarified with regard to the purchase of a new generation of equipment for air force transport.
- On 28th May, the Convention on the Future of Europe, presided over by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, presents a controversial outline of the preamble of the future constitution. In the outline proffered, the preamble does not make reference to Europe's Christian

roots, in spite of the intense pressure from the Vatican. The new text conserves the name European Union, omits the concept of federalism, and emphasises the subsidiarity principle, thus calming the most reluctant views on federalism imposed on a European scale. However, the abolition of the power of national veto is foreseen regarding some twenty policies, including procedures in social, environmental and asylum issues, which would therefore be decided by a qualified majority. The new Charter of Fundamental Rights, approved in Nice in December 2002, is also incorporated, along with a prevision to integrate a general European department of public prosecution, with the aim of tracking crime across national borders.

June 2003

In France, the governor of the Bank of France is absolved, and a criminal investigation is opened surrounding President Chirac. In the country there are also new strikes, the government makes it more difficult for asylum seekers to obtain political refuge, and several suspected members of al-Qaeda are arrested. There are further arrests of suspected terrorists in Spain, Morocco and Italy. The Italian prime minister's trial comes to a standstill, and the government there is also involved in negotiations with Libya in order to stop illegal immigration. A boat loaded with explosives and detonators is intercepted off the coast of Greece. In Cyprus, there are mobilisations against the Turkish Cypriot leader. In Turkey, new measures are approved to bring the country closer to the EU, which reaches an agreement concerning the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. Elections are held in Jordan.

Spain

- In June, legal action is taken against the leaders of the Basque legislature for their refusal to comply with the Supreme Court decree that imposes the dissolution of Sozialista Abertzaleak (SA), the name adopted by Batasuna, ruled ETA's political wing by the government, after the party was de-

clared illegal in March. The Spanish government threatens the party's refusal to dissolve with the possibility of resorting to the suspension of Basque autonomy.

- On 3rd June, two members of the terrorist organisation ETA are sentenced to 2,354 years in prison for a 1987 car bombing in Zaragoza that killed eleven people.
- On 5th June, the European Ministers of Justice and Internal Affairs approve the inclusion of Batasuna on the EU's list of terrorist organisations.
- On 14th June, a man is arrested in the southern port of Algeciras for his suspected connection with the May bombings in Casablanca, in Morocco.
- On 17th June, in a joint operation between Spain and France, ten people are arrested for their connections with Segi, a radical Basque youth organisation group linked to ETA.
- On 23rd June, the terrorist organisation ETA sets off a bomb in a hotel close to Bilbao, but no one is injured.

France

- On 1st and 2nd June, at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, police arrest two suspected members of the terrorist network al-Qaeda. The detainees are Karim Mehdi, a Moroccan national who could be linked to the «Hamburg cell» that organised the 11th September 2001 attacks, and Christian Ganczarski, a German national born in Poland and a Muslim convert, who according to the French Minister of Internal Affairs, is «one of the leaders of al-Qaeda».
- On 2nd June, the trials begin of eight Corsicans accused of being accomplices in the February 1998 murder of prefect Claude Erignac, and of three other islanders accused of carrying out acts of terrorism in continental France. During June, new attacks are carried out against foreign and continental French property owners, on a police station, and against hypothetical traffickers of both drugs and Maghrebi immigrants.
- On 2nd, 3rd, 9th and 10th June more strikes are held within the public sector, in protest of government plans to reform the pension system. The strikes have a considerable effect on public transport and other public services. Some private sector workers al-

so add their support to protest against the high unemployment rate. On 19th June, there is new day of striking, which this time achieves only low levels of participation, this leads Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin to declare that the government plans have achieved public acceptance.

- On 5th June Minister of Foreign Affairs Dominique de Villepin presents a draft law to tighten restrictions on the process of the application for asylum, which according the Minister, is vulnerable and open to abuse by economic immigrants who represent «an increasingly high cost».

- On 11th June, a Paris magistrate opens a criminal investigation into the accounts approved by the Paris mayor's office between 1977 and 1995, while Jacques Chirac, currently in office as President of the Republic, was serving as its head. Chirac is accused of having used public funds illicitly for the personal benefit of himself and his family. However, according to French law, the President enjoys immunity for as long as he is in office, and not even be called on to testify. His wife, Bernadette Chirac, on the other hand, can be interrogated.

- On 18th June, Jean-Claude Trichet, governor of the Bank of France, is absolved by the Paris courts of the charges of complicity in fraudulent accounting at the bank *Crédit Lyonnais* in the early 1990's, when he was a civil servant in the Ministry of Finance. In view of his absolution, President Chirac upholds Trichet's candidacy for the presidency of the Central European Bank to EU leaders. Trichet would replace Dutch official Wim Duisenberg in the post.

- On 21st June, the Prime Minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, and the Minister of Internal Affairs, Nicolas Sarkozy, arrive on the island of Corsica in an attempt to gain more support for the governmental decentralisation plan. Opinion polls indicate that tendencies to the «No» vote are increasing as the day of the referendum, 6th July, approaches.

Italy

- The results of the second round of voting in the local elections held on 10th June reveal a favourable tenden-

cy toward the centre-left opposition, and produce fractures in the Pole of Liberties, the centre-right coalition in power.

- On 18th June, Berlusconi's trial comes to a standstill, after the lower legislative chamber approves a bill awarding immunity to the five highest national offices, of President, Prime Minister, head of the Constitutional Court, and the heads of the two legislative chambers. Berlusconi was accused of bribing judges in the 1980's. However, the law prevents certain judicial investigations, such as the one carried out in the middle of the month that explores possible tax evasion and falsification of accounts in a transaction carried out between 1994 and 1996 by Mediaset, Berlusconi's media group.

- On 24th June in Milan, six people of Maghrebi origin are arrested on suspicion of participating in the financing of terrorist activities and providing logistical support to the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, which is believed to have possible connections with the al-Qaeda network.

- The massive wave of illegal immigrants that arrive on Italian shores (over 3,500 in the month of June and some 23,000 over the last year, not including the unknown hundreds who have died in the attempt) compels the government to enact a decree giving the Navy power to board boats carrying illegal immigrants, and to return them to their country of origin.

Croatia

- On 5th June, Pope John Paul II begins the hundredth trip of his papacy with a five-day visit to Croatia. During his visit, the pope expresses his support for Croatia's tentative entrance into the EU, and urges the Croats to overcome their past.

- In an interview granted to *The Times*, published on 14th June, President Stipe Mesic promises that the government will give its complete cooperation in the trials against Croat citizens accused of war crimes. The judicial process taken up by the ICTY maintains a situation of constant tension within the administration, between Croat nationalists who are trying to

keep certain military officials, regarded as war heroes in Croatia, from being indicted, and the international pressure aimed at ensuring that no criminal escapes trial.

- Various measures are passed so that, for the first time since 1995, thousands of Serbs can return to the region of Krajina, on the Serbian border. According the government, such measures mean that more than two hundred thousand Serbs could return to their homes.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 22nd June, Pope John Paul II visits Banja Luka, capital of the Republic of Srpska (the Bosnian Serb entity). During mass, he asks for forgiveness for the crimes committed by «sons of the Bosnian Roman Catholic Church». This gesture was a precondition for the first meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

- On 26th June, Biljana Plavsic, former president of the Srpska Republic who was sentenced to eleven years in prison after pleading guilty before the ICTY, is sent to a Swedish prison to begin her sentence. On the same day, the tribunal in The Hague agrees to drop five charges against Bosnian Serb Pedrag Banovic, in exchange for his confession of crimes against humanity. His sentence will be pronounced in September.

Serbia and Montenegro

- On 11th June, former Serbian Security Secretary, Jovica Stanisic, is extradited to the ICTY, in The Hague, the Netherlands.

- On 13th June, Serbian police arrest Colonel Veselin Sljivacanin, accused of war crimes, in Belgrade. The police are finally able to enter Sljivacanin's apartment after ten hours of siege and serious confrontations with nationalists and relatives of the detainee who wanted to prevent police action. The US had warned Serbian authorities that their failure to arrest Sljivacanin could put 110 million dollars of aid money at risk.

- In mid-June Zoran Lilic, Yugoslav President between 1993 and 1997, testifies before the ICTY at his suc-

cessor Slobodan Milosevic's trial. Lilić assures that Milosevic had nothing to do with the massacre of thousands of Muslims in Srebrenica in 1995.

- On 19th June Serbia and Montenegro requests entrance into the peace association programme of NATO, a preface to the country's admittance into the Atlantic organisation.

Greece

- On 22nd June special forces intercept a boat off the Greek coast carrying 680 tonnes of explosives and detonators. The vessel was found to have been loaded in Tunisia and bound for Sudan; from where Osama bin Laden and the terrorist network al-Qaeda operate. The Tunisian authorities assure that the explosives were for civilian use in mining, and the Sudanese assure that the explosives were being transported to a legitimate company, as alleged by Greece.

Cyprus

- On 3rd June, the European Commission offers the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus twelve million euros in order to relax their commercial restrictions, and to facilitate both the integration of Turkish Cypriots into the EU and the reunification of the island. After the recently granted freedom of movement between both parts of the island, the EU has regained hope that a united Cyprus will be able to enter the Union in May 2004.

- On 11th June, the UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1486 (2003), which extends the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) until 15th December, 2003.

- On 28th and 29th June sixteen non-governmental Turkish Cypriot groups and three opposition parties unite in a challenge against the leader of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Rauf Denktaş, in the upcoming December elections. The groups affirm that Denktaş is incapable of representing the general vision of the Turkish Cypriot people, and announce the formation of the Peace and Democracy Movement, with the aim of replacing Denktaş as leading negotiator in the reunification talks.

Turkey

- On 19th June, the Great National Assembly unanimously adopts the sixth reform package on human rights. This step is required in order to begin negotiations for the country's admittance into the EU. The new legislation includes legal modifications aimed at facilitating education and the distribution of forms of media in Kurdish and in other minority languages, the execution of re-trials in accordance with the European Court of Human Rights, and the amendment of the legal definitions of terrorism that are currently in force.

Lebanon

- The studios of Rawsha de Mustaqbal TV, flagship of the local media interests of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, are attacked with missiles on the morning of 15th June by a group called Ansar Allah, who announce that they will not permit the shooting of «poison arrows at the heart of the resistance».

Jordan

- On 17th June, elections are held for Majlis al-Nuwaab, the lower chamber of the legislature. The legislature had been dissolved by King Abdullah II in June 2001, and in August 2002 he announced that the elections scheduled for the end of that year would be postponed until the spring of 2003 due to the «difficult circumstances in the region». Approximately two-thirds of the seats are won by tribal and independent candidates who are not far removed from the government, leaving little room for partisan opponents. The Islamic Action Front, the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood which boycotted the polls in 1997, emerges as the main partisan force with seventeen seats.

Libya

- On 20th June the US, represented by Deputy Secretary of State for Weapons Control John Bolton, accuses Libya of carrying out an «aggressive search» for weapons of mass destruction. The 21st June issue of *The Independent* reports that the US is investi-

gating the possibility that Libya is trying to attain the services of scientists who collaborated in the fallen regime of Saddam Hussein.

- On 24th June, the Italian government requests help from Libya in the fight against the wave of illegal immigration facing Italy, which has been the cause of rising tension at the centre of the governing coalition. It is believed that most of the immigrants entering Italy illegally come from other parts of Africa but set sail from Libya. The Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs affirms his intention, aimed at achieving higher collaboration from Libya, to persuade the EU to modify the embargo that prevents Libya from possessing military and strategic equipment.

- On 27th June, Libya flatly rejects Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's proposal, aimed at putting a stop to the influx of immigrants by sending Italian troops and ships to patrol the Libyan coast.

Morocco

- On 3rd June, in Tangiers, Moroccan police arrest a French national with possible connections with the suicide bombings carried out on 16th May in Casablanca, which killed forty-three people.

- On 17th June, the court of appeal upholds the conviction that editor Ali Lmrabet received in May for insulting King Mohammed VI, although the prison sentence is reduced from four to three years. Lmrabet maintained a hunger strike in protest of his incarceration from 6th May to 23rd June, and the case has sparked strong criticism both in Morocco and abroad among defenders of human rights and of the freedom of the press.

European Union

- On 5th June, the Central European Bank announces a half-point reduction in interest rates, which are at a historic low of two percent.

- The European Council meets on 19th and 20th June in Thessaloniki, Greece. At the meeting, which includes representatives from the ten member states who will enter in May 2004, the draft of the future EU Con-

stitution is presented and leaders adopt conclusions about the post-war situation in Iraq, weapons of mass destruction and a political asylum policy. With regard to Iraq, the EU calls on the UN for significant contributions in the forming of a representative government. It also expresses its support of the declaration against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that the Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted on 16th June. In the declaration, the EU contemplates, for the first time, the use of military force to pre-

vent this phenomenon. Finally, the leaders of the EU reiterate their determination to establish a common policy on political asylum.

- On 25th June, at a bilateral summit in Washington DC, Costas Simitis, serving as President of the European Council, and US President George W. Bush, make an attempt at smoothing over the cracks in transatlantic relations that have surfaced mainly due to the US-led war in Iraq.
- On 25th and 26th June, at a marathon meeting in Luxembourg, EU

agriculture ministers come to an agreement about the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). France, Spain, Portugal and Ireland succeed in ensuring that the reforms are not as drastic as those wanted by the UK and other members. The agreement preserves, in large part, European Commissioner of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries Franz Fischler's goal of separating production and subsidies from the CAP and offering farmers incentives that contribute to rural development and protecting the environment.

Gibraltar and western sahara

The following is an annex to the general chronology of the Mediterranean, an informative selection of what has happened between July 2002 and June 2003 in Gibraltar and the Western Sahara, as these territories and their specificities lend themselves to a separate explanation. With regard to Gibraltar, the United Kingdom currently has total rule over the island, but negotiations are underway concerning the possibility of a shared rule with Spain. Western Sahara is seeing open conflict over decisions related to its future status; for which the UN is looking for solutions, and in which Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and the Polisario Front are all involved.

Gibraltar

- On 12th July 2002, the UK Secretary of the Foreign Office Jack Straw announces the suspension of talks with Spain relating to shared sovereignty until the autumn.
- On 25th July 2002, Prime Minister Tony Blair says he is willing to share access to an important NATO base in Gibraltar with the Spanish troops.
- At the end of 2002, the Chief Minister of Gibraltar Peter Caruana announces that a referendum will be held on the shared sovereignty of the island.
- On 10th September 2002, thousands of Gibraltarians celebrate their National Day by demonstrating against the government's plan to share the sovereignty of Gibraltar with Spain. Peter Caruana is also against the plan and sets the date of 7th November to hold a referendum on the issue.
- On 7th November, citizens reject the shared sovereignty plan with Spain proposed by the British government en masse, with results of a decisive 98.97 percent against. Peter Caruana is congratulated on the result of the referendum, and he predicts a new era of cooperation between the govern-

ment of the United Kingdom and the citizens of Gibraltar with the purpose of deciding the future status of the territory.

Western Sahara

- At the beginning of July 2002, the Polisario Front liberates 101 prisoners from the Moroccan military forces, who were captured between 1975 and 1991. This is the second group of prisoners freed in 2002. It is calculated that some 1,200 remain captive in Polisario Front camps.
- On 30th July, 2002, the UN Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1429 (2002), extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31st January 2003.
- On 6th November 2002, King Mohammed VI of Morocco makes an appearance on public television and describes the UN plans for a referendum to determine the future of the disputed territory of the Western Sahara as «null». In a speech commemorating the Green March of 1975, when thousands of Moroccans marched to the Western Sahara in an effort to legitimise Morocco's pretensions concerning the territory, the king affirms that the referendum has «expired» and assures that there is «growing support from the international community» for an alternative plan for Morocco that will guarantee the autonomy of a Western Sahara under Moroccan sovereignty.
- In January 2003, after consecutive meetings with leaders from Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania and the Polisario Front, the UN envoy for Western Sahara, former US secretary of state James Baker, invites the different parties involved to make their observations known concerning a new peace plan proposed by the UN, of which details have not been released.
- On 30th January 2003, the UN Se-

curity Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1463 (2003), extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31st March.

- On 11th February 2003, the pro-independence Polisario Front announces the liberation of a hundred Moroccan prisoners as a show of «good will»; the gesture comes soon after its request by the Spanish government. According to calculations, some 1,100 prisoners are still held by the Polisario Front.
- On 25th March 2003, the UN Security Council adopts UN Security Resolution 1469 (2003), extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31st May.
- On 23rd May, a new version of the Baker Plan is made public with comments from the parties to whom it was presented in January. The new project, which maintains the call for a referendum to determine the future status of the territory, establishes a transition period of four to five years, during which the territory will have a statute of autonomy within Morocco and will be governed by a provisional executive branch and legislative assembly. The proposal establishes two elections with two different electorates. In the first poll, in which the interim authority shall be elected, those people included in the UN census are taken into account. The electorate that would be authorised to vote in the referendum on self-determination includes this first group with the added participation of people who have lived «continuously in the Western Sahara since 1999». Algeria favours the plan and the Polisario Front accepts it, but it is opposed by Morocco.
- On 30th May, 2003, the UN Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1485 (2003), extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31st July.