EU/Indonesia relations: strategy

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The committee adopted the report by Hanja MAIJ-WEGGEN (EPP-ED, NL) expressing cautious optimism about progress towards democracy in Indonesia. Although it felt that Indonesia was gradually establishing a political system based on the rule of law, the committee was concerned at the disloyalty of some elements in the army, the action of paramilitary forces in Timor, the Laskar Jihad fighters in the Moluccas and the actions of forces from the old Suharto regime. It accordingly called for international support for the new government to help in the process of dismantling the civil and military privileges of the army. On the situation in the Moluccas - where there are some 300 000 refugees and have been 5000 fatalities - the committee felt that more involvement by the international community could not be ruled out. It also called for the paramilitary groups in the refugee camps of West Timor to be disbanded. The report stressed the need for the Indonesian Government to step up its fight against corruption, while applauding the steps that it was taking to enable the entire population to benefit from the economic upturn. Finally it expressed support for further aid to Indonesia, provided that the process of democratisation was continued and that Jakarta made attempts to tackle the considerable problems that remained.