

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

17 November 2003

27/2003

WRITTEN DECLARATION

for entry in the register

pursuant to Rule 51 of the Rules of Procedure

by Marco Cappato and Daniel Cohn-Bendit

on the World Summit Information Society (WSIS) in Tunisia

Expiry date: 17 February 2004

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 51 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the second phase of the World Summit Information Society will take place in Tunis, hosted by the Government of Tunisia, from 16 to 18 November 2005,
- B. whereas the summit is a unique opportunity to link the promotion of information society technologies with the fostering of the freedoms of opinion and expression,
- C. noting that cyberspace in Tunisia has been regulated since 2001 by the press law, which provides for censorship, and that the state security police keep the 'information systems' under very tight control, censoring newspapers and websites, intercepting email and monitoring cybercafés,
- D. remembering the cases of:
 - Hamadi Jebali, sentenced to 16 years in prison for 'aggressively seeking to change the nature of the state';
 - Zouhair Yahyaoui, sentenced to two years in prison for 'spreading false news' and 'fraudulently using an Internet connection'; and
 - Abdallah Zouari, sentenced to 13 months' imprisonment for 'defamation' and 'failing to obey an administrative decision',
- E. whereas in view of the second phase of the WSIS, the Tunisian Government has appointed as Chief of the Organising Committee of the WSIS General Abib Ammar, former Commander of the Tunisian National Guard and Minister of the Interior, who, according to the World Organisation Against Torture, actively participated in the brutal repression of the Tunisian people,

Calls on the Commission and Council:

1. to propose making the holding of the WSIS in Tunis subject to the discontinuation of the serious violations of freedom of expression on the Internet in Tunisia, and to intervene with the Tunisian authorities requesting the liberation of the political dissidents detained for having expressed their opinion;
2. to intervene with the Tunisian authorities so that the appointment of General Ammar is repealed.