

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2516/06
by Harlem Désir (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Weakening of democracy in Senegal

The weakening of democracy in Senegal as the 2007 presidential elections draw near is particularly worrying.

In having the parliamentary elections due in 2006 postponed by one year on alleged budgetary grounds, President Wade is acting outside the Constitution.

There has been a flurry of political arrests: Mr Abdourahim Agne (chairman of the Reform Party) on 30 May 2005 and the Prime Minister Idrissa Seck on 15 July 2005, whilst Jean-Paul Dias (leader of the Gaïndé Centre Party has been provisionally released from detention.

Legal action is being taken against independent journalists, such as Madiambal Diagne of the Le Quotidien newspaper.

Senegal - which used to be an oasis of democracy in West Africa - is now at risk of sliding back into authoritarianism.

The Commission's response to this situation has so far been a deafening silence.

Is it not time for the European Union to express its condemnation of all attacks on democratic freedoms and to insist that free elections be held in accordance with the rules laid down in the Constitution and with the established timetable?

What action is the Commission intending to take to this effect?