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Press Freedom in Kenya

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by ***Margrete Auken***

on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas on 10 December 2008 the Kenyan Parliament approved a Communications Amendment Bill, which includes provisions that would severely harm press freedom,

B. whereas at this stage the bill requires President's Kibaki's signature if it is to enter into force,

C. whereas, if the bill is approved by president Kibaki, the information and communication minister would be empowered to appoint all members of the new Communication commission, which will have decision-making powers including authority over broadcasting content,

D. whereas the bill contains contentious provisions allowing the Security Minister to raid media houses and confiscate equipment on grounds of state security,

E. whereas Kenyan journalists and international organisations have expressed serious concerns,

F. whereas press freedom is one of the pillars in strengthening democracy,

1. Welcomes President Kibaki's decision to ask the Attorney General to review the recently passed Kenya Communications Amendment Bill, which undermines press freedom, although he signed the bill few days ago;

2. Considers that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right as stated in Article 19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights and that access to information representing a plurality of opinions is fundamental to empower citizens;

3. Calls on the Kenyan Government to guarantee freedom of expression, including a truly pluralistic media sector;

4. Urges the Kenyan Government to address the economic disparity between the rich and the poor in order to pave the way for a balanced distribution of wealth in the country; also urges the Kenyan authorities to

address the root cause of corruption;

5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Kenyan government, Kenyan Parliament, African Union and ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

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