

TDIP COMMITTEE -Press conference on Wednesday 26.04.2006 :

Abstracts of Mr. Claudio Fava's statements

Claudio Fava, rapporteur for the inquiry committee on CIA: "The extraordinary renditions were not just occasional procedures but rather a widespread practice shared by several European countries"

"After the 11th September, within the framework of the fight against terrorism, the violation of human and fundamental rights was not isolated or an excessive measure confined to a short period of time, but rather a widespread regular practice in which the majority of European countries were involved.

We just have to think about the use of the airspace and airports by CIA: more than a thousands flights run by the US secret services, often used directly for extraordinary renditions. None among the national security authorities - save a few exceptions - has ever cared to verify what was the real aim of those flights, who were in their crew and passengers (or rather prisoners). I am also referring to the cooperation offered to these illegal operations by the governments of third countries, accompanied by the silence of European embassies which were often well aware, but never did a move to prevent it".

Claudio Fava highlights among all the hearings held in these months, the one with the former UK ambassador in Uzbekistan, Craig Murray, who was witness to the detention and torture of hundreds of Uzbek political dissidents, generally labelled as 'alleged terrorists' .

"The information extorted this way by the Uzbek secret services, were then forwarded to CIA and to MI6. According to Mr Murray, for UK authorities everything was legal because UK authorities never used torture, they just used the information collected by others.

It has been proved that some of the EU member states or EU associate countries have had direct responsibility.

"Surely Sweden, which handed to CIA two Egyptian nationals, despite the high risk that they would be exposed to torture or detention, without any judiciary guarantee.

Surely Bosnia, by handing six suspected terrorists in Sarajevo to CIA, despite contrary decisions taken by the Supreme Court and the Human Rights Chamber. Surely Italy: according to the detailed hearing of prosecutor Spataro and the blurred witness given by Pollari, head of Italian secret services 'Sisde', it was clear to everybody that the Italian authorities couldn't be unaware about abduction of the Imam in Milan, organised by 22 CIA agents"

"Finally - adds the rapporteur Claudio Fava - extraordinary renditions, beside being illegal, revealed themselves to be a useless device in the fight against terrorism. As also explained by the former ambassador Murray and the Canadian national Maher Arar (abducted in USA, transported to Syria, detained and tortured for a year and finally released without any charge upon him). Both witness underlined that the evidences extorted by this kind of systems are totally invalid ("to let them stop torturing me, I was prone to sign whatever confession" said Arar)."

So far the work of the Commission was focused on the ascertained victims and their history, now on the workload will concentrate on the second part of the mandate: verifying whether and where there would be black sites in Europe.

"Eventually, Eurocontrol provided us with a Flight Logs file of all CIA flights. We are intended to investigate on the aim of some suspected routes: an evident example, the Boeing N 313P (the same used by CIA for the abduction of El Masri) which, from the 22nd to the 23rd of September 2003 flies to Kabul, Poland, Romania, Morocco and Guantanamo: such a crazy trip just for fuel?"

Next step, tomorrow afternoon in Skopje, Macedonia, inquiring on the abduction and the rendition of the German national Kaled el Masri to CIA. El Masri was detained for five months in Afghanistan and then released without any charge on him.

On May the 8th, the Commission will leave to Washington.

"We will collect information and opinions from former CIA officials which quitted the agency in a clear polemic attitude towards the methods used by Bush administration in the fight against terrorism."