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PRESS RELEASE

MEPs in Washington DC to investigate CIA allegations

A delegation of 13 MEPs from the committee looking into allegations of illegal CIA detention centres and prisoner transfers in Europe is in Washington DC to meet officials, lawyers and NGO representatives. Committee chair Carlos Coelho says it is regrettable that no Republican congressman is able to meet the delegation.

Mr Coelho (EPP-ED, PT) said: *“We came here on a fact-finding mission, trying to bring more light to the allegations of illegal CIA activities and detention centres in Europe, and also with the wish to open new ways of dialogue with the US government, in order to strengthen transatlantic relations. Our cooperation on the war against terror is vital, but it should always rely on the respect of human rights and the supremacy of international law.”*

On Tuesday, the MEPs met human rights lawyer Scott Horton and New York University law professor Margaret Satterthwaite, as well as Barbara Olshansky, Director of the ‘Guantanamo Global Justice Initiative’ and Elisa Massimino, Director of ‘Human Rights First’. Mr Coelho said: *“This first day was very productive. We got some useful, concrete information on extraordinary rendition operations and on the alleged existence of secret detention centres in European countries.”*

The MEPs’ four day agenda also includes meetings with former CIA Director James Woolsey and Senator Richard Durbin, plus two other congressmen. All three are Democrats, as no Republican member of Congress is able to meet the MEPs, which Mr Coelho said was regrettable.

The delegation will announce its initial conclusions from the meetings at a press conference at 5.30pm local time on Thursday at the European Commission delegation in Washington DC. A further press release will be published on Friday.

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Further information:

Website of the European Commission Delegation in Washington DC:

<http://www.eurunion.org/>

Web page of the TDIP committee:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/expert/committees/presentation.do;jsessionid=8A8A956928B87BA92D8D641D5BBF8A61.node1?committee=2073&language=EN>