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Strenghtening Eurojust **REPORT IN THE EP PLENARY**

Brussels, September 1st, 2008 – Romanian MEP Renate Weber (PNL, ALDE) presented tonight, in the EP plenary sitting, the “*Strenghtening Eurojust*” report¹, on behalf of the LIBE Committee, who named Mrs. Weber as rapporteur on this matter in February 2008.

The text of the plenary speech where Mrs. Weber mentioned some of the amendments proposed in the report is below:

“*Colleagues,*

Thinking at the European Union as an area of freedom, security and justice – would be merely a remarkable goal without the involvement of the already established European Agencies whose capacity to act and react on combating organized, trans-border crime should become stronger. Strengthening Eurojust aims at making it more efficient in the benefit of our citizens, overcoming the existent reluctance among some Member States when it comes to share information about ongoing crimes and investigations.

I would like to thank the shadow rapporteurs with whom I have worked very well nearly on all aspects of the report, but also to thank the President of Eurojust and his team for their openness during this process.

During the process of elaboration of/ While elaborating this report I have heard many colleagues asking for a European Prosecutor and I admit that in this respect I am much more in favour of harmonization, of setting up a European justice system, rather than re-reinforcement of cooperation. However, I personally believe that for a number of reasons, for the time being we are still pretty far from such goal.

Firstly, because there is no European legislation addressing the issue of jurisdiction in cases that are in the competence of Eurojust.

Secondly because of the reluctance of Member States when it is about transferring some of their investigation powers even to a European Agency. The text on the possibility of Eurojust national members to be part of “Joint Investigation Teams” is quite an example. It basically allows the Member States to decide when their own national members act as representing the countries or Eurojust. This is a lack of trust which makes me wonder about the effectiveness of combating trans- border crime.

This is the paradox: while the members of the European Parliament are ready to really address serious trans-border crimes, including by granting more powers to Eurojust, our major concern being just the respect for human rights, the Member States are preaching one thing but legislating in a rather contradictory manner. And it is difficult to explain to our European citizens how we can establish an area of freedom, security and justice if the Member States do not trust enough our own European Agencies.

¹ Raportul poate fi citit aici:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2008-0293&language=RO&mode=XML>

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But we, as a Parliament, understand and agree with the fact that Eurojust must work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The LIBE committee also agreed that for the efficiency of Eurojust it is essential for the national members to have the same judicial powers they enjoy in their own countries. And we also voted in favour of strengthening relations with Europol and the European Judicial Network and creating links with other European and international agencies, such as FRONTEX, Interpol or World Customs Organisation.

What we as MEPs required, and the report I drafted is a reflection of this approach, was a proper balance between the powers of Eurojust and of its national members in one hand, and the right of the defendants in the other hand. This is why several amendments I proposed aimed at increasing the level of protection of procedural rights, such as the right to defence, the right to a fair trial, the right to be informed and to judicial redress.

At the same time, although aware of a strong data protection system established by the Agency, several amendments represent additional safeguards.

However, a major concern still exists about data transmitted to third countries and international organisations. Because the truth is that we don't know what will happen in reality to this data and in order to make sure our own European standards will be observed, I proposed to introduce an evaluation mechanism. Thank you, commissioner Barrot for mentioning this.

Last but not least I am concerned with the role that the European Parliament should play in relation to Eurojust. Not knowing what will be the fate of the Lisbon Treaty is even more worrisome. However, there is nothing in the current community law that would prevent the Parliament to have an active function on supervising the activity of Eurojust. It is entirely a matter of political will and I truly hope that this House will be allowed to do its job."