Report on fundamental rights in the European Union for 2000

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PURPOSE : to present the Union's second annual report on human rights in the European Union. CONTENT : this report examines closely the concrete activities led by the Union in view of conforming in principle to the respect and the protection of human rights in the Union. The main aspects highlighted in this report are: - the combat against racism and xenophobia : since the entry into force of the Amsterdam treaty, undebatable progress has been made in this area, notably, in relation to the reinforcement of judical and police co-operation (Article 29) and the fight against discrimination (Article 13). In this field in particular, one notes a number of new measures which prohibit discrimination in the field of employment, education, social protection and access to care and services. In parallel, the work done by the Observatory on racist and xenophobic phenomenon is continued due to its official opening in Vienna in April 2000; - jusice and security: the Tampere Summit of December 1999 highlighted in this regard, a particular importance on what concentrated entirely for the first time on the setting up of a Area of freedom, security and justice (AFSJ) by paving the way for actions to be carried out in this field. The Council in particular asked the Commission to set up a Scoreboard or a calendar indicating actions comprising step by step, the semistrial progress made by the Union in the various areas of AFSJ): ayslum and immigration (definition of a European policy on asylum and immigration, in partnership with the countries where a majority of political asylum seekers come from, creating a common European asylum system based on the principles of the Geneva Convention, management of migratory movements); definition of a European Area for Justice (creation of an area or judicial systems and adminstrations of the Member states which do not make up the social and economic development of companies in particular); fight against criminality at Community level (in particular the combat against the treatment of human beings and the sexual exploitation of chldren); - combat social exclusion : in this framework a global strategy was defined at the Lison Summit of which its objetcives were to modernise the European social model by investing in human resources. In this context,the Union set itself new challenges for the next ten years: to become a knowledge based economy, to be capable of sustainable economic growth accompanied by an improvement in qualititative and quantitative employment and a greater social cohesion. Four priority actions have been defined : development of an information society for all, life-long education/training, reinforcing the equality of opportunities in all aspects, modernisation of social protection systems; - children's rights : several projects have been launched in view of combatting against violence in relation to children and yound people (DAPHNE programme), to combat against the sexual exploitation of children (STOP Programme) and to protect non-accompanied minors; - fundamental women's rights: many initiatives have been set up to better associated women with the economic and political life in particular through the application of Article 2 of theTreaty; by leading actions aiming to grant a better access for women to the working world and the new economy in the context of the Lisbon process and centres on an improvement of the presence of women in the decision-making process. Other initiatives had been implemented in view of protecting women against the violence due to concrete actions of sensitisation and the continuation of the STOP Programme. It should also be noted that the actions aiming to associate the candidate countries to various actions in these area in order make conscious the future partners of the Union about the importance of these issues and the essential character of the respect of human rights for all current members and future members of the European Union.