Human rights in the world. Annual report 1999-2000

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The Council reaffirmed the Council conclusions of 10 December 1998, endorsed by the Vienna European Council, which highlighted the importance of human rights as a corner stone of EU foreign policy. The Council took stock of ongoing initiatives, notably the preparation of EU Guidelines against Torture, which will enhance EU actions aimed at the eradication of this abhorrent violation of human rights. These guidelines will add to the already existing guidelines on the death penalty and create a new instrument for the EU in its relations with third countries. It further noted that the Commission had prepared a Communication on electoral assistance and observation, on which the Council will adopt conclusions shortly. Both this Communication as well as the Communications on human rights and democratisation and on conflict prevention, which have been announced by the Commission, will be used as an input for the Conference on the EU and human rights in the framework of conflict prevention and resolution to be held on 28 and 29 May.