

Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union

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PURPOSE: presentation of a European Council document concerning the drawing up of a Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. **CONTENT:** This document seeks to lay down the main lines which should be covered by a Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The Charter should contain the fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as basic procedural rights guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and derived from the constitutional traditions common to the Member States, as general principles of Community law. The Charter should also include the fundamental rights that pertain only to the Union's citizens. In drawing up such a Charter, account should furthermore be taken of economic and social rights as contained in the European Social Charter and the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers (Article 136 TEC) insofar as they do not merely establish objectives for action by the Union. In the view of the European Council, a draft of such a Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union should be elaborated by a body composed of representatives of the Heads of State and Government and of the President of the Commission, as well as of members of the European Parliament and national parliaments. Representatives of the European Court of Justice should participate as observers. Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and social groups, as well as experts should be invited to give their views. Secretariat services should be provided by the General Secretariat of the Council. A draft document should be ready before the European Council in December 2000. The European Council will propose to the European Parliament and the Commission that, together with the Council, they should solemnly proclaim on the basis of the draft document a European Charter of Fundamental Rights. It will then have to be considered whether and, if so, how the Charter should be integrated into the Treaties.