Agreements EC/third countries: respect for democratic principles and human rights

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Adopting the report by Mr Carlos CARNERO GONZALEZ, the committee affirmed that it was incumbent on the Union to give concrete expression to the human rights clause in the Treaty and to draw up objective criteria for its application. The individual "must be the centre of all political activity" and protection of his/her rights must be guaranteed. Therefore the IGC must ensure that the new Treaty incorporates a stipulation that any external agreement must contain a "human rights clause". But it is also necessary to draw up an objective method of application "in cases of flagrant violation of human rights and social rights". Hence the call on the Commission to formulate "criteria, procedures, forms of sanctions, and their method of application", and the proposal for the Union to act in concert with other international organizations. The committee felt that "an efficient and democratic decision-making process" was needed and that "the Council should act on the basis of a qualified majority rather than unanimity" in deciding whether to suspend an agreement. Parliament, for its part, should be consulted about the suspension of an agreement and should have the power to "recommend the application of the human rights clause". In addition, when the Commission makes a proposal for suspension, it should transmit it to the Council and Parliament at the same time. The CARNERO report called for the proposed CFSP analysis unit to take due account of the resolutions of the European Parliament and to allow it access to the human rights assessments of the Unit.