Citizenship of the Union. 3rd report

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PURPOSE : Third Commission report on Citizenship of the Union. CONTENT : The report focuses on the rights provided for in the second part of the EC Treaty. It includes advances in areas closely related to citizenship in the wider sense, such as the protection of fundamental rights, including measures to combat all forms of illegal discrimination. Two texts deserve special mention: 1) The proposed directive on the right of citizens of the Union to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. This is a product of the legal and political environment created by the introduction of citizenship of the Union. The principal aim is to replace the various pieces of legislation existing in this area by a single legislative instrument, to relax and simplify the conditions and formalities attached to it, and to clarify restrictions based on public policy, public security and public health. The most important change is that after four years of uninterrupted residence individuals will acquire a permanent right of residence in the host Member State. Once acquired, this right is no longer subject to any conditions. 2) The Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Charter was proclaimed by the three institutions at Nice. It was not incorporated into the Treaties, but its legal status will have to be examined after the public debate to launched in preparation for the IGC in 2004. Chapter V of the Charter, on citizen's rights, lists the rights that feature in the second part of the EC Treaty. The right to good administration is an innovation introduced by the Charter, drawing on the principles laid down by the Court of Justice. the Commission also deals with the following in this report: -the right to vote and stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament and at municipal elections. - the right to diplomatic and consular protection. - the right to petition the European Parliament and right of access to the Ombudsman. - measures to combat racism. - measures to combat discrimination. - public information.