Human rights and democratisation: role of the Union in third countries

2001/2276(COS) - 21/05/2003

OBJECTIVE: to promote respect for Human Rights and democracy in the Mediterranean. CONTENT: This communication, to be presented to the EU Mediterranean partners at the Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on 26-27 May 2003 in Crete, sets out working guidelines to promote Human Rights and fundamental freedoms in cooperation with the Mediterranean partners. The communication fits within the Action Plan agreed by all participants at the Valencia Euro-Med Ministerial meeting on 22-23 April 2002, in which the parties committed to reinforce efforts in this vital area. The communication is also consistent with the recently laid out new EU neighbourhood policy ('Wider Europe' - refer to INI/2003/2018). In particular, the communication outlines ways to maximise the effectiveness of the instruments at the disposal of the European Union and its Mediterranean partners with a view to the implementation of their common goal of promoting and protecting universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. It proposes ten concrete recommendations to improve the dialogue between the Union and its Mediterranean partners, as well as EU financial cooperation on Human Rights issues. The main specific measures proposed by the Commission will allow: - a deeper and more operational focus for political dialogue on Human Rights and democratisation at all levels with MEDA partners; - the development of MEDA National and Regional Action Plans on Human Rights and democracy with the MEDA partners willing to engage in such an exercise; - increased participation by civil society in the MEDA partner countries; - increased attention to Human Rights and democratisation issues in the Commission's National and Regional Strategy Papers and Indicative Programmes, including through a special additional facility; - enhanced complementarity between the MEDA programme and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights and enhanced efforts at all levels in the area of improvement of electoral frameworks. Their implementation will be enhanced by three levels of complementarity between: 1) political dialogue and financial assistance, 2) the MEDA programme and assistance under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and 3) the national and regional dimensions.