Respect for human rights in the European Union in 1995

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The Annual Report on human rights in the European Union for 1995 will be presented by Claudia Roth (D, Greens) on behalf of the civil liberties committee. It runs to some 171 paragraphs and in addition to calling on the IGC to introduce a mechanism to allow the EU as such to accede to the European Human Convention on Human Rights, takes up other human right issues such as the right to live and die in dignity, freedom from torture, fundamental freedom, immigrants' rights, privacy, combatting racism, the right of the child, non-discrimination and the environment. *The right to live and die in dignity - No to Euthanasia Here the UK along with Greece and Belgium is called upon to ratify protocol number 6 to the European convention on Human Rights designed for the unconditional abolition of the death penalty. There is also a call to ban euthanasia. There should be no discrimination against different religions. *The right to freedom from torture and the rights of people in detention The use of torture is emphatically condemned and Denmark is praised for introducing new procedures to enable complaints to be made against the police. The other Member States are requested to introduce similar complaints procedures. The draft resolution regrets the 1995 decision of the British government to extend the Prevention of Terrorism Act. *Freedom of movement Once again there is a call for the Schengen intergovernmental arrangements governing free movement to be brought under the auspices of the European Community with jurisdiction for the Court of Justice. *Fundamental rights - Abortion in Ireland an issue *Here the rights of conscientious objectors are reaffirmed and there is request for Greece to put a halt to persecuting conscientious objectors and to introduce alternative service. There is objection to Ireland's restrictive laws banning publicity for abortion services. The text "condemns the restriction on freedom of opinion in Ireland, where a law prohibits the publication of any material in favour of abortion". There is also support for the EU and Member States ratifying the Council of Europe's Social Charter, which was not signed by the UK. There is also a call on the UK to sign up to the Social Charter of the Maastricht Treaty. *Legal rights Here, there is a call for the right of victims in criminal cases to be strengthened in such a way as to provide compensation. The draft resolution draws attention to the growing prison population and the unacceptable conditions, especially as regards health and hygiene faced by many prisoners. There is a call for young people not to be placed in detention and for drug addicts not to be punished but instead given treatment. Proper child care facilities should be available for mothers in prison with small children. *Immigrants' rights Here the draft resolution takes the view that a ban on further immigration is not effective but simply encourages illegal immigrants. There is therefore a call on the Member States to review existing immigration policies. The right to reunification of families is also reaffirmed and the Member States are requested to regularise the status of people who have been living for a considerable amount of time in their respective countries. *Combatting racism Here there is a call on the Member States to ratify racist propaganda as a criminal offence to take appropriate preventative measures, especially in education and training of those people such as social workers, police officers and teachers. *Social security and poverty Here there is support for the EU to support legislation guaranteeing a minimum income and level of social protection, medical health treatment and housing. There is also a call on the Member States to recognise the special situation of travelling people and gypsies. Mention is also made of the right to "work" and a "minimum" pension. *The right to privacy Here there is support for the right to privacy and data protection as a fundamental right. *The right to non-discrimination Here there is support for including a chapter in EU policies confirming the fundamental right of the disabled to equal opportunities. Member States should ensure that there is no discrimination eitheragainst women or homosexuals and lesbians. Special measures should be taken to combat violence and abuse against women. *Children's rights - No to Scandinavian porn Here there is a call on the EU to outlaw child labour. Sexual exploitation is strongly condemned. There is a call for the ban on child pornography and paedophile materials in any form, especially in Sweden and Denmark where such publications are still legal. *Right to a healthy environment Here the right to a healthy environment is confirmed. This should

be guaranteed by the relevant authorities if necessary through "polluter pays" legislation. There is also a call for a ban on the export of foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals which are prohibited in the EU.