Criminal proceedings in the EU framework (Corpus juris)

1998/2104(INI) - 17/02/1999

The committee unanimously adopted a report asking for the gradual creation of a European criminal law system and of a European Public Prosecutor. A European criminal law system should be based on the gradual harmonisation of the approaches to serious crimes - sexual exploitation of children, trafficking in persons, drugs trafficking, terrorism, corruption and fraud, and money-laundering - and might in the medium term lead to the appointment of an independent European Public Prosecutor. Rapporteur Jan Kees WIEBENGA (ELDR, NL) argued that the increase in transnational crime demands suitable strategies. The conventions concluded previously to this end only tackle the most urgent problems and, moreover, are difficult to implement because of the cumbersome procedures involved. Recent events, such as the Öcalan and Pinochet cases, have demonstrated once again the urgent need for cooperation in the field of criminal law based on minimum common standards. A European Public Prosecutor might initially serve to centralise judicial information on transnational investigations under way, but at a later stage might be given the responsibility for opening investigations and bringing criminal law proceedings before the competent national courts. These cases would be limited to offences covered by the European criminal law system. The European prosecutor might also provide judicial control of Europol and of the future anti-fraud unit UCLAF or OLAF.