The rights of prisoners in the European Union

2003/2188(INI) - 09/03/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Parliament adopted by 439 votes in favour, 49 against and 20 abstentions an own-initiative report drafted by Maurizio TURCO (IND, I) on the rights of prisoners in the EU. According to Council of Europe statistics, on 1 September 2002, a total of 539 436 persons were being held in prison in the enlarged European Union. These statistics paint an alarming picture regarding overcrowding, excessive increase in the prison population, rise in the number of foreign nationals being held, high numbers of remand prisoners and numerous cases of death and suicide. Accordingly, it calls on the Council and the Member States to encourage the drawing up a European Prisons Charter covering all the Council of Europe's Member States. Such a Charter would have to incorporate detailed rules, binding on the Member States, concerning a prisoner's right to: - access to a lawyer, to healthcare and to notify a third person that he or she has been detained, - the right to physical and mental safety, - prison conditions, - the right of access to internal and, if necessary, external medical services, - re-education, training, rehabilitation and reintegration into society and the workforce, - the separation of categories of detained persons: juveniles, persons on remand, convicted criminals.