

# The quality of criminal justice in the European Union

2005/2003(INI) - 01/02/2005

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by António COSTA (PES, PT) containing a series of recommendations to the Council for achieving better standards of criminal justice in the different Member States:

- "a Quality Charter for Criminal Justice in Europe" should be drawn up to serve as a common reference framework for all EU countries;
- in order to strengthen mutual trust between national legal systems, a mechanism should be established for ongoing mutual evaluation, including the establishment of a comparative statistical database, benchmarking exercises, sharing of best practice, annual publication of an evaluation report and the setting up of a monitoring committee on the quality of justice;
- with regard to procedural law, priority should be given to harmonising national legislation in such areas as the minimum rights of prisoners, the possibility for them to serve their sentence in their Member State of residence, the gathering and assessment of evidence, transparency in the administration of justice and the system for protecting the depositions of witnesses and victims.

Finally, the report urged the Commission to incorporate the proposed Quality Charter for Criminal Justice and mutual evaluation mechanism into the Action Plan it is due to submit in 2005.