Basic information

1995/2309(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
European Union and the external dimension of human rights policy: from Rome to Maastricht beyond **Subject** 6.10.08 Fundamental freedoms, human rights, democracy in general	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible		Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET	Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	ROUBATIS Yiannis (PSE)	06/02/1996

Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
RELA	External Economic Relations	KREISSL-DÖRFLER Wolfgang (V)	21/02/1996
DEVE	Development and Cooperation	PONS GRAU Josep E. (PSE)	20/12/1995
LIBE	Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs	ANDREWS Niall (UPE)	29/05/1996
INST	Institutional Affairs	LENZ Marlene (PPE)	02/07/1997
FEMM	Women's Rights	GLASE Anne-Karin (PPE)	27/02/1996

Council of the European Union

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
22/11/1995	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1995)0567	Summary
31/01/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/10/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
28/10/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0409/1998	

16/12/1998	Debate in Parliament		
17/12/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
09/04/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1995/2309(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/4/07328

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0409/1998 OJ C 379 07.12.1998, p. 0005	28/10/1998	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0757/1998 OJ C 098 09.04.1999, p. 0200-0267	17/12/1998	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1995)0567	22/11/1995	Summary

European Union and the external dimension of human rights policy: from Rome to Maastricht beyond

1995/2309(COS) - 22/11/1995 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: this communication outlines a global European strategy to incorporate human rights in the Union's international relations. It consists of two sections: . a summary of the action taken by the Community in this area, . an overview of the strategies to be implemented with a view to improving the consistency and visibility of the EC's action. SUBSTANCE: as regards the assessment of the EU's commitment within the international community: the Commission emphasises that the Union makes a significant contribution to the work carried out within international bodies (UN, OSCE), particularly in terms of standards and strengthening the mechanisms for the protection of human rights. The Community's own action is based on a series of international acts (United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and is aimed at providing aid for and promoting human rights throughout the world (supporting democratisation, encouraging and enhancing the rule of law, promoting civil society and the independence of the media, providing support for education, raising awareness of human rights, encouraging equal opportunities, protecting the most vulnerable sections of society, refugees and minorities, and so on). To implement these measures, the Community possesses the following instruments: - relations with third countries, particularly agreements between the EC and third countries which include clauses on respect for human rights, with accompanying clauses to cover non-respect; - technical and financial assistance from the EU to third countries, which includes explicit references to human rights; - financial resources: lines in the Community budget concerning the promotion of human rights and democracy together with other resources taken from the appropriations set aside for technical and financial assistance for actions in this field. The Commission hopes to continue its

action in this direction by urging the Member States and the Council to make aid dependent not only on respect for human rights, but also on the promotion of fundamental social rights (the fight against forced labour and the exploitation of children, the freedom to join trade unions and the right to collective bargaining) in line with what was agreed for the GSP (additional trade preferences for countries respecting ILO agreements). As regards future prospects: the Commission plans to continue its action in this field in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner by increasing the visibility of its action and improving the instruments available. This improvement would involve the following elements: - contractual relations with third countries, particularly the definition of the criteria which must be met when establishing contractual relations with these countries and the assessment of efforts made in this direction (which means that an agreement could only be concluded if the country involved had demonstrated that it was firmly committed to a process of democratisation). Subsequently, continued dialogue with the country concerned would enable common agreement to be reached on the definition of a partnership programme benefiting human rights and democracy; - financial resources: to ensure optimum use of the various financial instruments concerning human rights, the Commission hopes that the funds will be: . more flexible with a view to making them compatible with the specific objectives being pursued, in particular to ensure that financial resources are available at short notice in cases of emergency and that they are adapted to the specific requirements of human rights, .complementary (technical assistance, funds for development cooperation, specific lines concerning human rights) so as to prevent overlaps and to promote continuity; .more available, so as to provide for sums acting as incentives which are to be granted in accordance with efforts to establish democracy, . more transparent. In parallel, cooperation and dialogue should be stepped up with the various national, regional and international partners in order to: . provide support for the various mechanisms used to monitor respect for human rights and for the bodies working to promote human rights, . encourage medium and long-term programming for priority activities to be implemented jointly, . improve the exchange of information on activities under way and research on the issues involved.

European Union and the external dimension of human rights policy: from Rome to Maastricht beyond

1995/2309(COS) - 17/12/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report drafted by Mr. Yannis ROUBATIS (PES, GR) on the external dimension of human rights policy, the European Parliament welcomed Article 6 and 7 of the Amsterdam Treaty which reinforce the previous provisions on human rights; however, it stressed that Council decisions concerning action in the field of human rights should be taken by a qualified majority to allow a swifter and more effective response. The Parliament also called for: - the Commission's decision-making and management structures to be organised as one unit to ensure a coherent and consistent human rights policy; - the establishment of a Human Rights Forum, empowered to make recommendations on the human rights dimension of EU policies and to evaluate the EU's human rights related activities; - the establishment of a Parliament and Commission Working Party on Human Rights, as foreseen in the 1998 budget, in order to improve inter-institutional co-operation on activities for human rights and democracy; - the establishment of a comprehensive human rights impact assessment and monitoring system, which should be drawn up before an initiative is implemented, with due regard for consistency, proportionality and coherence, and which should subsequently be used as a basis for monitoring the human rights situation. The Parliament also recommended the regular attendance of the CFSP Representative at meetings of the EP's Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy, and Question Time during plenary sessions. It reiterated its call for improved transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the selection, implementation and monitoring of projects geared to the promotion of human rights.