Basic information

1999/2001(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Human rights in the European Union. Annual Report, June 1998 to June 1999 **Subject** 1.10 Fundamental rights in the EU, Charter	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
LIBE Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs	HAARDER Bertel (ELDR)	13/09/1999

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AFCO Constitutional Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PETI Petitions	SORNOSA MARTÍNEZ María (PSE)	14/10/1999

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
01/10/1999	Non-legislative basic document published	11350/1999	
01/12/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
24/02/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
24/02/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0050/2000	
15/03/2000	Debate in Parliament		
16/03/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0111/2000	Summary
16/03/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
29/12/2000	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1999/2001(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 101o-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/4/10708

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0050/2000 OJ C 377 29.12.2000, p. 0004	24/02/2000	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0111/2000 OJ C 377 29.12.2000, p. 0172-0344	16/03/2000	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	08727/1999	28/05/1999	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	11350/1999	01/10/1999	Summary

Human rights in the European Union. Annual Report, June 1998 to June 1999

1999/2001(INI) - 28/05/1999 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present a report from the Austrian Presidency on the reinforcement of its human rights actions and instruments. CONTENT : in line with the wishes of the European Council which met in Vienna on 11-12 December 1998, the Council submitted a report identifying avenues to reinforce its capacity to achieve its objectives in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The fields examined concern the following points : - joint evaluation of human rights in the world by increased coordination and by the publication of an annual report on human rights : to this effect, this annual report from the Union, the first of its kind, covering the period from 1 June 1998 to 30 June 1999, seeks to explain how the Union's progress towards integration is paralleled in the field of human rights (refer to document INI/1999/2002). The report aims to increase transparency of Union policy on human rights and to reinforce it; - cooperation development in the field of human rights thanks to education and training activities carried out with other interested organisations, as well as programmes in 15 European universities (an ad hoc budget line for these programmes might be considered) ; - to reflect on the opportunities offered by holding an annual forum on human rights with the involvement of the Union institutions and NGOs in order to strengthen dialogue between parties in this field (the first forum is planned for the end of 1999); - increase the means enabling a response to international operational demands with respect to human rights by creating a common file of European experts on the subject, with a view to operations defending human rights on the ground (actions of this type may be initiated in the framework of election observations); - development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights in third countries: since 11.05.1999, the Union has at its disposal 2 instruments that seek to consolidate democracy and respect of human rights in the form of distinct budget lines from which many activities which aim to support human rights and democracy are funded (1999 : EUR 98 million); - greater coherence in the Union's actions by examining the ways to reinforce the Union's competent structures : the idea is to favour an inter-pillar approach to human rights. Concerning the structure, a CFSP "Human Rights" Working Group and its cooperation with other working groups is on the agenda. It is also hoped that the implementation of a Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit may improve the structures of the Union in this field. Regional initiatives are also envisaged : this is notably the case in ex-Yugoslavia with the Process on Stability and Good Neighbourliness. There is also a need to strengthen the Union·s unanimous voice at international level within fora such as the Human Rights Commission (55th session of this Commission in Geneva), the Council of Europe and the OSCE. On an internal level, it is also important to mention the intense work carried out to combat against racism and xenophobia, as well as the international activity carried out by the Union with a view to promoting the gradual abolition of the death penalty.

Human rights in the European Union. Annual Report, June 1998 to June 1999

1999/2001(INI) - 01/10/1999

PURPOSE : the presentation of the first EU annual report on Human Rights (part of which is dedicated to Human Rights in the European Union). CONTENT : the Council submits the first annual report on human rights to the European Parliament which is made up of two distinct parts : the first deals with human rights in the Union, the second with the evolution of human rights in the world (see INI/1999/2002). This report takes the place of the traditional memorandum on the Union's activities in the domain of human rights addressed up to now each year by the Council for the European Parliament to informing it about EU action on human rights in the world over the past year. In presenting this report, the Union would like to contribute to a better understanding of the motives and institutional structures and policy instruments of the Union. More specifically, the report highlights that several new provisions have been created by the the Amsterdam Treaty relating to human rights thus strengthening the basis for EU action in this field, in particular in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Thus, the Treaty has enshrined in principle the respect for fundamental rights, as guaranteed by the Council of Europe's Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Union bases its actions on the principles of freedom, democracy, the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, the Treaty establishing the European Community, as amended by the Treaty of Amsterdam, specifically empowers the Community to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. It also contains measures concerning asylum, refugees and immigration. It should also be noted that any Member State violating human rights in a serious and persistant way can face the suspension of the rights it is granted under the Treaties. With the process of enlargement, the Union has clearly indicated that accession is only open to states that respect the principles of the Treaty, which refer to the protection of human rights and minorities. At Union level, respect for human rights is guaranteed by the European Parliament and the Ombudsman, the Commission, the Council of Ministers and, in particular, by the Court of Justice. The main responsibility for the protection and promotion of human rights rests, however, with the Union·s Member States. The European Parliament is an important participant in making and implementing the EU·s Human Rights Policy. The EP has become an important forum for discussion on human rights and maintains regular contact with human rights organisations and human rights defenders. It also undertakes human rights missions to countries outside the EU and has influence in treaty-making processes with third countries. According to this report, progress in implementing human rights is based on interaction between governments and civil society. The Union has a tradition of cooperating with its active and well-established NGO community which makes efforts to combat racism and xenophobia, in particular. Moreover, the Union seeks to strengthen the position of NGOs as participants, promoters and beneficiaries in the democratization and development process. As for racism and xenophobia in the EU, the commitment of the EU to curbing racism and related intolerance was reflected in numerous activities in all Member States by Governments and NGOs during the European Year Against Racism in 1997. The most visible outcome was the establishment of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia situated in Vienna. Its prime mandate is to provide and analyse objective, reliable and comparable data and best practices on racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in EU Member States. Another focus of activity of the Centre is the organizing of Round-Table seminars in the Member States aimed at increasing the visibility and interaction between the actors in this field. Lastly, with the Treaty of Amsterdam, a new opportunity for promoting fundamental rights and fighting discrimination is offered under Article 13. Legislative procedures with this goal will be initiated as soon as possible seeking to combat racial discrimination and discrimination concerning employment.

Human rights in the European Union. Annual Report, June 1998 to June 1999

1999/2001(INI) - 16/03/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted its resolution on the own- initiative tabled by Mr. Bertel HAARDER (ELDR, DK) concerning human rights in the EU. The resolution is divided into a number of headings and sub-headings: 1) A new legal and political context: - The EP recalls that human rights are a set of universal and interdependent rights applicable to all human beings. It notes that the new Treaty formally establishes that the EU is founded on respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law which is a requirement for membership of and accession to the Union. - It hopes that the next Council annual report on human rights will contain a country-by-country detailed analysis of developments in the human rights situation in the EU and proposes that monitoring systems and strategies be introduced in the future to improve respect for such rights. - It welcomes the fact that the protectionj of human rights in the Council of Europe has been strengthened in institutional terms with the establishment on 01/11/98 of a single and permanent human rights court to which any plaintiff may have direct access. It hopes that the new Court of Human Rights, which has experienced a significant increase in the number of applications in 1998 and 1999 and is currently faced with the task of processing more than 6,000 applications, will succeed in resolving this problem and speeding up its proceedings. - It welcomes the establishment of a Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights with non-judicial responsibility for promoting human rights education and awareness in the framework of the ECHR and the appointment to this post of Mr. Alvaro Gil-Robles. - It deplores the fact that yet again eleven of the fifteen Member States are listed in Amnesty International's Yearbook for 1999 on account of both serious and less serious human rights abuses. 2) Human Rights developments in the EU: This section of the report contains the following headings: - extension of the right to vote and to stand for election; - protection of national minorities; - respect for private life; - freedom of religion and belief; - violence perpetrated by police and prison personnel; - treatment of refugees and immigrants; - shortcomings of judicial services; - fight against terrorism; - equal rights for men and women; - equal rights for disabled people; - life styles and types of relationship; - bioethics and protection of human dignity. A number of shortcomings in Member States and candidate countries are cited and calls made for these to be remedied. 3) Means of strengthening protection of human rights in the EU: The Parliament stresses that the EU's very credibility in this area before the international community is dependent on proper respect for human rights and the rule of law within the Union and its institutions. It considers that in view of the new legal context arising from the Treaty of Amsterdam, theforthcoming prospect of a European Charter of Fundamental Rights and the establishment of a European area of freedom, security and justice, the EU's approach to human rights should not be limited to reporting and applying sanctions on a case-by-case basis but should form part of a genuine European human rights policy, applicable to all EU Member States. It calls for the setting up of an independent supervisory body responsible for monitoring effectively the protection of personal data and the right to private life as envisaged in Article 286 of the Treaty. It considers therefore essential that the Commission be provided with appropriate budgetary resources to

establish the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice in Europe within the next five years. It stresses the importance of involving NGOs in the protection of human rights, which depends on proper financing and well-functioning cooperation with the Commission and, as far as the candidate countries are concerned, with the Council of Europe, the UN and the OSCE. The Parliament underlined the need to establish a clear hierarchy of legal rules and a proper definition and delimitation of the powers of the Court of Justice of the EC, the Court of Human Rights and the national courts, in order to prevent different legal standards from being applied. It urges the Member States to give the EU legal personality to enable it to accede to the ECHR. The Parliament stresses the importance of strengthening judicial cooperation and calls on the Member States to adopt appropriate provisions ro bring previous judicial cooperation agreements within the Community framework, in particular with regard to notification and recognition of judicial and extra-judicial acts, in order to guarantee that European citizens can rely on a properly functioning judicial system in the Union. The Member States are urged to ratify the Convention establishing an International Criminal Court as soon as possible and to take all the necessary measures to ensure that, in the near future, perpetrators of crimes against humanity can under no circumstances benefit impunity within the EU. The EP also urged them to step up the training of law-enforcement officials and prison personnel in respect for human rights and conflict management and proposes that the future European Police Academy, which the Tampere European Council decided to set up, be responsible for this major aspect of training.