

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	1996/2003(INI)	Procedure completed
Respect for human rights in the European Union in 1995		
Subject 1.10 Fundamental rights in the EU, Charter		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	LIBE Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs		20/12/1995
		V ROTH Claudia	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	FEMM Women's Rights		02/07/1996
		PSE D'ANCONA Hedy	

Key events			
01/01/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/02/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	B4-0031/1996	
20/03/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
20/03/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0112/1997	
08/04/1997	Debate in Parliament		
08/04/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0141/1997	Summary
08/04/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
28/04/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1996/2003(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 101o-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/4/07455

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		B4-0031/1996	03/02/1996	EP	
Committee draft report		PE218.951/A	22/01/1997	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE218.951/AM-	06/03/1997	EP	

Committee draft report		PE218.951/B	07/03/1997	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE218.951/AMC	18/03/1997	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0112/1997 OJ C 132 28.04.1997, p. 0006	20/03/1997	EP	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE220.960/DEF	20/03/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0141/1997 OJ C 132 28.04.1997, p. 0020-0031	08/04/1997	EP	Summary

Respect for human rights in the European Union in 1995

The Annual Report on human rights in the European Union for 1995 will be presented by Claudia Roth (D, Greens) on behalf of the civil liberties committee. It runs to some 171 paragraphs and in addition to calling on the IGC to introduce a mechanism to allow the EU as such to accede to the European Human Convention on Human Rights, takes up other human right issues such as the right to live and die in dignity, freedom from torture, fundamental freedom, immigrants' rights, privacy, combatting racism, the right of the child, non-discrimination and the environment. *The right to live and die in dignity - No to Euthanasia Here the UK along with Greece and Belgium is called upon to ratify protocol number 6 to the European convention on Human Rights designed for the unconditional abolition of the death penalty. There is also a call to ban euthanasia. There should be no discrimination against different religions. *The right to freedom from torture and the rights of people in detention The use of torture is emphatically condemned and Denmark is praised for introducing new procedures to enable complaints to be made against the police. The other Member States are requested to introduce similar complaints procedures. The draft resolution regrets the 1995 decision of the British government to extend the Prevention of Terrorism Act. *Freedom of movement Once again there is a call for the Schengen intergovernmental arrangements governing free movement to be brought under the auspices of the European Community with jurisdiction for the Court of Justice. *Fundamental rights - Abortion in Ireland an issue *Here the rights of conscientious objectors are reaffirmed and there is request for Greece to put a halt to persecuting conscientious objectors and to introduce alternative service. There is objection to Ireland's restrictive laws banning publicity for abortion services. The text "condemns the restriction on freedom of opinion in Ireland, where a law prohibits the publication of any material in favour of abortion". There is also support for the EU and Member States ratifying the Council of Europe's Social Charter, which was not signed by the UK. There is also a call on the UK to sign up to the Social Charter of the Maastricht Treaty. *Legal rights Here, there is a call for the right of victims in criminal cases to be strengthened in such a way as to provide compensation. The draft resolution draws attention to the growing prison population and the unacceptable conditions, especially as regards health and hygiene faced by many prisoners. There is a call for young people not to be placed in detention and for drug addicts not to be punished but instead given treatment. Proper child care facilities should be available for mothers in prison with small children. *Immigrants' rights Here the draft resolution takes the view that a ban on further immigration is not effective but simply encourages illegal immigrants. There is therefore a call on the Member States to review existing immigration policies. The right to reunification of families is also reaffirmed and the Member States are requested to regularise the status of people who have been living for a considerable amount of time in their respective countries. *Combatting racism Here there is a call on the Member States to ratify racist propaganda as a criminal offence to take appropriate preventative measures, especially in education and training of those people such as social workers, police officers and teachers. *Social security and poverty Here there is support for the EU to support legislation guaranteeing a minimum income and level of social protection, medical health treatment and housing. There is also a call on the Member States to recognise the special situation of travelling people and gypsies. Mention is also made of the right to "work" and a "minimum" pension. *The right to privacy Here there is support for the right to privacy and data protection as a fundamental right. *The right to non-discrimination Here there is support for including a chapter in EU policies confirming the fundamental right of the disabled to equal opportunities. Member States should ensure that there is no discrimination either against women or homosexuals and lesbians. Special measures should be taken to combat violence and abuse against women. *Children's rights - No to Scandinavian porn Here there is a call on the EU to outlaw child labour. Sexual exploitation is strongly condemned. There is a call for the ban on child pornography and paedophile materials in any form, especially in Sweden and Denmark where such publications are still legal. *Right to a healthy environment Here the right to a healthy environment is confirmed. This should be guaranteed by the relevant authorities if necessary through "polluter pays" legislation. There is also a call for a ban on the export of foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals which are prohibited in the EU. ?

Respect for human rights in the European Union in 1995

In adopting the report by Mrs Claudia ROTH (V, D) on the respect of human rights in the European Union, the European Parliament first called on the IGC to grant the European Union the legal status needed for it to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In this respect it took the view that fundamental freedoms comprised all rights which ensured the dignity of the individual and that the defence of these freedoms was a never-ending task which should not be corrupted in the name of ideology. It also considered that its role should not involve the same functions as the existing Courts of human rights, but that its purpose should be to highlight and generally make known the various human rights' situations which require remedying within the European Union. Parliament recalled a number of principles such as the right to physical integrity, legal rights, the rights of persons in detention, combating racism and xenophobia, economic and social rights, the right to privacy and freedom from discrimination, the rights of the child and the right to a healthy environment. To this list Parliament added the right to personal health, which should be granted to any person irrespective of his or her situation, sex, race, age or religion, etc. Parliament expressed the hope that the European Union would include human rights clauses, which provided for appropriate sanctions to be imposed, in all agreements concluded with third countries and called on the IGC to include in the Treaty a new Article 6a which would allow the current concept of banning all discrimination on grounds of nationality, race, skin colour, etc., to be extended. In particular, Parliament called on the EU to adopt a European Declaration of fundamental rights which would be incorporated in the Treaty on European Union. Parliament stressed the need for respect of physical integrity, the respect of life and the right to die in dignity. Here it called for a ban on euthanasia towards disabled persons, patients in a persistent coma, handicapped babies and the elderly. It called on Member

States to give priority to setting up units for terminally ill patients which allow such persons the opportunity to die in dignity. Strongly condemning the use of force and acts of torture, Parliament urged Member States to take the necessary steps to put a stop to such practices. In the area of religious freedom, while reaffirming the full and complete recognition of this right, Parliament called on Member States not to grant the status of religious organisation systematically to certain 'organisations' and to consider the possibility of debarring sects which are given to clandestine or criminal activities. In the area of fundamental freedoms, Parliament recalled its position in support of conscientious objectors, condemned moves aimed at restricting the freedom of the press and called for the right to set up or belong to a trade union to be granted to employees of governmental organisations. It also called on Greece to guarantee the right of association and assembly which would allow ethnic and religious minorities, and other groups, to hold meetings. It reaffirmed that freedom of expression implied the right to demonstrate publicly and in a peaceful manner. In the area of freedom of movement, Parliament regretted that Article 7a of the Treaty (the right of the individual to freedom of movement entering into force on 1 January 1993) had still not been implemented. This freedom should apply to each person who is legally resident in the territory of the European Union, whatever his or her nationality. The European Parliament called for the Schengen arrangements to be brought under the auspices of the Court of Justice of the European Communities. In respect of legal rights, Parliament called on Member States to carry through the required reform of criminal procedures so as to reinforce victims' rights and means of recourse. As regards the right of persons in detention, Parliament called on Member States not to imprison young minors, except in very special circumstances. It also urged them to recognise that drug addiction was not in itself a crime but a problem to which solutions should be sought by way of treatment and social care. In addition, it called for prisoners suffering from AIDS to be provided with special facilities in prison. It strongly condemned the practice of depriving asylum seekers of their liberty in order to discourage others. Recalling that the right to seek asylum was a universal right under Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and calling for the strict application of the Geneva Convention, Parliament took the view that the visa requirements and the sanctions imposed on road hauliers constituted a major obstacle to the right of access to the asylum procedure. As regards the Council resolution of 1995 on minimum guarantees for equivalent asylum procedures, Parliament expressed concern that this would allow application of the concept of 'safe third countries', without necessarily ensuring sufficient legal guarantees against the repatriation of persons to countries where they faced the risk of persecution. Believing that the policy of 'zero immigration' would only produce situations involving clandestine activities, Parliament called on Member States to provide, in their legislation, criteria for legal immigration. It took the view that a significant proportion of foreign nationals without identity papers comprised persons who had lost their legal status as a result of restrictive immigration laws. It therefore called for these laws to be amended. As far as the control of racism and xenophobia was concerned, Parliament urged Member States to regard the dissemination of racist messages as a criminal offence and to adopt measures preventing such acts. It also called on Member States to ensure that police officers did not display racist behaviour. Taking the view that poverty and exclusion were unworthy of democratic, prosperous societies, Parliament called for a binding legal instrument to be set up at Community level, in the area of social rights and social security provisions, which would guarantee minimum rights in respect of income, social protection and access to health care and housing. Here it regretted that an increasing number of local authorities in France and in Germany were banning the practice of begging in their districts. Regarding the right to privacy, Parliament called in particular for measures to be taken for the protection of personal data, notably in respect of Community data banks such as the SIS, the EIS and the CIS. As regards the right to non-discrimination, Parliament called in particular on Austria to repeal its anti-homosexual laws and, more specifically, those measures which set the minimum legal age for homosexual relations at 18, while the equivalent age for heterosexual relations was 14. At the same time, it called on Member States to ensure that women were allowed to participate in public life on an effective and equal basis. Stressing that no-one should be victimised for belonging to a national or linguistic minority, Parliament regretted that practically no Member State had implemented the law on ethnic and linguistic groups, as laid down by the Council of Europe. Lastly, Parliament reaffirmed the rights of children, and in particular the right to a good-quality education, the right to be free from physical and mental violence and the right of each individual to live in a healthy environment. ?