

# Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	<a href="#">1998/2052(INI)</a>	Procedure completed
Prison conditions in the Union and others sentences		
Subject 1.10 Fundamental rights in the EU, Charter		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>LIBE</b> Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs	ARE <a href="#">PRADIER Pierre</a>	04/02/1998

Key events			
02/12/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	<a href="#">B4-1022/1997</a>	
13/03/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
12/10/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
12/10/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A4-0369/1998</a>	
16/12/1998	Debate in Parliament		
17/12/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0768/1998	Summary
17/12/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
09/04/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2052(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/4/09872

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		<a href="#">B4-1022/1997</a>	02/12/1997	EP	
Committee draft report		PE227.548	24/06/1998	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE227.548/AM	18/09/1998	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE227.548/AMC	06/10/1998	EP	

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	<a href="#">A4-0369/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 379 07.12.1998, p. 0004</a>	12/10/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T4-0768/1998 <a href="#">OJ C 098 09.04.1999, p. 0209-0299</a>	17/12/1998	EP	Summary

## Prison conditions in the Union and others sentences

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The Committee has adopted the own-initiative report by Mr Pierre PRADIER (ARE - F) on prisons (conditions in the EU and other sentences). The objective of this report is to aid the Member States in devising policies and reaching decisions which could help improve the results of imprisonment, which are not satisfying as things stand. A further goal is to elicit or develop the sense of responsibility in inmates, so as to facilitate their reintegration in society. The Union's prison population today stands at approximately 400 000. Allowing for movements within a given year and taking prisoners' relatives into account, the subject of prison conditions directly concerns almost 2 m people. The members of the committee tabled a number of amendments to the original text. Sixteen of these are compromise amendments. The rapporteur stressed the need for the committee to reach a clear joint position, so that Parliament can deliver a properly consistent opinion. The report refers to the various functions of imprisonment, and examines the questions of overcrowding, provisional detention and alternative forms of sentencing. The committee calls on the Member States to ensure the full application of the Council of Europe's provisions on prison conditions, in particular those concerning minimum health standards: cell design, diet, clothing, heating, hygiene, access to sanitary facilities, participation in work, education and training and socio-educational, cultural and sporting activities. All these elements help maintain prisoners' dignity and contribute to their reintegration in society. The committee also insists that due account be taken of prisoners' families. Prisoners should be held near the place of residence of their families. Regular visits from spouse and children play a highly beneficial role in encouraging prisoners to reform, to develop their sense of responsibility and, finally, to return to society. The report recognises the difficult conditions under which prison wardens have to work, and stresses the need for them to be given initial and ongoing training and to be offered better working conditions. It also suggests the creation of networks for exchanging experiences.?

## Prison conditions in the Union and others sentences

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In adopting its resolution on prison conditions in the EU and improvements and alternative penalties, drafted by Mr. Pierre PRADIER (ARE, F), the Parliament called on the Member States to apply fully the Council of Europe's prison rules with particular regard to the rules on minimum health requirements covering the fitting-out of cells, food, clothing, heating and hygiene, and access to health facilities, work, education and training and social and educational, cultural and sporting facilities. All of these aspects contribute to the dignity and social rehabilitation of prisoners. Furthermore, the Parliament called on the Member States to comply scrupulously with the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to implement the recommendations addressed to them. The resolution also makes reference to the need to take the interests of prisoners' families into account, unless there are specific and justified grounds for not doing so (possible involvement in crime, mafia, etc.) by holding prisoners close to the homes of their families and encouraging visits. The Parliament calls on the Member States to set to work drafting a fundamental prison law laying down a legal framework which regulates the internal (substantive) legal position, the external legal position, the right of complaint and obligations of prisoners and provides for an independent supervisory body to which prisoners can turn in the event of violation of their rights. The Parliament also urges the Member States to ensure the strict application of the WHO directive laying down principles on which to base measures to combat HIV infection and AIDS in prisons. As it takes the view that minors do not belong in prisons, it calls for the introduction of constructive, humane laws on penalties for young offenders geared to the responsibility and skills of young people and providing alternative solutions to locking young people up in prisons, and for measures aimed, as far as possible, at remedying the emotional and educational deficiencies which are often the cause of delinquency. It stresses that alternative penalties to detention should be used in all cases where they would not jeopardise the safety of persons and property and calls on the public authorities to make use of semi-custodial arrangements or open regimes based on specific rules and to cultivate conditions under which these regimes can be used in a way which ensures public safety and responsible behaviour on the part of prisoners. The resolution urges the Member States, in particular, to introduce specific policies to encourage the reintegration into the workforce of former prisoners, and to end the all too frequent discrimination which in practice gives them no chance of finding employment in the broad sector covered by public companies and the civil service. Member States should step up their efforts to recruit, train and deploy social and educational support staff to prisons, open regimes and post-release follow-up activities. Lastly, the resolution calls for MEPs to have the right to visit and inspect prisons and detention centres for refugees within the European Union.?