

Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	1996/2252(INI)
Procedure completed	
Respect for human rights in the European Union in 1997	
Subject 1.10 Fundamental rights in the EU, Charter	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	LIBE Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs	UPE SCHAFFNER Anne-Marie	19/03/1998

Key events			
15/11/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
24/11/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
24/11/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0468/1998	
16/12/1998	Debate in Parliament		
17/12/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0759/1998	Summary
17/12/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
09/04/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1996/2252(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 101o-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/4/08419

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE228.192	18/09/1998	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE228.192/AM	03/11/1998	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0468/1998 OJ C 098 09.04.1999, p. 0005	24/11/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0759/1998 OJ C 098 09.04.1999, p. 0201-0279	17/12/1998	EP	Summary

Respect for human rights in the European Union in 1997

The Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs has adopted the report by Anne-Marie SCHAFFNER (UFE, F) on respect for human rights in the EU in 1997. The committee restated its view that the Member States must ensure that fundamental rights were genuinely respected, since the credibility and consistency of the EU's action on this issue in its external policies was at stake. Respect for human rights is seen as an essential aspect of any democratic society and should be one of the fundamental pillars of the Union's domestic and foreign policy. The committee, in deference to the human rights violations perpetrated against women, called on the Commission to designate 1999 'European Year to Stop Violence Against Women' and condemned the practice of sexual mutilation of women. MEPs voiced concern at the discrimination and occasional full-blown persecution to which new religious movements and minority religions were subject in certain Member States. However, it considered it essential to combat the attacks on personal rights perpetrated by certain cults or sects. It stressed that the right to respect for private and family life, residence and correspondence, as well as the protection of personal data, were fundamental rights which States must uphold and that any optical or computerised surveillance measures must be subject to the strictest possible respect for such rights and without exception include judicial guarantees. MEPs fully recognised conscientious objection with, as a corollary, the requirement to carry out an alternative civilian service under comparable conditions to those applicable to military service. They welcomed the fact that Greece had passed a law recognising the right to conscientious objection. The committee called on the Member States to adopt and implement, in close collaboration with humanitarian organisations, laws to prevent and combat exclusion, particularly access to the labour market, health care, social security, housing, education and the courts. The report welcomed the fact the UK had signed the Community's 1989 Charter of Fundamental Social Rights and also called for all the Member States to comply with the Council of Europe's Social Charter on which the Community's charter was based. The draft Treaty of Amsterdam includes provisions making it possible to combat all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. The committee recalled that no-one should suffer prejudice or discrimination. Examples: there should be no discrimination against homosexuals; women should enjoy equal treatment and equal opportunities, including genuine participation in public life; actions by anti-abortion "commandos" should be severely punished; abortion should not be criminalised; and an individual's genetic data should only be transmitted to a third party with the prior, informed and written consent of that individual. The committee called for better integration of foreign citizens in the EU; it wants the Member States to grant the right to vote and stand for election to immigrants at local elections under certain conditions. The report says that Member States should recognise full-blown 'jus soli' from birth as regards the acquisition of nationality, and should accept dual nationality. Lastly, the committee deplores the fact that in the European Union there are cases of torture, rape and inhuman, cruel and degrading treatment inflicted by the police or prison personnel on persons under arrest or held in custody, particularly when they are being held under 'forty-eight hour arrest'. It stresses the racist nature of many of these acts.

Respect for human rights in the European Union in 1997

In adopting its report on the respect for human rights in the European Union, drafted by Ms. Anne-Marie SCHAFFNER (UPE, F), the European Parliament urges the Union to ensure that its own human rights commitments and those of its Member States are translated into strong political action, and to this end asks that : - from the coming into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, the Commission give one of its Members responsibility for issues concerning human rights, and likewise for the area of freedom, security and justice; - the Parliament Committee which is responsible for civil liberties and internal affairs periodically review the human rights situation in the Member States and the progress made in the area of freedom, security and justice; - the remit of the racism monitoring centre in Vienna be expanded to include human rights in the EU, since the centre has a special role to play in providing the EU institutions with regular information concerning racism, xenophobia and human rights in the Member States. It calls on those Member States that have not yet signed/ratified the Second Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to do so. The report deals with a range of issues: - Access to care : for example, the Parliament called for a ban on any active intervention intended to curtail the life of newborn babies, the disabled, the elderly and patients in a prolonged coma; - Right to safety - the rule of law and the fight against terrorism; - Judicial procedures; - Civil and political rights; - Respect for private life; - Freedom of expression and other freedoms; - Religious freedom; - Economic and social rights; - Cultural rights; - Fighting discrimination - women's rights - rights of the child - protecting the family; - Conditions of detention - rehabilitation; - Fighting racism and xenophobia; - Immigration and asylum.?