

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2000/2105(INI)	Procedure completed
Human rights in the world. Annual report 1999-2000		
Subject 6.10.08 Fundamental freedoms, human rights, democracy in general		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense	V/ALE WUORI Matti	07/11/2000
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	BUDG Budgets	PSE WYNN Terence	05/12/2000
	DEVE Development and Cooperation	UEN COÛTEAUX Paul Marie	22/11/2000
	Council of the European Union	Council configuration General Affairs	Meeting 2338

Key events			
14/04/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
09/10/2000	Non-legislative basic document published	11317/2000	Summary
19/03/2001	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
29/05/2001	Vote in committee		Summary
29/05/2001	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0193/2001	
04/07/2001	Debate in Parliament		
05/07/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0399/2001	Summary
05/07/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		
14/03/2002	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	

Procedure reference	2000/2105(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 101o-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/5/12699

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	11317/2000	09/10/2000	CSL	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(2000)0726	14/11/2000	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A5-0193/2001	29/05/2001	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T5-0399/2001 OJ C 065 14.03.2002, p. 0176-0336 E	05/07/2001	EP	Summary

Human rights in the world. Annual report 1999-2000

This report sets out an overview of the activities in the protection of human rights and democracy funded by the European Commission in external relations between 1996 and 1999. It examines the major thematic priorities and the regional strategies of such action, and provides an analysis of some procedural aspects. In addition, an assessment of the performance of the Commission in this field is included. It is the fourth report of its kind, and describes the main lines of action followed in the use of resources available in the financial years 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) (Chapter B7-70 of the EU budget). During the period assessed by this report, approximately EUR 300 million were allocated to human rights and democracy projects from this part of the budget alone. This report is complementary to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights, adopted by the Council in October 1999. While the present document deals with activities funded under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights by the European Commission from 1996 to 1999, the EU Annual Report on Human Rights has a wider remit. However, both reports share the same goals: to enhance the transparency, coherence and consistency of the Union's human rights policies. The present report sets out a detailed financial breakdown of where and how the money was spent. Furthermore, by highlighting individual projects as examples, the report illustrates the concrete action facilitated by Community finance. This survey also highlights that a major priority for the Union has been the development of its partnership with non-governmental organisations and civil society. NGOs are the principle implementing partners for projects under EIDHR. With regard to the development of activities between 1996 and 1999, it can be seen that funding has increased dramatically in certain areas. For example, the priority attached by the Union to promoting awareness and professional competence in the field of human rights is illustrated by a large increase for projects concerning human rights and education. Similarly, enhanced assistance for strengthening legal systems reflects the growing emphasis on institutional-building and the rule of law. Where certain activities are marked by an apparent decline in resources in 1999, such as those projects described contained in the section on 'target groups', this represents an evolution of projects which focussed on specific categories of individuals towards instruments which better ensure their protection through larger, thematic programmes. Lastly, this report can make a significant contribution to the dialogue on human rights issues and activities between the Commission and its partners. Above all, it demonstrates that the EU will always face a demand for assistance in the human rights field which will outstrip its ability to fund worthwhile projects. However, with the help of reports such as this, the EU will be better able to establish a strategy to make best use of its resources. ?

Human rights in the world. Annual report 1999-2000

The Council reaffirmed the Council conclusions of 10 December 1998, endorsed by the Vienna European Council, which highlighted the importance of human rights as a corner stone of EU foreign policy. The Council took stock of ongoing initiatives, notably the preparation of EU Guidelines against Torture, which will enhance EU actions aimed at the eradication of this abhorrent violation of human rights. These guidelines will add to the already existing guidelines on the death penalty and create a new instrument for the EU in its relations with third countries. It further noted that the Commission had prepared a Communication on electoral assistance and observation, on which the Council will adopt conclusions shortly. Both this Communication as well as the Communications on human rights and democratisation and on conflict prevention, which have been announced by the Commission, will be used as an input for the Conference on the EU and human rights in the framework of conflict prevention and resolution to be held on 28 and 29 May. ?

Human rights in the world. Annual report 1999-2000

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Matti WUORI (Greens/EFA, FIN) on the 1999-2000 annual report on human rights in the world. The committee called for the EU to actively promote human rights and democracy in all its activities across the world, including EU conflict prevention efforts. Human rights matters should also be fully addressed in peace-building dialogues and in agreements with third countries. Council and Commission were accordingly urged to develop more focused thematic common strategies on human rights. Such strategies should be subject to annual review and should ensure consistency across relevant EU policies. The committee expressed concern

that many of the EU's international agreements which contained human rights clauses did not include rules setting out how the agreement might be suspended in the case of serious human rights abuses, and wanted to this to be rectified. Parliament's views should be taken into account when invoking the human rights clause in such agreements. Member States should ensure consistency between their actions and those of the EU, particularly when suspending bilateral co-operation. The report also paid special attention to violations of the fundamental right of freedom of expression. In particular it wanted concrete measures to be taken to prevent attacks on journalists and to ensure that press freedoms were safeguarded. There was also mention of human rights in the context of enlargement, with specific condemnation of continuing discrimination against the Roma people in several applicant states - most notably Romania. Turkey also came under fire for human rights abuses inflicted on its Kurdish and Christian minorities as well as in Cyprus, and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was also condemned for human rights violations, especially towards women. Other items taken up in the report included the need for Parliament to improve its own structures for dealing with human rights-related matters, notably the appointment of a special "representative" (possibly a vice-chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee) to pursue all human rights related issues, including follow-up of individual cases of human rights violations. ?

Human rights in the world. Annual report 1999-2000

In presenting his report on human rights in the world in 2000 and the European Union Human Rights Policy (refer to previous document), Matti WUORI (Greens/EFA, FIN) welcomed the fact that the Belgian presidency had underlined the need for increased coherence and consistency in the promotion of human rights and he emphasised the need for more transparency. Furthermore, he welcomed past comments from Commissioner Chris PATTEN that it would be 'intellectual vandalism' to ignore the views of NGOs. Overall, it was necessary to establish a clearly defined strategy - otherwise tactics became the strategy. Mr. Wuori cited the case of the extradition of President Milosevic as an example of principles of universal human rights overriding national sovereignty. He believed that criticism must be fair and the EU should ensure that human rights provisions were fully implemented in applicant countries. Otherwise they would simply become 'Potemkin villages' with only cosmetic changes. He considered that a thematic approach was the best way of moving forward. He considered too that agreements with third countries should have human rights clauses. He concluded that it was time the EU put its principles into practice on the issue of freedom of expression. Against this background, the report was adopted by an overwhelming majority. Amendments to the report related to the behaviour of Russia in Chechnya, to the recent United Nations Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva and finally, another amendment regretted that Council did not submit a resolution on human rights in China. ?