

Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2001/2011(INI)
Annual report on human rights in the world in 2001 and European Union's policy	
Subject 6.10.09 Human rights situation in the world	
Procedure completed	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense	PPE-DE <u>VAN HECKE Johan</u>	16/10/2001

Key events			
18/01/2001	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
26/03/2002	Vote in committee		Summary
26/03/2002	Committee report tabled for plenary	<u>A5-0106/2002</u>	
24/04/2002	Debate in Parliament		
25/04/2002	Decision by Parliament	<u>T5-0203/2002</u>	Summary
25/04/2002	End of procedure in Parliament		
05/06/2003	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2001/2011(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Annual report
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP P.F.
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/5/14218

Documentation gateway				
Document attached to the procedure		<u>B5-0024/2002</u>	28/01/2002	EP

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A5-0106/2002	26/03/2002	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T5-0203/2002 OJ C 131 05.06.2003, p. 0017-0138 E	25/04/2002	EP	Summary

Annual report on human rights in the world in 2001 and European Union's policy

The committee adopted the report by Johan van HECKE (EPP-ED, B) on human rights in the world in 2001 and EU human rights policy. The report focused, among other things, on modern forms of slavery and terrorism. Stressing that all forms of forced labour represented a violation of human rights, the committee called on the Commission and Member States to draw up a list of products manufactured using child labour or forced labour, indicating the country of origin, and to adopt a joint approach within the WTO and the ILO on ways of combating this problem. The committee also expressed the view that the sexual exploitation of children was a criminal act which should be prosecuted and called on the EU Member States to extend the jurisdiction of their penal codes outside their territory to protect children against sexual abuse. While acknowledging that the events of 11 September 2001 had revealed new types of terrorism with no concern for innocent human lives lost on a massive scale, the report stressed that the fight against terrorism must not in itself lead to breaches of human rights. In this connection the legal status of the prisoners captured during the Afghanistan war and detained at Guantanamo Bay should be clarified. The committee said that the military decree issued by President Bush, authorising a military commission to judge these prisoners in secret, was a contravention of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the USA is a signatory. It backed the call by Javier SOLANA for the Guantanamo Bay detainees to be granted prisoner-of-war status, and said that any dispute as to their status should be decided by a competent tribunal in accordance with the Geneva Convention. The committee also wanted state terrorism to be included in the definition of terrorism. The report further stressed that the EU's overall strategy in the area of human rights needed to be coherent and consistent. It pointed out that Parliament's main role was to hold the Council and the Commission accountable for the implementation of the EU's human rights policies. The Council should give full consideration to Parliament's priorities and report back to it to a greater extent, including giving written replies to issues raised by Parliament in its annual reports. The committee urged that human rights be placed high on the agendas of Parliament's relevant committees and delegations and also that an 'ambassador' for human rights be appointed to represent the EP vis-à-vis other EU institutions and international organisations. Other points raised in the report included concern at the decrease in funding for the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), to which Parliament attached high priority, and condemnation of the use of stoning under Sharia law and all forms of degrading and cruel punishment. Iran, some states of Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Sudan were all singled out in this connection. Lastly, the committee called on all states to introduce a moratorium on executions with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty and reiterated an appeal to various countries (USA, China, Saudi Arabia, Congo, Iran and others) to end all executions immediately.?

Annual report on human rights in the world in 2001 and European Union's policy

The European Parliament adopted its own-initiative report drafted by Johan van HECKE (EPP-ED, Belgium) on human rights in the world and EU human rights policy. (Please refer to the document dated 26/03/02.) Parliament pointed out that the number of poor people in the world who are not benefiting from globalisation or whose circumstances are even worse as a result of it, is rising steadily. Widening inequalities generated by precarious socio-economic circumstances are a breeding ground for acts of violence and human rights abuses. With regard to slavery, there is a need to combat the root causes, in particular poverty, illiteracy, views on women and demographic and environmental pressure, by investing in education, providing economic incentives, tackling the problems of debt and climate change, and opening Western markets to the products of developing countries. The promotion of core labour standards and the improvement of social governance at European and international level by both the public and private sectors constitutes one of the Commission's objectives in the spheres of social and external relations, development and trade policies, as well as that of the revised EU GSP (social incentive) scheme. There is a need for concrete action to develop a coherent policy in respect of the social responsibility of business, trade unions and other civil society actors in the field of external relations. This should be a future priority of the EIDHR. Parliament pointed out that more than 300 000 children are working as soldiers, who are often forced to kill their families and peers and are themselves subjected to terrible abuses. Only one Member State has ratified the voluntary protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibiting the recruitment of soldiers under 18. This needs to be rectified and Somalia and the USA must ratify the Convention. With regard to terrorism, the European Council and Member States must denounce all human rights violations, including those committed by allies. Governments must not use the fight against terrorism as a pretext for human rights abuses at home. All UN states and particular the USA ought to accede to the Rome Statute setting up the International Criminal Court and enact effective universal jurisdiction legislation. In terms of future action, Parliament asked for the EU annual report on human rights to provide an analysis of the impact of EU activities on the human rights situations addressed, and a follow-up of the fulfilment of the clauses in the cooperation agreements. For the sake of consistency and coherence of EU policy on human rights and democracy, Parliament called on Member States, when taking over the EU Presidency, to set priorities in their respective programmes and to ensure continuity of actions undertaken by previous EU Presidencies. It committed itself to giving human rights issues a central place on each agenda of its committees and delegations, to ensuring that violations in third countries are systematically followed up.?