


Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	2001/2138(COS)	Procedure completed
Relations EU/Iran		
Subject 6.40.08 Relations with Asian countries		
Geographical area Iran		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense		20/03/2001
		PPE-DE GAHLER Michael	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
Council of the European Union European Commission	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		11/07/2001
		PSE WESTENDORP Y CABEZA Carlos	
	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	External Relations		

Key events			
07/02/2001	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2001)0071	Summary
03/09/2001	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/11/2001	Vote in committee		Summary
22/11/2001	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0418/2001	
12/12/2001	Debate in Parliament		
13/12/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0703/2001	Summary
13/12/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		
25/07/2002	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2001/2138(COS)

Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/5/14960

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2001)0071	07/02/2001	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0418/2001	22/11/2001	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0703/2001 OJ C 177 25.07.2002, p. 0214-0296 E	13/12/2001	EP	Summary

Relations EU/Iran

PURPOSE: to assess existing contacts between the EU and Iran and in particular, to examine the current political and economic conditions in Iran with a view to recommending a deepening of future links between the two communities. **CONTENT:** relations between the European Union and Iran have been strengthened in recent years thanks largely to the arrival of the reform minded President Khatami. An existing Agreement between the EU and Iran lapsed in 1977, shortly before the Islamic Revolution. Thanks, in large part, to the softening of policies under the new reformers the EU and Iran have agreed to reactivate relations by meeting every six months, in troika format. Known as the Comprehensive Dialogue, the meetings air matters of mutual concern and cover: - global issues (terrorism; human rights and proliferation); - regional issues (Iraq, Gulf, Central Asia, the Middle East Peace Process) - areas of cooperation (drugs, refugees, energy, trade and investment). In this Communication, the European Commission evaluates the current political and economic situation in Iran with a view to assessing future EU involvement in Iran. As part of its assessment, the report notes that whilst human rights are beginning to improve a number of issues remain outstanding. Notably, the harsh sentences given to thirteen Jews in Shiraz and the death penalty awarded to leaders of a student protest movement. Similarly, the delay in reforms relating to the freedom of the press confirm that Iran has a long way to go before it can claim to be an open society. Human rights remain a matter of concern since any future contractual arrangements between the EU and Iran will require a discussion on human rights. Further problems foreseen by the Communication relate to the economic situation in Iran. The EU is the largest trading partner for Iran which exports petroleum, carpets, caviar and pistachios. EU exports to Iran are dominated by manufactured goods, vehicles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. The Communication notes that the EU potential to export to Iran could be greater were it not for the fact that the legal system remains intransparent and arbitrary. Moreover, difficulties have been reported with regard to the treatment of expatriate personnel of foreign companies. Added problems such as obstacles obtaining import licenses, foreign ownership rights and the repatriation of profits, discourage greater EU investment. In spite of these hurdles the Commission communication notes that the process of reform currently taking place has had a number of positive side-effects. Discussions under the Comprehensive Dialogue serve to highlight matters of mutual concern and areas where co-operation is both desirable and feasible. It is therefore recommended that closer ties be strengthened, subject to the continuation of the reform process. Specifically, the Communication proposes: The encouragement of political and economic reform through: - more frequent official and unofficial bilateral contacts; - the development of exchange and co-operation in areas of mutual interest and concern such as drugs, rule of law, refugees; - a readiness to engage in dialogue on human rights; - the strengthening of CFSP by deepening the dialogue in areas such as regional security, weapons of mass destruction, proliferation. The Promotion of bilateral economic relations through: - the negotiation of a Trade and Co-operation Agreement; - the continuation of Commission - Iran working groups on energy, trade and investment. ?

Relations EU/Iran

The committee adopted the report by Michael GAHLER (EPP-ED, D) on the Commission communication. It was in favour of closer cooperation between the EU and Iran, and called for a "critical dialogue" under which increased cooperation between the EU and Iran would be closely linked to the question of human rights. The report also called on Iran to reconsider its policy in the Middle East and help reconcile the two objectives of creating a viable, democratic Palestinian State and guaranteeing the right of Israel to live in peace and security within internationally recognised borders. Iran, it said, could use its influence to urge those movements with which it maintained relations to refrain from the use of violence. The committee welcomed the efforts and the willingness displayed by the Iranian Government to address the human rights issue, which was seen as a positive step towards normalising relations. It acknowledged the scale of the economic and social problems facing Iran, especially the growing and destabilising influx of refugees from Afghanistan, and therefore called for emergency, humanitarian and financial aid to be provided. It also welcomed the steps taken by Iran to combat drug trafficking. However, the committee expressed concern at certain developments since President Khatami's re-election, such as an increase in the number of executions. The human rights situation remained worrying, particularly regarding issues such as freedom of assembly, of expression and of conscience, the situation of women and the rights of minorities. Pointing out that any trade and cooperation agreement would contain a substantive human rights clause, MEPs called for the promised reform of the press and judiciary to be carried out, and for Iran to move towards greater democracy, to promote the measures needed to establish a democratic and open society and to implement the legal and administrative reforms needed to bring about real equality of the sexes and guarantee the practical application of fundamental rights and freedoms. The report also pointed out that closer trade and economic cooperation between the EU and Iran would be possible if Iran moved towards greater economic liberalisation, as provided for in its 1999 five-year plan. Lastly, MEPs stressed the importance of 'cultural dialogue', for example through parliamentary dialogue between the European Parliament and the Assembly of the Islamic Council, including the sending of delegations in both directions. ?

Relations EU/Iran

The European Parliament adopted the resolution by Mr Michael GAHLER (EPP-ED, D). (Please refer to the previous text).?