


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) 2001/2276(COS)	Procedure completed
Human rights and democratisation: role of the Union in third countries	
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		28/05/2001
		PSE DÍEZ GONZÁLEZ Rosa	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	LIBE Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs		20/02/2002
		GUE/NGL DI LELLO FINUOLI Giuseppe	
Council of the European Union	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		11/07/2001
		PSE MARTIN Hans-Peter	
	DEVE Development and Cooperation		25/06/2001
		PPE-DE FERRER Concepció	
	FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities		01/10/2001
		ELDR DYBKJÆR Lone	
European Commission	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	General Affairs	2362	25/06/2001
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Development		

Key events			
08/05/2001	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2001)0252	Summary
25/06/2001	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
13/12/2001	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/03/2002	Vote in committee		Summary

19/03/2002	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0084/2002	
24/04/2002	Debate in Parliament		
25/04/2002	Decision by Parliament	T5-0204/2002	Summary
25/04/2002	End of procedure in Parliament		
05/06/2003	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2001/2276(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/5/15573

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2001)0252	08/05/2001	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		SEC(2001)0801	22/05/2001	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2001)0891	06/06/2001	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0084/2002	19/03/2002	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0204/2002 OJ C 131 05.06.2003, p. 0017-0147 E	25/04/2002	EP	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(2003)0294	21/05/2003	EC	Summary

Human rights and democratisation: role of the Union in third countries

PURPOSE: To set out a strategy on the EU's role in promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries. **CONTENT:** All fifteen Member States of the European Union are democratic states respecting fundamental human rights and adhering to the rule of law. This offers the EU, as an international organisation, a unique opportunity to promote, encourage and advance human rights and democratisation globally. The purpose of this Communication, prepared by the Commission and forwarded to the European Parliament and Council for consideration, is to assess the EU's future position on human rights and democratisation in its dealings with third countries. The European Union seeks to uphold the universality and indivisibility of human rights - civil, political, economic, social and cultural. This has been strengthened in recent years through the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights which was officially proclaimed following the Nice summit in December 2000. On a global perspective the EU has a number of sound reasons to promote human rights and democratisation. A large portion of the EU budget is devoted to development aid and financial assistance programmes. One of the main aims of these development programmes is poverty reduction. Poverty reduction and the equal distribution of EU funds, the Communication argues, is more likely to occur in cases where governance is democratic and fundamental human rights respected. The EU can claim to be the world's largest aid donor. As such is feels obliged to promote human rights and democracy. Since 1992 the EU has included in all its agreements with third countries a clause defining respect for human rights and democracy as "essential elements" in the EU's relationship with third countries. This clause is unique in bilateral agreements. The Communication calls on multinational corporation to play a more active role in the promotion of human rights and democracy. Multinationals frequently play an influential role in third countries and accordingly should become more involved in increasing respect for human rights world-wide. As the Communication points out, it is after all, in their interests to operate under regimes in which the rule of law is respected and human rights acknowledged. The Communication identifies three areas in which the Commission can play a more effective role: - promoting consistent human rights policies across the EU; - ensuring human rights remains a high priority in the EU's relations with foreign countries; - adopting a more focused and strategic approach to the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). In parallel with this the Commission will promote coherence and consistency between EU actions under different Treaty pillars as well as between the Member States. Finally, the Commission will continue regularly to monitoring the points made in its Communication and assess progress.?

Human rights and democratisation: role of the Union in third countries

This document explains the process of selection of thematic and geographical priorities for the implementation of the 2001 European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The EIDHR has, in 2001, a total appropriation of 97.03 M EUR, covers five budget lines and has three principal procedures for identifying projects: - the Calls for Proposals that will be implemented by civil society operators; - targeted projects; - micro-projects facilities, which are small grants made available to and administered directly by selected Delegations. In selecting priorities, two kinds of inputs were considered: - a political input, provided by the analysis of recent EU official statements. - a procedural input based on the Commission services know-how, direct knowledge of countries and regions and ongoing cooperation programmes and projects. For 2001, 12 thematic priorities were selected. These include, the support for education, training and awareness-raising in the area of HR, and support for measures to combat racism and xenophobia and to protect minorities and indigenous peoples. There are a restricted number of themes for each country/region, so as to enhance focus and impact of the EU action in the field. The Call for Proposals involved ten priority themes. A total of 44 M EUR allocated corresponds to 50% of Budget Lines B7-701, 702, and 703. Projects to be financed via the remaining two budget lines -B7-704N and B7-709N- will be selected as targeted projects. The total available for targeted and micro projects in 2001 amounts approximately to 53.3 M EUR. The document gives a breakdown of the funds available. Targeted projects are necessary in order to pursue objectives that cannot effectively be achieved via the instrument of the CfP. The document gives a number of reasons concerning both the nature of the action and the type of implementing partners which justify the necessary of this instrument. One example is projects to be financed out of funds within B7-704N (International Criminal Court) and B7-709N (Electoral Assistance and Observation). These two budget lines were not included in the CfP because of the specificity of these sectors and the limited number of implementing partners. There are two tables in this document which indicate which thematic areas must be considered as priorities in each country for each budget line.?

Human rights and democratisation: role of the Union in third countries

The committee adopted the report by Rosa DIEZ GONZALEZ (PES, E) on the Commission communication. MEP's welcomed the Commission paper, although they added a number of recommendations of their own. In particular they wanted an interinstitutional code of conduct to be drawn up, governing relations between the EU and the countries with which it has concluded various agreements containing a "democracy clause", in order to ensure a more coherent approach in the Union's external action on democratisation and human rights. The code of conduct would require a suspension of economic and political relations between the EU and any third countries identified by the United Nations as supporting or sponsoring terrorism. Occasional human rights violations could also result in the suspension of agreements. The committee also called for any third country wishing to have political, economic or other relations with the EU to be required to sign, ratify and apply basic texts on human rights. Furthermore, the report said that, under the code, the existence of the death penalty in a non-EU country should automatically trigger a demand that it be abolished or that a universal moratorium be introduced as a clear indication of the EU's position. The report also specified that the application of the democracy clause should under no circumstances affect the provision of humanitarian aid to third states, irrespective of the type of relations they have with the EU. This aid should preferably be distributed through UN agencies or NGOs rather than through government channels. Lastly, the committee wanted to ensure that respect for women's rights as a part of human rights was included as a key element in all Community programmes and as a criterion for external relations with non-EU countries. As a specific condition of any form of financial aid, such countries should be required to eradicate and penalise the worst kinds of violence against women, including genital mutilation, stoning and rape in times of war.?

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on a draft by its rapporteur Rosa DIEZ GONZALEZ (PES, Spain) on human rights and democratisation in third countries. (Please refer to the document dated 19/03/02). Parliament pointed out that the reduction of poverty, the main objective of the EU's new development policy, requires the existence of genuine participatory democracy and responsible, corruption-free government. In many former colonies of European countries, the influence of colonial powers has not encouraged, and has even hindered, human rights and good governance. The EU can make a crucial contribution to eliminating the exclusive aspects of globalisation and giving it a focus based on inclusion of the least favoured social groups and the poorest countries. Whilst Parliament welcomed the Commission's Communication, it regretted the absence of specific proposals to encourage consistency in the work of the various Community institutions and end the almost total dependence on the political will of the Council, reflected in the frequent requirement for unanimity in decision-making. It called on the Convention on the Future of Europe to put forward firm proposals to this end. Demands regarding democratisation and respect for human rights placed on partner countries should in all circumstances take precedence over any legitimate economic, commercial and any other interests of the EU and its Member States. Parliament expands on the principles to be applied to the interinstitutional code of conduct. It also supports the establishment of an EU Agency for Human Rights and Democracy, as proposed in the conclusions of the Cologne European Council. This agency would draw up a global overview of the human rights situation by country. Before the signing of any accession, association or cooperation agreement with a third country, the Commission should draw up a report on the human rights situation in that country, with a recommendation on whether or not negotiations should be completed. The Council and the Parliament should be required to give an opinion on this recommendation, with the approval of both institutions being required for the agreement to be signed.?