Procedure file

Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure	2003/2188(INI)	Procedure completed
The rights of prisoners in the European Union Subject 1.10 Fundamental rights in the EU, Charter		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	LIBE Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs	NI TURCO Maurizio	07/10/2003

Key events

09/09/2003	Non-legislative basic document published	B5-0362/2003	
22/09/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/02/2004	Vote in committee		Summary
19/02/2004	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0094/2004	
09/03/2004	Decision by Parliament	T5-0142/2004	Summary
09/03/2004	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2003/2188(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 134o-p3
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/5/20227

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		B5-0362/2003	09/09/2003	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0094/2004	19/02/2004	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0142/2004	09/03/2004	EP	Summary

		OJ C 102 28.04.2004, p. 0031-0154 E			

The rights of prisoners in the European Union

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Maurizio TURCO (IND, I) on the rights of prisoners in the European Union. Quoting statistics compiled by the Council of Europe in 2002 which painted an alarming picture of overcrowding in prisons, an excessive increase in the prison population, a rise in the number of foreign nationals being held, high numbers of remand prisoners and numerous cases of death and suicide, the report addressed a formal recommendation to the Council to take a joint standpoint on matters relating to prisoners. In particular, it called for a binding European Prisons Charter covering all the Council of Europe's Member States, which would guarantee basic rights for all detainees in those countries. Such rights would include: access to a lawyer and to healthcare, protection from violence by fellow prisoners, decent prison conditions (with regard to accommodation, cleanliness, ventilation, light, food, etc.), rehabilitation and reintegration into society and the workforce, the separation of different categories of detainees (i.e. juveniles, remand prisoners and convicted criminals), specific measures for vulnerable groups, special protection for imprisoned juveniles and women, special arrangements for pregnant women and the mothers of young children, visiting rights, the greatest possible use of open or semi-open prisons and alternatives to imprisonment, such as community service, information to prisoners about their rights, in a language which they understand, and training for prison staff and law enforcement officers. The Member States were also urged to earmark "appropriate resources" for the restructuring and modernisation of prisons and to create a specific EU budget heading for these and other projects involving prisoners' rights. ?

The rights of prisoners in the European Union

Parliament adopted by 439 votes in favour, 49 against and 20 abstentions an own-initiative report drafted by Maurizio TURCO (IND, I) on the rights of prisoners in the EU. According to Council of Europe statistics, on 1 September 2002, a total of 539 436 persons were being held in prison in the enlarged European Union. These statistics paint an alarming picture regarding overcrowding, excessive increase in the prison population, rise in the number of foreign nationals being held, high numbers of remand prisoners and numerous cases of death and suicide. Accordingly, it calls on the Council and the Member States to encourage the drawing up a European Prisons Charter covering all the Council of Europe's Member States. Such a Charter would have to incorporate detailed rules, binding on the Member States, concerning a prisoner's right to: - access to a lawyer, to healthcare and to notify a third person that he or she has been detained, - the right to physical and mental safety, - prison conditions, - the right of access to internal and, if necessary, external medical services, - re-education, training, rehabilitation and reintegration into society and the workforce, - the separation of categories of detained persons: juveniles, persons on remand, convicted criminals.?