

Procedure file

Basic information		
CNS - Consultation procedure Decision	2005/0125(CNS)	Procedure lapsed or withdrawn
European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: pursuing actions on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, Treaty TEU Title VI		
Subject		
1.10 Fundamental rights in the EU, Charter		
7.30.05 Police cooperation		
7.40.04 Judicial cooperation in criminal matters		
8.40.08 Agencies and bodies of the EU		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	PSE KÓSZÁNÉ KOVÁCS Magda	14/09/2005
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)	2768	04/12/2006
	Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)	2752	05/10/2006
	General Affairs	2736	12/06/2006
European Commission	Commission DG Justice and Consumers	Commissioner FRATTINI Franco	

Key events			
30/06/2005	Legislative proposal published	COM(2005)0280	Summary
29/09/2005	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
12/06/2006	Debate in Council	2736	Summary
13/09/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
18/09/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A6-0282/2006	
05/10/2006	Debate in Council	2752	Summary
12/10/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
12/10/2006	Debate in Parliament		
12/10/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0415/2006	Summary

30/11/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0510/2006	Summary
04/12/2006	Debate in Council	2768	

Technical information

Procedure reference	2005/0125(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
Legal basis	Treaty on the European Union (after Amsterdam) M 031; Treaty on the European Union (after Amsterdam) M 034-p2c; Treaty on the European Union (after Amsterdam) M 030
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure lapsed or withdrawn
Committee dossier	LIBE/6/29476

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal	COM(2005)0280	30/06/2005	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2005)0849	30/06/2005	EC	Summary
Committee draft report	PE369.852	07/02/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE370.082	15/02/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A6-0282/2006	18/09/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading	T6-0415/2006	12/10/2006	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T6-0510/2006	30/11/2006	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2007)0054	11/01/2007	EC	

Additional information

European Commission	EUR-Lex
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European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: pursuing actions on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, Treaty TEU Title VI

COMMISSION'S IMPACT ASSESSMENT

For further information concerning the background to this issue, please refer to the summary of the Commission's initial proposal of 30 June 2005 for a Council Decision empowering the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to pursue its activities in areas referred to in Title VI of the Treaty on European Union ? [COM\(2005\)0280](#).

Note: This proposal was tabled in conjunction with a related proposal for a Council Regulation establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (please refer to summary relating to CNS/2005/0124).

1- POLICY OPTIONS AND IMPACTS

To address the Council's policy objectives, five policy options were identified in this extended impact assessment. These policy options were elaborated in terms of tasks and outputs:

1.1- Option 1 ? ?status quo?: where current structures such as EUMC and the Network of independent experts in fundamental rights would continue. There would also be a number of short and medium-term developments (such as establishment of the European Institute for Gender Equality). This option would

not meet the policy objectives of the Council to establish an EU Fundamental Rights Agency - an idea that was also almost unanimously supported in the public consultation launched by the Commission.

1.2- Option 2 ? ?Focused Observation Agency??: which could collect information on fundamental rights in a limited number of thematic areas having strongest links to EU policies. The remit of the Agency would be considered ?technical assistance? to the EU institutions. This option would address the problems in the current situation but only to a very limited extent. The impact on improving fundamental rights data quality, the key objective of the Council, would be marginal. So the potential of this policy option to contribute to the policy objectives is very limited. The opinions expressed in the **course of the public consultation were divided about the effectiveness of this policy option.**

1.3- Option 3 ? ?General Observation Agency??: that would be similar in the scope of its tasks to policy option 2, but would cover more thematic areas.

1.4- Option 4 ? ?Focused Observation and Assessment Agency on Union Policies??: that would include all the objectives and activities of policy option 3. In addition, the Agency would have greater responsibilities as regards observing EU institutions and Member States when they implement Union law. Based on data collection, the Agency would carry out assessments and issue opinions to EU institutions and Member States.

1.5- Option 5 ? ?Widest Possible Observation and Assessment Agency?, covering both Union and non-Union policies: that would include all the objectives and activities identified for policy option 4. But the Agency would also monitor respect for fundamental rights in the Member States for the purposes of Article 7 TEU, i.e. it would monitor Member States also when they act autonomously, outside EU law. In practice, this would require the Agency to have substantial presence in each EU Member State.

CONCLUSION: Option 4 ? ?Focused Observation and Assessment Agency limited to Union law? ? emerged from the impact assessment as the preferred way to achieve the policy objectives and address the problems identified. It addresses the problems in the current situation efficiently; it entails a medium financial cost, and it has a considerable degree of political acceptability.

IMPACTS

The proposed establishment of a Fundamental Rights Agency would have an impact in several positive respects relating to the quality of information, as well as to systematic observation of impact on fundamental rights resulting from EU action and from implementation of EU law by the Member States.

The Agency will increase the availability, quality and comparability of data and information by closely working with Member States? statistical institutes and other stakeholders to improve the current situation. In contrast to policy option 3, the task of issuing opinions will provide an additional impetus to ensure that data and information are valid, comparable and available. The Agency will establish comprehensive systems to observe the impact of EU and Member States? action on the ground through better availability of information and issuing of opinions. The focus on the areas of Union competence means, however, that observation and assessment of issues is limited to how the implementation of EU law and policies affects fundamental rights in practice. The creation of the Agency will lead to better coordination of national human rights institutions and engagement with NGOs, when the Agency will work with them for consultation, information-gathering purposes. It will also increase awareness of citizens of their fundamental rights. This will be done via publicity campaigns, public website, access to Agency resources etc, in accordance with a communication strategy to be prepared by the Agency.

The Agency will increase the coherence and consistency of applying fundamental rights standards in the Union policies by acting as a centre of expertise for the Union institutions. The Agency will also have a duty to respond rapidly to requests for information and assistance from the Union institutions. By observing and assessing the impacts on fundamental rights from the Union policies and legislation, the Agency will have ability to improve the coherence of fundamental rights policy of the EU.

Efficiency is expected as work will be targeted and focused on Union priorities. Focus on EU level priorities ensures relevance of the Agency to the Union?s policies. It will also contribute avoiding duplication of work by other institutions at the international, European and national levels.

Lastly, by keeping racism and xenophobia as one of the prime fields to observe and assess, the Agency will ensure EUMC work on racism and xenophobia will not be diluted. Continuation of EUMC work will facilitate the transformation into an Agency and retain EUMC expertise and institutional learning.

The screening did not reveal any significant negative impacts of the proposal in economic, social or environmental area. On the contrary, a high level of respect of fundamental rights will affect positively to other policy areas of the Union, and thus indirectly lead also to high economic, social and environmental standards for the advantage of the Europeans.

2- FOLLOW-UP

The Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency will be responsible for the implementation of effective monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the Agency against its objectives according to professionally recognized standards and shall report annually to the Management Board on the results of the evaluation.

The Director will prepare an annual report on the activities of the Agency which will compare, in particular, the results achieved with the objectives of the annual Work Programme; this report, following adoption by the Management Board, will be forwarded by 15 June at the latest to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Court of Auditors.

The Agency should also be subject to periodic external evaluation. The first external evaluation should be carried out after three years of operation. Such an external evaluation, in addition to questions of efficiency and effectiveness, should also consider the following questions:

- the Agency?s place in, and contribution to, the system of European governance (as a means of delivering Community policy objectives);
- the consistency of the Agency?s activities with those of other international organisations, such as the Council of Europe, OSCE and UN, and other relevant European bodies, such as the European Institute for Gender Equality;
- the value added by the Agency as a type of implementation of Community policy (compared to ?in-house? implementation by Commission departments);- the longer-term impact of the Agency?s activities on citizens and their level of awareness of their fundamental rights.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: pursuing actions on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, Treaty TEU Title VI

PURPOSE: To empower the European Agency for Fundamental Rights to pursue its activities in areas referred to in Title VI of the TEU.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

CONTENT: In 2003 the Member States agreed to build upon the existing European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), based in Vienna and to extend its mandate by turning it into a Human Rights Agency. For legal reasons the Commission is presenting two separate proposals concerning the establishment of the Agency. The first a Regulation (see CNS/2005/0124), which is the appropriate instrument for establishing an Agency and the second this Decision, which seeks to entrust the Agency with tasks in areas referred to in Article VI of the TEU.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is the point of reference for the Agency's mandate. The objective of the Agency will be to provide the relevant EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies with assistance and expertise relating to fundamental rights when defining policies or implementing legislation. The thematic areas of activity will be distinguished by a Multi-annual Framework, determined by an implementing Regulation. The idea of the Agency is to allow the Council, for example, to exploit the Agency's expertise when acting on a proposal by one third of the Member States, by the European Parliament or by the Commission during the procedure under Article 7 of the TEU. Importantly, the mandate of the Agency will not be to carry out systematic and permanent monitoring of the Member States for the purposes of Article 7.

Regarding budgetary implications, it is being proposed that the Agency begin work as early as 1 January 2007, with a considerably extended mandate. In order to take account of the inevitable transition period, a growing budget for the period 2007-20013 is being proposed.

For more details concerning the financial implications of this measure, please refer to the financial statement.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: pursuing actions on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, Treaty TEU Title VI

The Council took note of work on a draft Regulation aimed at establishing an EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and on a draft Decision on pursuit by the agency of its activities. It requested the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue work on the remaining outstanding questions so as to enable the Council to reach an agreement.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: pursuing actions on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, Treaty TEU Title VI

The committee adopted the report by Magda KÓSZÁNYI KOVÁCS (PES, HU) approving the proposed decision on the activities of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, subject to just one amendment (under the consultation procedure). This introduced a new recital referring to Article 11 of the TEU, stipulating that the Union should "define and implement a common foreign and security policy covering all areas of foreign and security policy, with the objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms".

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: pursuing actions on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, Treaty TEU Title VI

The Council had an exchange of views on the state of play regarding the establishment and effective functioning of the Agency.

The debate focused on the main outstanding question, which is the extension of the scope of the Agency to questions relating to police and judicial penal cooperation (Title VI of the Treaty on European Union, the so-called "Third Pillar").

The Presidency called on Member States, in a constructive spirit, to help in finding a compromise solution to this question, with a view to establishing of the Agency before the end of the year, in accordance with the timeframe set by the European Council in June 2006.

In this respect, the Presidency indicated that it would submit a compromise solution to delegations in the near future.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: pursuing actions on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, Treaty TEU Title VI

The European Parliament decided to postpone the final vote on the report by Magda KÓSZÁNYI KOVÁCS (PSE, HU) regarding the extension of the competences of the Agency to matters covered by Title VI of the TEU (3rd pillar ? intergovernmental cooperation.) In doing so, Parliament wished to give the Commission more time to reach a compromise with the Council. Certain Member States favour the proposition that the Agency should deal not only with first pillar issues but also third pillar ones such as police and justice cooperation which includes measures on immigration and counter-terrorism.

Accordingly, Parliament approved the decision of its competent committees and accepted the 43 amendments proposed by the latter on the legislation concerning the establishment of the

Agency. (Please see CNS/2005/0124). It also rejected by a large majority the proposition of the IND/DEM group to reject the Commission's entire proposal.

Parliament inserted here a new recital stating that the Agency's remit enables it to provide protection for human rights not only in the field of terrorism and organised crime but also in other fields, such as trafficking in persons, offences against children, illicit drug and arms trafficking and corruption and fraud, where measures can also weaken the effectiveness of the protection of human rights.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: pursuing actions on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, Treaty TEU Title VI

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Magda Kovács (PES, HU) by 469 votes in favour to 101 against with 13 abstentions. It approved the Commission proposal as amended by Parliament on 12 October 2006. This resolution is closely connected to that drafted by Kinga GÁL and adopted on the same date. (Please see CNS/2005/0124.)