

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

COMMITTEE ON CITIZENS' FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Thursday 24 April 2003, 9 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. and 3 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.

Rue Wiertz, 60 - Brussels
European Parliament Chamber, Paul-Henri Spaak Building

**Public Hearing: 'Respect for fundamental rights:
the situation within the European Union in 2002'**

Draft programme

For the third consecutive time, the European Parliament is organising a hearing of national parliament representatives with a special interest in respect for the fundamental rights enshrined in the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Since 2001, the European Parliament has presented an annual report on the situation of fundamental rights within the European Union which follows the structure of the Charter and is based on all available information sources (United Nations, Council of Europe, specialised European Agencies, NGOs).

Moreover, following its resolution of 5 July 2001, the European Parliament called on the Commission to create a European network of 15 national experts in the field of fundamental rights. The network has been operational since October 2002.

Although the national parliaments' procedures for dealing with such issues differ, examination of respect for our common democratic values remains without doubt a key parliamentary responsibility. The European Parliament therefore wishes to strengthen cooperation with national parliaments in this area.

This is all the more important since fundamental rights are eventually to become legally binding. Similarly, following the entry into force of Article 7(1) (new) of the Treaty of Nice, the European Parliament, together with the Commission and the Member States, could be involved in implementing an early warning system to prevent serious violations of human rights in Member States.

Following opening statements by the European Parliament, the Presidency-in-Office of the Council, the Commission and the Council of Europe Representatives, the morning will be devoted to hearing the NGOs concerned and the afternoon the national Parliaments representatives concerning the situation regarding fundamental rights in the EU and the main issues in 2002, which will be the subject of the next EP report by rapporteur, Mr Fodé Sylla. Adoption of the report is likely to take place at the September 2003 part-session.

The aim of the hearing is to highlight violations and the shortcomings of our policies in this area, as well as to examine and encourage best practice as applied in some Member States in order to create a genuine European area of freedom, security and justice. Mr Fodé Sylla's preliminary draft report and the summary report of the network of national experts drawn up by its coordinator, Mr Olivier De Schutter, will serve as a basis for the discussion.

Due to time constraints and given the wide range of issues to be covered, members of national parliaments are asked to limit their presentations to five minutes so as to enable an exchange of views to be held with their EP colleagues.

More detailed written contributions (ten pages max.), which will be welcomed by the rapporteur, may of course be submitted provided that texts are forwarded to the secretariat (in FR and/or EN) no later than 4 April; similar conditions apply to written contributions by NGO representatives on the understanding that their oral statement may not exceed five minutes.

Draft programme:

24 April 2003

'Respect for fundamental rights: the situation within the EU in 2002'
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9 a.m.- 12.30 p.m. **First half of the day**

Opening session

- 9 a.m. Opening of proceedings by **Mrs Charlotte CEDERSCHIÖLD**, Vice-President of the European Parliament (*to be confirmed*)
- 9.15 a.m. Address by **Mr Filippas PETSALNICOS**, Minister of Justice, representing the Greek Presidency of the Council (*to be confirmed*)
- 9.30 a.m. Address by **Mr Antonio VITORINO**, Member of the European Commission, Chairman of Working Group II of the European Convention
- 9.45 a.m. Address by **Mr Alvaro GIL-ROBLES**, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe
- 10 a.m. Presentation by **Mr Fodé SYLLA**, rapporteur on the situation regarding fundamental rights in the European Union (2002)

Statements by NGOs representatives

10.05 a.m. **Dignity and Freedoms**

- Prohibition of torture and degrading treatment, particularly in the context of the fight against terrorism

Amnesty International, Mr Dick OOSTING, Director

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Mr Pierre BARGE, Deputy Secretary-General

Human Rights Watch, Mr Leo PEIJNENBURG, Director

International Observatory for Prisons, Mr Thierry LEVY, President

- Freedom of expression today

Reporters without borders, Mr Jean-Paul MARTHOZ, President, Belgian Section

European Federation of Centres Research and Information on Sectarianism (FECRIS), Mr Jean NOKIN, President

- The situation of asylum-seekers and immigrants in the EU

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), Mrs Maria Teresa GIL-BAZO, EU representative

10.40 a.m. Exchange of views

11 a.m. **Equality and Solidarity**

Elimination of discrimination on any of the grounds listed in Article 13 of the Treaty: improvements to be made

- Gender and sexual orientation

European Women's Lobby (EWL), Mrs Mary Mc FAIL, Secretary-General
(to be confirmed)

International Lesbian and Gay Association - Europe (ILGA), Miss Ailsa SPINDLER, Director

- Disabled persons

European Forum for Disabled People, Mr Stefan TRÖMEL, Director

- Combating exclusion

International ATD Fourth World Movement, Mrs Sarah CUNNINGHAM
(to be confirmed)

11.20 a.m. **Access to Justice**

Fair Trials Abroad, Mr Stephen JAKOBI, Director

11.30 a.m. **Exchange of views with European Journalists**

12.25 p.m. Closing of the first half of the day by **Mr Fodé SYLLA**, rapporteur on the situation regarding fundamental rights in the European Union (2002)

12.30 p.m. End of first session

1 p.m. Lunch

3 p.m. – 6.30 p.m. Second half of the day

Exchange of views with national Parliaments representatives

- 3 p.m. Introduction by **Mr Olivier de SCHUTTER**, Professor at the Law Faculty in the Catholic University of Louvain, Coordinator of the network of experts on fundamental rights
- 3.30 p.m. **Discussion between members of national Parliaments and MEPs**
Series of contributions by members of national parliaments to be followed by an exchange of views with MEPs
- 5 p.m. **European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Mrs Beate WINKLER**, Director
- 5.15 p.m. **Police and Human rights programme (Council of Europe), Mr Hartmut SELTMANN**, Police Senior Officer
- 5.30 p.m. **UNHCR, Mr Johannes van der KLAAUW**, Senior European Affairs Officer
- 5.45 p.m. **International Labour Organization, Mr Eddy LAURIJSSEN**, Director of the liaison office with the European Community (*to be confirmed*)
- 6 p.m. Conclusions by **Mr Jorge HERNANDEZ MOLLAR**, Chairman of the Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs,

ANNEX

Hearing secretariat:

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