

THE 1987 COHOM MANDATE

MANDATE FOR THE EPC - WORKING GROUP ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Twelve wish to underline the importance they attach to the promotion of human rights. They are determined to ensure that human rights concerns continue to receive appropriate attention at all levels of activity within the EPC framework. It is against this background that a new working group specifically devoted to human rights issues has been created. In this context, it is noted that the regional working groups would continue to be best suited to deal with specific human rights cases within their geographical regions, and that the OSCE working group should continue to deal with both human rights policy and cases within the OSCE process.

The human rights working group is tasked with:

1. Discussion and submission of recommendations to the Political Committee on general guidelines for common reactions to actual or predictable violations of human rights, including options and modalities for reactions of the Twelve;
2. Co-ordination of positions of the Twelve on human rights issues likely to arise within all relevant international fora;
3. The working group should meet at least twice a year (once before the session of the UN Human Rights Commission and once before the General Assembly). Additional meetings could be called when required. Time schedules for meetings of the UN working group and the human rights working group should be related.
4. Collection and evaluation of information on current violations of human rights in various parts of the world and actions undertaken by the Twelve in cases of such violations.
5. Discussion and, where appropriate, submission of recommendations to the Political Committee on i.a. the general aspects of human rights questions as well as on the general aspects of the implementation of the Twelve's human rights policy, including examination of the general balance of the interventions of the Twelve in the field of human rights.
6. Reporting annually to the Political Committee on actions taken by the Twelve in the field of human rights.

THE 1999 EXTENSION

COREPER, 27 APRIL 1999

12. HUMAN RIGHTS: FOLLOW-UP TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN VIENNA

Sur la base d'un rapport de la Présidence, le Comité charge le Groupe "Droits de l'homme" du suivi de l'ensemble des points opérationnels contenus dans la déclaration faite par l'Union à Vienne le 10 décembre 1998 à l'occasion du 50ème anniversaire de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'Homme. Il autorise le Groupe à faire appel, sur une base ad hoc, à des experts en questions communautaires ou JAI pour l'assister dans cette tâche.

Le Comité note également qu'il aura lors d'une prochaine réunion une discussion sur un document de la Présidence concernant le premier des points opérationnels de la déclaration de Vienne, un Rapport annuel de l'Union sur les droits de l'homme.

OPERATIONAL POINTS EXTRACTED FROM THE DECLARATION OF THE EU ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, VIENNA, 10 DECEMBER 1998:

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IV. These policies must be continued and, where necessary, strengthened and improved. In this regard, it is important that the Union reinforce its capacity to achieve its objectives on the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this context, the Union is determined to ensure respect for human rights in all its actions. In particular the Union will consider concrete measures such as:

- 1) enhance the capacity to jointly assess the human rights situation in the world by closer co-ordination and otherwise ensure that all pertinent means for action are available within the framework of the Union, including through the possible publication of an annual EU human rights report;
- 2) further develop cooperation in the field of human rights, such as education and training activities, in coordination with other relevant organisations, and ensure the continuation of the Human Rights Masters Programme organised by fifteen European universities;
- 3) reflect on the usefulness of convening a periodic human rights discussion forum with the participation of EU institutions as well as representatives of academic institutions and NGOs;
- 4) strengthen the capacities to respond to international operational requirements in the field of human rights and democratisation, such as through the possible establishment of a common roster of European human rights and democracy experts, for human rights field operations and electoral assistance and monitoring;
- 5) foster the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in third countries, in particular through working towards the earliest possible adoption of the draft regulations, currently under consideration in the EU framework, on the implementation of co-operation operations;

6) ensure all means to achieve the coherent realisation of these goals, including through the consideration of strengthening relevant EU structures.

December 2003: extended mandate

Without prejudice to the existing competencies of the CFSP geographical working groups, the Committee agreed to extend the mandate of the Human Rights Working Group to include first pillar issues so as to have under purview all human rights aspects of the external relations of the EU. First pillar issues may be addressed only within the limits of the powers conferred upon the European Community by the EC Treaty and of the objectives assigned to it therein.
