

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on International Trade

2005/2057(INI)

12.10.2005

OPINION

of the Committee on International Trade

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on The Human Rights and Democracy Clause in European Union agreements
(2005/2057(INI))

Draftsperson: Glyn Ford

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the European Community's general practice of incorporating human rights and democracy clauses—the so-called 'essential element' and 'non-execution' clauses—in its international agreements since 1992, but at the same time notes the selective manner in which such clauses are implemented in some cases;
2. Calls on the Commission to incorporate a standard human rights clause in all its future international agreements, including sectoral trade agreements concluded with, and autonomous trade measures granted to third countries; moreover, when assessing countries' compliance with the clause, calls on the Commission to establish specific priorities for each country;
3. Recommends the establishment of specific benchmarks in the area of human rights and democracy on the basis of political dialogue and with reference to relevant international standards and international treaties;
4. Calls on the Commission to establish a monitoring mechanism that links the implementation and temporary suspension of trade agreements and autonomous trade measures to a beneficiary country's compliance with basic democratic norms and respect for human and minority rights, as set out in the European Parliament's Annual report on human rights in the world;
5. Calls, in this regard, on the Commission to involve Parliament fully in the assessment of the implementation of human rights clauses or similar requirements of compliance with basic democratic standards and respect for human and minority rights incorporated in such agreements; and emphasises the importance of consulting civil society in this assessment process so as to improve the monitoring of the human rights situation;
6. Emphasises that the temporary suspension of trade agreements and autonomous trade measures should be undertaken according to objective and transparent criteria, which are the same for each country and clearly regulated by an expiry clause in each international agreement, so that third countries comply with respect for human rights at the latest on expiry of the suspension period;
7. Recommends that the Commission develop an objective and transparent methodology that spells out the exact relationship between third countries' compliance with human rights standards and the appropriate Community response;
8. Is of the opinion that the setting up of standing sub-groups or sub-committees on human rights within the framework of international agreements, including sectoral trade agreements, would clearly contribute to further developing a structured dialogue on human rights and democratic principles;

9. Calls on the Commission and the Council to fully engage the European Parliament in the development of such a regime;
10. Calls on the Commission to make better use of the knowledge which civil society possesses about local human rights situations, as such expertise is insufficiently used in current policy documents;
11. Calls on those members of Parliament who participate in country missions to actively assess local human rights situations and to include their findings in their final reports; calls on the Commission to incorporate such findings in its policy.

PROCEDURE

Title	The Human Rights and Democracy Clause in European Union agreements	
Procedure number	2005/2057(INI)]	
Committee responsible	AFET	
Committee asked for its opinion Date announced in plenary	INTA 13.6.2005	DEVE 24.5.2005
Enhanced cooperation	Yes	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Glyn Ford 30.8.2005	
Discussed in committee	30.8.2005	12.9.2005
Date suggestions adopted	11.10.2005	
Result of final vote	for: 20 against: 1 abstentions: 0	
Members present for the final vote	Jean-Pierre Audy, Enrique Barón Crespo, Jean-Louis Bourlanges, Nigel Farage, Béla Glattfelder, Jacky Henin, Alain Lipietz, Erika Mann, Helmuth Markov, David Martin, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Georgios Papastamkos, Tokia Saïfi, Peter Šťastný, Robert Sturdy, Johan Van Hecke, Zbigniew Zaleski	
Substitutes present for the final vote	Panagiotis Beglitis, Danutė Budreikaitė, Elisa Ferreira, Filip Andrzej Kaczmarek, Jörg Leichtfried, Antolín Sánchez Presedo, Mauro Zani	
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Syed Kamall	