



Fundamental rights in the EU: civil liberties MEPs address shortcomings

Committees: Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

The civil liberties committee criticises violations of the basic rights of migrants, LGBT people, women and national minorities, among others, in its annual resolution on fundamental rights in the EU, adopted on Tuesday. It urges member states and the Commission to do more to ensure that fundamental rights are fully respected in Europe.

The text analyses the global fundamental rights situation in the EU from 2010 to 2011. "I am satisfied with the result of the vote. This is a very strong report and it shows that the EP takes very seriously its task to defend the fundamental rights in the EU", commented the rapporteur, Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D, SK), after the vote. The resolution was adopted by 32 votes to 24, with 1 abstention.

National minorities and Roma inclusion

Civil liberties MEPs call on EU countries to defend the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including the right of members of linguistic minorities to use their own languages. They also stress that, while the protection of minorities is part of the Copenhagen criteria, there is no standard for minority rights in EU policy.

The committee regrets that citizens of Roma origin are subjected to collective expulsions and deplores the "weak reaction" of the Commission in certain cases. It also highlights the many gaps found in most of the Roma integration strategies presented by member states to the Commission and it calls on national governments to allocate sufficient resources to meet the aims of those strategies.

Rights of migrants

MEPs strongly condemn the extensive use in the EU of detention to ease the removal of immigrants, including minors, and call on member states to provide alternatives to detention under national legislation. They also underline that access to healthcare is a fundamental right and urge national governments to make it a reality, including for irregular migrants, especially pregnant women and children.

The civil liberties committee deplores the slow progress in adopting the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and calls on the Council and member states to ensure that it is implemented by the end of 2012 as planned.

Gender equality and fight against homophobia

EU countries are urged to set specific employment targets and strategies to close the pay and pension gaps between women and men. These targets must address the concentration of women in part-time, low-pay and precarious jobs, says the resolution.

The Commission and the Council should intervene more forcefully against homophobia, violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, explain MEPs, adding that LGBT people's rights are more likely to be safeguarded if they have access to legal institutions such as cohabitation, a registered partnership or marriage.

Press release

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