to support the emerging democracy and its willingness to contribute to the economic development of the country.

The Commission proposal which is to be discussed this evening falls within the framework of that agreement. It is proposed that the Community guarantee in full, from its own resources, loans granted by the European Investment Bank up to a total of ECU 300m over a period of two years. The Bank would grant the loans in accordance with its usual criteria for assistance.

South Africa’s need for infrastructure investment and external financing is considerable. The Bank’s assistance will send a political signal. It will also be an effective financing tool and act as a catalyst for further private investments. Under the proposal, the Community will provide full coverage for the Bank’s operations. This is justified because the Bank is bound by its statute to take the necessary guarantees. Since 1989 the rule has been that when the Bank is called upon by the Community to provide assistance in third countries, the loans are guaranteed in full by the general budget of the Community. The present case is similar to that of assistance previously provided by the Bank at the Council’s request in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia.

The Commission therefore cannot concur with the amendment proposed in the report by the Committee on Budgets. However, and what is important, the Commission considers that after the indicative period of two years stipulated in the proposal, the terms of the Community’s guarantee to the Bank in respect of loans in South Africa must take into account the follow-up to its report on the advisability of restricting the scope of the guarantee from the Community budget for the Bank’s external loans. The report will shortly be presented to the Council and Parliament. The Commission is reflecting on the possibility of a 75% guaranteed rate for the new protocols.

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Prönk (PPE). - Mr President, I just have one question for the Commissioner. In fact, he did not answer the main issue of this debate.

Will the Commission be able to give an answer at a later stage on the real problems of this debate and not only on the problems which he read up on and obviously prepared before he actually heard us?

Tomlinson (PSE). - Mr President, I do not want to delay the House and I am sure the House would not want to argue with Commissioner Liikanen, but it shows the weakness of the Commission’s position when it says: we do not want to argue about the legal base. We will just give you the facts. But of course the facts rest upon the legal base. The two are so linked you cannot ignore them.

The Commission really has to reconsider this, not least in the interest of intellectual honesty. What you have actually said is inviting a total breach of budgetary law as well because you are really suggesting that what will happen is that the Commission will pass their view to the Council who will seek unilaterally to take a decision in relation to the use of the Community budget to guarantee by the figure of 100% that which must be determined jointly in the context of the budget procedure and the two arms of the budget authority. If you start that process, the troubles that you are storing up for yourselves in the future are very great indeed by comparison with the ones that you are trying to avoid tonight.

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Presidente. - La discussione è chiusa.

La votazione si svolgerà domani, alle 10.00.

Respekt for menneskerettighederne i Den Europæiske Union
Achtung der Menschenrechte in der Europäischen Union
Σημασία των ανθρωπίνων δικαιώματων στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Respect for human rights in the European Union
Respeto de los derechos humanos en la Unión Europea
Respect des droits de l’homme dans l’Union européenne
Rispetto dei diritti dell’uomo nell’Unione europea
Naleving van de mensenrechten in de Europese Unie
Respeto dos Direitos do Homem na União Europeia
Ihmisoikeuksien kunnioittaminen Euroopan unionissa
Mänskliga rättigheter i Europiska unionen


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Newman (PSE), rapporteur. - Mr President, for many years the European Parliament has examined the human rights situation in countries outside the European Community and has rightly condemned numerous abuses of human rights. It is, however, only since
1993 that our Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs has begun to produce an annual report on respect for human rights within the countries of what is now the European Union.

My report repeats the view of the Parliament that the European Union should itself accede to the European Convention of Human Rights. I have produced a political report. I have prioritised what I regard either as the worst or the most common infringements of human rights. I have introduced new areas for examination and made fresh emphases.

The report expresses concern about the lack of effective action by Member States to combat the increase of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism and calls for a European directive prohibiting racial discrimination. It insists that membership of, or active support for, racist groups is incompatible with membership of the police force and it calls for the disqualification from eligibility to stand for public office, including membership of the European Parliament, for persons who incite racial hatred or advocate racial discrimination. It urges Member States to consider as an aggravating circumstance any crimes perpetrated with a racist motive. It deplores the use of violence to expel immigrants.

The report is concerned about the increasing restrictions on asylum seekers and condemns racist attacks on asylum seekers and their harsh treatment in detention centres. Some detailed asylum seekers have become so desperate that they have been driven to commit suicide.

The report calls on European Union Member States to ensure that living conditions for prisoners meet basic standards of human dignity. It calls for the once-and-for-all abolition of the death penalty in all Member States and it supports the rights of conscientious objection to military service.

The report calls for all persons of long-standing residence in the European Union to have permanent residence and voting rights. Freedom of expression is a basic human right and no-one should be prosecuted for simply opposing the government. The report affirms freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of information and privacy. It condemns the removal of the right to silence. It condema the keeping of blacklists. The report asserts that freedom from crime and the fear of crime is a fundamental human right. It is necessary to be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime such as poverty, mass unemployment and the drug culture. Greater support should be given to crime prevention measures and to the victims of crime. There are over 53 million people living in poverty in the European Community so the report calls for a system of minimum guarantees in respect of housing, social aid, health care and legal aid. The UK is urged to sign the Social Chapter.

The report asserts that the present level of unemployment of around 20 million is a violation of human rights as the right to work with a reasonable level of pay is a basic human right. It maintains that the right to good quality housing at an affordable price is a basic human right. It affirms the right of a person to the highest standard of health care based on need. The report supports the right for workers to associate in a trade union and to take industrial action without the threat of sacking or court action.

Member States are urged to guarantee a statutory right to trade union recognition, representation of individuals by their trade union and collective bargaining. The UK Government is urged to restate and compensate the sacked trade unionists at OCHQ. Domestic workers who are third country nationals should be recognised as workers in their own right and have the right to change employers. The report affirms the right of all children to good health care, clean accommodation, healthy nutrition, a non-polluted environment, a good education and freedom from economic exploitation. It calls for coordinated measures against child abduction and protection of children from sexual abuse and violence.

The report maintains that physically disabled people, mentally handicapped people and people who are mentally ill should have the same rights as able-bodied people and resources should be provided to allow them to be fully integrated into society. The report declares that discrimination on the grounds of sex or sexual orientation is unacceptable. Human rights, Mr President, include the right to live in an environment that is as free from pollution as possible.

In conclusion, within the Member States of the European Union the level of human rights is regarded as being amongst the highest in the world. However, a genuinely civilized society must be constantly vigilant in exposing human rights violations and in rectifying and improving the situation. Civil and political rights and justice within the law are very important human rights but they are not the only ones. Social rights and freedom from poverty and crime are human rights too.

Nassauer (PPE), Berichterstatter des mitberatenden Rechtsausschusses. - Herr Präsident, meine Damen und Herren! Bei unseren Dringlichkeiten bemühen wir uns darum, durch Erklärungen des Europäischen Parlaments auf Menschenrechtsverletzungen in aller Welt hinzuweisen und den Verfolgten durch unsere Zuwendung zu helfen. Das werden wir mit Aussicht auf Erfolg nur dann tun, wenn wir selbst mit den