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Preliminary Document

on activities of certain organizations
concerning the protection of human rights

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document contains information concerning recent activities of certain organizations, in particular the European Community Institutions, on human rights questions. It is intended to contain a selection of the major items and may be extended to include details of other organizations not mentioned here.

II. ACTIVITIES OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

On 5 April 1977 the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission signed a Joint Declaration on upholding human rights, stressing the "prime importance these institutions attached to the protection of fundamental rights as derived in particular from the constitutions of the Member States", and the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms". The Declaration continues by stating "in the exercise of their powers and in pursuance of the aims of the European Communities these institutions respect and will continue to respect these rights".

The European Parliament has debated Human Rights issues on a number of occasions, and the Political Affairs and Legal Affairs Committees are regularly seized with issues concerning human rights, both within the European Community and in other countries of the world. Recent debates in the European Parliament included:

- a debate on Protection of Human Rights throughout the world, and in Europe, and the adoption of a resolution (11 May 1977);
- a debate on the oral question (Doc. 544/76) on repeated violation of human rights in Uruguay (February 1977);
- a debate on Mr Jozeau Marigné's report (Doc. 557/76) on behalf of the Legal Affairs Committee on the draft joint declaration on the protection of fundamental human rights (February 1977);
- the adoption of a resolution (OJ C259 of 4.11.1976) concerning the violation of human rights situation in Chile (October 1976);
- a debate on Mr Jozeau Marigné's report on behalf of the Legal Affairs Committee on the report of the Commission on the Protection of Fundamental Rights (Doc. 321/76), and the adoption of the resolution (October 1976);

- A debate on the oral question (Doc. 190/76) and the adoption of a resolution (Doc. 229/76) on violations of human rights in Argentina (July 1976);
- a debate and the adoption of a resolution (Doc. 228/76) on the ill-treatment of Valdimir Bukovsky in July 1976;

Oral and written questions have been submitted to the Council and the Commission on resolutions with certain countries in view of the human rights situation in them. Amongst the countries concerned are Uganda, Angola, Iran, and Greece¹.

Other debates on issues such as the Helsinki CSCE and the Belgrade Conference have also touched on human rights.

The Directorate General of Research and Documentation has prepared in response to a request by the Legal Affairs Committee certain documents on human rights, in particular a review of the constitutions of the Member States, and of other relevant sources, to isolate fundamental rights which are guaranteed by the Member States. The review includes comparisons of certain fundamental rights in Member States.

The European Parliament was also represented at the Conference of Presidents of European parliaments (i.e. parliaments of the Member States of the Council of Europe) which took place in Vienna in June 1977. The agenda of this Conference included a discussion on human rights.

Human rights issues have also been discussed in the context of meetings between Delegations from the European Parliament and from other parliaments, in particular from the US Congress, from the Parliament of Canada, and from the Latin American Parliament. Meetings with the US Congress and with the Latin American Congress in July 1977 included discussions of human rights issues.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Council of Europe is intimately concerned with the protection of human rights in its Member States, particularly in view of the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Protocols.

Document H(76)16 of the Council of Europe contains a detailed review of its activities in the field of human rights in 1976.

¹ A list of recent European Parliament resolutions, reports and activities on human rights appears in PE 49.405.

This review itemizes the activities of the European Commission on Human Rights, the European Court on Human Rights, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It also describes the present situation concerning the Protection of the European Convention on Human Rights, and of the European Social Charter.

The Council of Europe has prepared an extensive bibliography relating to the European Convention on Human Rights H(73) 13 and further bibliographical notes, most recently one on documents relating to the European Convention on Human Rights (20 February 1976 H(76)2).

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations has been concerned with human rights since its inception. On 10 December 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The General Assembly holds periodic discussions on human rights issues and certain associated organizations are particularly involved in the question. These include the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council, the Sub-Commission on discrimination and the protection of minorities, the UN High Commission for Refugees, UNESCO, and the International Court of Justice.

In 1976 two covenants entered into force, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights with its Optional Protocol. These covenants require countries ratifying them to recognize and protect a wide range of human rights. The United Nations has published a wide range of documents on human rights.

V. THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The "Final Act" of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe contains clauses in the main body of the text supporting the protection of human rights, in particular through the recognition of responsibilities under the United Nations Declaration and of the other International Covenants. "Basket 3" of this Final Act is concerned with the free movement of persons and of information, aspects which are covered in these international covenants and in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Progress following the Final Act is being assessed at the Belgrade Conference.

