ALDE disappointed with lack of ambition of EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

Today the European Parliament adopted a report indicating its expectations on the Multi-annual Framework for the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights established on 1st March 2007. The Fundamental Rights Agency will have three key functions: to collect information and data; provide advice to the EU and its Member States and promote dialogue with civil society to raise public awareness of fundamental rights.

ALDE-members welcome the establishment of the agency, but stressed that the framework programme is too minimalist. Sophie in ´t Veld (D66, Netherlands): "We want the agency to be able to act as a real watchdog for fundamental rights in Europe. The European Parliament is the strongest supporter of a strong agency. As it only got limited powers, we should endow it with a Multi-annual Framework that will allow the FRA to play its role to the full."

"The current list is not sufficiently focussed, and some key areas are missing. Homophobia, anti-gypsism, violation of privacy and the erosion of civil liberties in the fight against terrorism are of very real concern in a number of Member States. It is no coincidence that the Member States wish to keep these issues out."

The European People’s Party and the European Socialist did not oppose the minimalist approach of the Council.

"The Parliament could have sent a stronger signal to the Council that we want a strong Agency with the power to protect the rights of our citizens. It is disappointing that the other groups were not willing to demand more.", concluded In ´t Veld.

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