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# You, Europe, and your rights.

Internacional | 27/06/2007 | 13:26

**The Government is blocking an EU charter which would protect these fundamental rights for British people. Why?**

What's at stake: Science is seeking to eradicatedisabilities by genetic manipulation. It might be possible for parents to order a "designer" baby.

Expert opinion: "I would be totally opposed to any attempt to socially engineer people."

Ian Gibson, vice-president, Royal Society for Public Understanding of Science

Torture

No one should be subjected to torture. Article 4

What's at stake: Since the invasion of Iraq, British soldiers have found themselves in the dock over the abuse of civilian detainees

Expert opinion: "It is all the more deplorable when some of the most powerful men on earth seek to justify the use of torture."

Moazzam Begg, a torture victim and former prisoner in Guantanamo Bay

Human trafficking

Trafficking in human beings is prohibited. Article 5

What's at stake: This year the UN said that human trafficking had reached epidemic proportions. The Home Office said that in 2003, 4,000 women were trafficked into the UK for sexual exploitation

Expert opinion: "It is shameful that this country is trying to duck out of a charter that specifically prohibits child trafficking."

Louise Christian, human rights lawyer

Data protection

Everyone has the right to the protection of personal data concerning him or her. Article 8

What's at stake: A vast amount of data is stored on each of us already. From 2010, ID cards will be compulsory for anyone applying for a passport in the UK.

Expert opinion: "It's... a safeguard to protect the right of the individual in relation to the state."

Maurice Frankel, director, Campaign for Freedom of Information

Right to protest

Everyone has the right to freedom of assembly and of association. Article 12

What's at stake: Anti-war protests prompted the Government to bring in legislation to prevent unlicensed demos within quarter of a mile of Parliament

Expert opinion: "Allowing dissent in the form of peaceful protest is the hallmark of a country that understands respect for human rights."

Kate Allen, Amnesty International UK director

Working rights

Every citizen of the Union has the freedom to seek employment... in any Member state. Article 15

What's at stake: The Conservatives' fear is that Poles and other east Europeans have taken up jobs and housing at British workers' expense

Expert opinion: "People who come to work in the UK are providing vital services which would collapse without them."

Brendan Barber, TUC general secretary

Deportation

No one can be removed to a state where there is a serious risk of torture. Article 19

What's at stake: The Government's determination to deport terror suspects to countries with questionable human rights records

Expert opinion: "In an effort to circumvent its obligations, the Government has secured 'memoranda of understanding' with Jordan, Libya and Lebanon."

Shami Chakrabarti, Liberty director

Industrial action

Workers have the right to take collective action to defend their interests, including strike action. Article 28

What's at stake: The right to strike has been restricted in the UK since the 1980s. There are rules about ballots andpicketing. None of these restrictions is mentioned in the charter

Expert opinion: "We back the right to strike, to negotiate, to fight against unfair dismissal."

John Monks, European TUC leader

Child exploitation

The employment of children is prohibited... except for limited derogations. Article 32

What's at stake: Could be a threat to family-run corner shops where children help out, or to the pocket money others earn from babysitting or paper rounds

Expert opinion: "To keep children safe, we must ensure parents and employers are clear about how and when children and young people can be employed."

NSPCC statement

Health care

Everyone has the right to preventative health care. Article 35

What's at stake: Earlier this month, The Independent highlighted a new pill that could help hay fever sufferers, which the NHS will not prescribe because of cost. Critics say this clause could open the NHS to litigation

Expert opinion: "This article would not give much backing to any patient who took on the NHS."

Dr Evan Harris, member Medical Ethics Committee

Font: THE INDEPENDENT

Autor: Redacció
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