**Wednesday 18 January 2023**

P9_TA(2023)0011

# Human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter — annual report 2022

## European Parliament resolution of 18 January 2023 on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter — annual report 2022 (2022/2049(INI))

(2023/C 214/06)

*The European Parliament*,

— having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the 'Charter'),

— having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights,

— having regard to Articles 2, 3, 8, 21 and 23 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),

— having regard to Articles 17 and 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),

— having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular principles 2, 3, 11 and 17 thereof,

— having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to other UN human rights treaties and instruments,

— having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

— having regard to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 and UN Human Rights Council Resolution 43/29 of 22 June 2020 on the prevention of genocide,

— having regard to the UN International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages of 17 December 1979,

— having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979,

— having regard to the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, proclaimed by UN General Assembly Resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981,

— having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 10 December 1984,

— having regard to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities of 18 December 1992,

— having regard to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by consensus on 9 December 1998,

— having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto, adopted on 25 May 2000,

— having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 13 December 2006, which entered into force in the EU on 21 January 2011 in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC of 26 November 2009 concerning the conclusion, by the European Community, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([1]),

— having regard to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 December 2006,

([1]) OJ L 23, 27.1.2010, p. 35.

**Wednesday 18 January 2023**

— having regard to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted on 13 September 2007, and to International Labour Organization Convention No 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of 1989,

— having regard to the UN Arms Trade Treaty, in particular Article 7 on Export and Export Assessment thereof, and to the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports,

— having regard to the Beijing Declaration of 15 September 1995,

— having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted on 25 September 2015, in particular goals 1, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 16 thereof,

— having regard to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration of 19 December 2018 and the Global Compact on Refugees of 2018,

— having regard to the UN General Assembly resolution of 24 March 2022 on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine,

— having regard to the assessment by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 31 August 2022 on human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China,

— having regard to the statement by the Chair of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine at the 51st session of the Human Rights Council on 23 September 2022,

— having regard to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development of 1994, and to the outcomes of its review conferences,

— having regard to the Council of Europe Conventions for the protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine (CETS No 164), adopted on 4 April 1997, and the protocols thereto, on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No 197), adopted on 16 May 2005, and on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No 201), adopted on 25 October 2007,

— having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) of 11 May 2011, which not all Member States have ratified,

— having regard to Council of Europe Protocol No 6 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the Abolition of the Death Penalty,

— having regard to the resolution adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 16 March 2022 on the cessation of the membership of the Russian Federation to the Council of Europe,

— having regard to the European Council conclusions on Ukraine of 30 and 31 May 2022,

— having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2020/1998 of 7 December 2020 concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses ([2]),

— having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument — Global Europe ([3]),

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 12 July 2021 on EU priorities at the UN during the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, September 2021-September 2022,

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 24 January 2022 on EU priorities in UN human rights forums in 2022,

([2]) OJ L 410 I, 7.12.2020, p. 1.
([3]) OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1.

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 18 July 2022 on EU priorities at the UN during the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, September 2022-September 2023,

— having regard to the joint communication by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission of 25 March 2020 entitled 'EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024' (JOIN(2020)0005), and to the Council conclusions of 18 November 2020 thereon,

— having regard to the joint communication by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission of 25 November 2020 entitled 'EU Action Plan (GAP) III — An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action' (JOIN(2020)0017),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 24 March 2021 on the EU strategy on the rights of the child (COM(2021)0142),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 3 March 2021 entitled 'Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030' (COM(2021)0101),

— having regard on the EU Guidelines on human rights defenders, as adopted by the Council on 14 June 2004,

— having regard to the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law ([4]), as updated in 2009,

— having regard to the EU Guidelines on the death penalty, as updated by the Council on 12 April 2013,

— having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom and religion or belief, as adopted by the Council on 24 June 2013,

— having regard to the EU Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, as adopted by the Council on 24 June 2013,

— having regard to the EU Human Rights Guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline, as adopted by the Council on 12 May 2014,

— having regard to the EU Human Rights Guidelines on non-discrimination in external action, as adopted by the Council on 18 March 2019,

— having regard to the EU Human Rights Guidelines on safe drinking water and sanitation, as adopted by the Council on 17 June 2019,

— having regard to the revised Guidelines on the EU's policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as adopted by the Council on 16 September 2019,

— having regard to the revised EU Guidelines on human rights dialogues with partner/third countries, as approved by the Council on 22 February 2021,

— having regard to the European Parliamentary Research Service's European Implementation Assessment of 24 August 2022 on EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders,

— having regard to the Commission communication of 12 September 2012 entitled 'The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations' (COM(2012)0492),

([4]) OJ C 303, 15.12.2009, p. 12.

**Wednesday 18 January 2023**

— having regard to the Commission proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 (COM(2022)0071),

— having regard to the Commission proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market (COM(2022)0453),

— having regard to the report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled'2021 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World',

— having regard to the European Ombudsman strategic initiative of 7 July 2021 on how the Commission ensures respect for human rights in the context of international trade agreements,

— having regard to its Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, which in 2021 was awarded to Alexey Navalny, a leading Russian politician, lawyer and anti-corruption activist detained in Russia since January 2021,

— having regard to its resolution of 3 July 2018 on violation of the rights of indigenous peoples in the world, including land grabbing ([5]),

— having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2019 on EU Guidelines and the mandate of the EU Special Envoy on the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU ([6]),

— having regard to its resolution of 23 October 2020 on Gender Equality in EU's foreign and security policy ([7]),

— having regard to its resolution of 10 March 2021 with recommendations to the Commission on corporate due diligence and corporate accountability ([8]),

— having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2021 on human rights protection and the EU external migration policy ([9]),

— having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2021 on the effects of climate change on human rights and the role of environmental defenders on this matter ([10]),

— having regard to its resolution of 8 July 2021 on the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EU Magnitsky Act) ([11]),

— having regard to its resolution of 16 September 2021 with recommendations to the Commission on identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU ([12]),

— having regard to its recommendation of 17 February 2022 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning corruption and human rights ([13]),

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([5]) OJ C 118, 8.4.2020, p. 15.
([6]) OJ C 411, 27.11.2020, p. 30.
([7]) OJ C 404, 6.10.2021, p. 202.
([8]) OJ C 474, 24.11.2021, p. 11.
([9]) OJ C 15, 12.1.2022, p. 70.
([10]) OJ C 15, 12.1.2022, p. 111.
([11]) OJ C 99, 1.3.2022, p. 152.
([12]) OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 88.
([13]) OJ C 342, 6.9.2022, p. 295.

— having regard to its resolution of 17 February 2022 on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter — annual report 2021 ([14]), and to its previous resolutions on earlier annual reports,

— having regard to its resolution of 7 April 2022 on the EU's protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine ([15]),

— having regard to its resolution of 3 May 2022 on the persecution of minorities on the grounds of belief or religion ([16]),

— having regard to its resolution of 3 May 2022 toward an EU strategy to promote education for children in the world: mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic ([17]),

— having regard to its resolution of 5 May 2022 on the impact of the war against Ukraine on women ([18]),

— having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2022 on the fight against impunity for war crimes in Ukraine ([19]),

— having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2022 on the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including the Xinjiang police files ([20]),

— having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2022 on a new trade instrument to ban products made by forced labour ([21]),

— having regard to its resolutions of 9 June 2022 entitled 'Global threats to abortion rights: the possible overturning of abortion rights in the US by the Supreme Court' ([22]) and of 7 July 2022 on the US Supreme Court decision to overturn abortion rights in the United States and the need to safeguard abortion rights and women's health in the EU ([23]),

— having regard to its resolutions on breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (known as urgency resolutions), adopted in accordance with Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure since 2019, in particular those adopted in 2021 and 2022,

— having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0298/2022),

A. whereas the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as set out in Article 2 TEU; whereas the Union's action on the international scene should be guided by the principles that have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement and that it seeks to advance in the wider world, as enshrined in Article 21 TEU;

B. whereas an effective protection and defence of human rights, as well as human dignity, must be at the core of all of the EU's external policies including development, trade, security and defence, migration, neighbourhood and enlargement;

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([14]) OJ C 342, 6.9.2022, p. 191.
([15]) OJ C 434, 15.11.2022, p. 50.
([16]) OJ C 465, 6.12.2022, p. 33.
([17]) OJ C 465, 6.12.2022, p. 44.
([18]) OJ C 465, 6.12.2022, p. 155.
([19]) OJ C 479, 16.12.2022, p. 68.
([20]) OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 96.
([21]) OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 132.
([22]) OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 120.
([23]) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0302.

C. whereas consistency between the EU's internal and external policies is an indispensable part of a credible and effective EU human rights policy;

D. whereas the Union strongly believes in and fully supports multilateralism, a rules-based global order that is predicated on the observance of international law and democratic processes, and the set of universal values, principles and norms, including those laid out in the UN Charter, that guide the UN member states and their mutual relations;

E. whereas gender equality is a core value of the EU; whereas the right to equal treatment and freedom from discrimination is a fundamental right enshrined in the Treaties and in the Charter and should be fully respected; whereas the right to the integrity of the person is paramount under Article 3 of the Charter; whereas gender mainstreaming and an intersectional approach should therefore be implemented and integrated as a horizontal principle in all EU activities and policies;

F. whereas the rise in authoritarianism, illiberalism, populism and violations of human rights around the world threatens the global rules-based order and the values and principles on which the Union is founded; whereas according to the 2021 Democracy Index, less than half of the world's population (45,7 %) now live in a democracy 'of some sort' and more than 37 % live under authoritarian rule;

G. whereas terrorism continues to be one of the biggest threats to international peace and security and is a clear breach of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

H. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic led to human rights setbacks around the world, as a consequence of the instruments and policies put in place under the guise of slowing the spread of the virus, and in many cases those instruments and policies have been linked to the loss of state democratic principles in a number of states;

I. whereas environmental emergencies, including those resulting from climate change and deforestation, give rise to human rights violations and affect not only the people in their immediate vicinity, but also humanity as a whole; whereas in recent years there has been an increase in murders, assaults and other forms of violence against people who defend human rights, the environment and people's access to their land and natural resources; whereas climate change and environmental degradation are two urgent and interlinked challenges underpinning both sustainable development and the enjoyment of human rights globally;

J. whereas the energy crisis, coupled with the production crisis facing Europe, may increase poverty and vulnerability in Europe, with a potentially detrimental impact on human rights;

K. whereas violations of the rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the right to believe or not to believe, to espouse theistic, agnostic or atheistic views, to change or leave one's religion and to express one's own faith publicly, give rise to situations of oppression, conflict and war around the world;

***General trends and global challenges to democracy and human rights***

1. Reaffirms the universality and indivisibility of human rights and the inherent dignity of every human being; stresses, in this regard, its strong commitment to addressing the challenges facing human rights within the EU and worldwide and reiterates the duty of the EU and its Member States to strive to be a global leader in the promotion and protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy in line with the founding values of the Union;

2. Insists that the protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the dignity of every human being must be the cornerstone of the Union's external policy; strongly encourages the Union, to that end, to strive for a continued ambitious commitment to make the protection of human rights a central part of all EU policies in a streamlined manner and to enhance the consistency between the EU's internal and external policies in this field;

3. Recalls that the 2020-2024 EU action plan on human rights and democracy should be used as a roadmap of the EU's priorities concerning human rights and should therefore be at the centre of all EU external policies; stresses the importance of the Member States taking ownership of the EU action plan and publicly reporting on their actions under it; encourages national and regional parliaments, national human rights institutions and civil society organisations to engage with authorities at Member-State level on their contributions to the carrying out of the EU's external human rights policy; calls for Parliament to be involved in the Council's future review and update of any of the EU's Human Rights Guidelines and for more transparency in their implementation to be ensured;

4. Expresses deep concerns at the grave threats to human rights and democracy worldwide, noting that the number of democracies has continued to decline, while the number of authoritarian regimes has grown and nearly 75 % of the world's population have experienced a deterioration in the situation of human rights in their country in the past year; underlines with concern the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in an increasing number of places around the world, as well as widespread impunity for these violations;

5. Deplores the fact that despite the need to concentrate on responses to the threats posed by climate change and the recovery from the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through global solidarity, some authoritarian leaders have, in addition to mismanaging the pandemic and global resources, intensified their repression of political opposition, dissent, human rights defenders, civil society organisations, including community-led and belief- and faith-based organisations, and independent media, as well as fuelling and expanding existing internal and international conflicts and sparking new ones with devastating effects on human rights; deplores the several instances in which authoritarian leaders misused the effects of the pandemic to justify tightening their repressive policies;

6. Emphasises the importance of the EU and its Member States consistently acting together, notably in multilateral forums, to address global challenges to human rights and democracy, and of maintaining consistency within its internal and external policies; is of the opinion that maintaining the unanimity rule for certain EU foreign policy decisions, including sanctions on human rights offenders, stands in the way of necessary decisive action owing to changing geopolitical circumstances, and should therefore be reconsidered;

7. Urges the EU and its Member States to intensify their efforts all over the world to support democracy and human rights; calls for the EU and its Member States, in this regard, both individually and in cooperation with like-minded international partners, to thwart unacceptable attempts to weaken democratic institutions and universal human rights and diminish the space for and role of civil society; reaffirms the value of multilateralism as an instrument to achieve this goal; stresses the importance of placing democracy and human rights concerns at the heart of the EU's diplomatic relations with all counterparts, in particular with countries considered to be strategic partners; stresses, in addition, the importance of placing human rights matters at the heart of EU parliamentary activity, including by upgrading the Subcommittee on Human Rights to a stand-alone committee; notes the launch on 26 August 2022 of a pilot project to establish a European diplomatic academy;

8. Reiterates that the ambitious commitment and rhetoric of the EU's foreign human rights policy requires it to lead by example in order to avoid undermining its credibility when opposing the global democratic decline; calls for the EU institutions and bodies, including the European External Action Service (EEAS), to ensure that the EU's and Member States' human rights obligations are consistently implemented in the EU's common foreign and security policy; encourages them, in this regard, to make use of all diplomatic tools, both privately and publicly, and both bilaterally and in multilateral forums, to raise human rights issues with partner countries; reiterates its call for the EU to take particular care to assess and prevent any violations linked to its own policies, projects and funding, including by the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, in third countries and to create a complaints mechanism for individuals or groups whose rights may have been violated by EU activities in these countries;

*War of aggression against Ukraine*

9. Condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as Belarus's involvement enabling Russia to launch deadly attacks against Ukraine from its territory; expresses, in this regard, its deep grief at the human suffering and condemns the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the Russian armed forces and their proxies in Ukraine;

10. Welcomes the joint efforts of the EU, its Member States and civil society in response to the war; welcomes, moreover, the solidarity shown by a great number of countries towards Ukraine, as highlighted by their stance during the sessions and votes of the UN General Assembly on the illegal war in Ukraine; reiterates the need to increase EU diplomatic efforts towards the states that abstained from or voted against the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 2 March 2022 on aggression against Ukraine and the following resolutions on the matter in order to explain the seriousness of Russia's aggression and the need for a unanimous response from the international community against this flagrant violation of international law; calls for the EU and its Member States to give the Ukrainian people the support they need to defend their freedom, democracy, human rights and international law; welcomes the unprecedented sanctions imposed in the context of the war and calls for them to be implemented in a coordinated manner; calls, additionally, for the EU and its Member States to support efforts and reinforce independent Russian civil society organisations with a view to helping to lay the foundations of a future democracy in Russia;

11. Strongly condemns and is deeply concerned by the atrocities, war crimes and serious violations of international humanitarian law, including sexual violence, gender-based violence and the torture and killing of civilians and prisoners of war, committed by Russian armed forces and their proxies in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; urges all necessary measures to be taken to make sure that those who committed war crimes and human rights violations in Ukraine are identified and held accountable as soon as possible and to provide effective remedies for the damages suffered by Ukrainian civilians; calls for the EU and its Member States to continue to offer their full support to the relevant stakeholders, measures and mechanisms in this field, including Ukrainian prosecutors, investigators and the judiciary, the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Commission of Inquiry of the UN Human Rights Council and national investigations under the principle of universal jurisdiction; welcomes in this regard the fact that the EU has provided support to the ICC's investigation capabilities to help it scale up its investigations into war crimes in Ukraine; stresses the importance of swiftly gathering and preserving evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity and welcomes the efforts of civil society to this end; calls on the Commission to provide all the necessary assistance in this process, including funding from the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI — Global Europe), and urges the Member States to engage in this process themselves whenever they are in a position to do so; welcomes the amended mandate of the EU Advisory Mission Ukraine and the Commission's proposal to extend the mandate of Eurojust to support the fight against impunity in all situations; calls for an informed decision to be made about the most appropriate solutions to hold to account the individuals and entities responsible for enabling Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the war crimes committed on Ukrainian territory, which should include activating the prosecution of crimes of aggression in a specially created international court or under ICC jurisdiction;

12. Calls for the EU and its Member States to continue to use all of the instruments at their disposal to support the fight to free Ukraine from its occupiers and to bring aid to people fleeing Ukraine and seeking support in the EU Member States; notes that 8,8 million Ukrainians have entered the EU since the beginning of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, out of which 4 million are registered under temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe; welcomes all the expressions of solidarity and assistance shown to the Ukrainian people by EU citizens, including their involvement in humanitarian aid, and welcomes the triggering of the Temporary Protection Directive ([24]) in order to provide for immediate protection and rights for displaced Ukrainians arriving in the EU; underlines the importance of enhanced funding for the host countries, including a greater focus on access to education, economic opportunities, housing, healthcare and integration into the host societies; underlines the need to support, among others, those victims of sexual, gender-based and reproductive violence;

13. Denounces the forced relocation and deportation of Ukrainian children, including from healthcare institutions, to the Russian Federation and the Russian-occupied territories in Ukraine and their forced adoption by Russian families; calls for the EU and its Member States to provide support to locate these children and reunite them with their families or legal guardians;

([24]) Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof (OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12).

14. Underlines that the illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine has had a tremendous impact on global food security, given that Ukraine is the fifth largest grain exporter in the world;

15. Expresses deep concern regarding the safety of nuclear installations in Ukraine, which are in constant danger of military shelling; calls for the EU, its Member States and the international community to establish safety zones around these nuclear installations;

***Enhancing EU policies, instruments and diplomacy to protect and advance human rights and democracy in the world***

*NDICI — Global Europe and the human rights and democracy thematic programme*

16. Calls for the EU to reflect on how to promote and best apply a human rights–based approach in all EU instruments and strategies in order to strengthen the EU's human rights foreign policy and to adapt to and shape the evolving geopolitical situation; underlines that NDICI — Global Europe, including its thematic programme on human rights and democracy, is one of the main tools at the EU's disposal to improve the human rights situation around the world and help foster resilient, inclusive and democratic societies, while counteracting the influence of authoritarian regimes; stresses that the engagement of local civil society actors is vital to protect human rights and democracy in their countries and reiterates its call to fully engage them in all of the EU's relevant external activities; welcomes in this regard the invaluable assistance currently being provided to civil society organisations and activists worldwide under the thematic human rights and democracy programme of NDICI — Global Europe and under the European Endowment for Democracy; highlights the importance that NDICI — Global Europe attaches to the promotion of human rights and democracy with strategic international and local partners, inter alia, through EU election observation missions; underlines Parliament's role in the instrument's programming process and calls on the Commission and the EEAS to improve the sharing of all relevant information in a timely manner in order to enable Parliament to fulfil its role as enshrined in the treaties, in particular during high-level geopolitical dialogues with the Commission; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to engage in a dialogue with Parliament to ensure improvement in this regard;

17. Highlights the importance of long-term planning and continuing support for projects and initiatives under NDICI — Global Europe, particularly when it concerns regions affected by conflicts, war and natural disasters; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to integrate democracy support as a cross-cutting priority into all thematic and geographic NDICI — Global Europe programmes;

18. Reiterates its call for greater transparency regarding human rights-related provisions in financing agreements under the NDICI — Global Europe and for clarification on the mechanism and criteria for the suspension of such agreements in the event of a breach of human rights, democratic principles or the rule of law, as well as in grave cases of corruption; calls on the Commission to refrain from using budget support to third countries' governments as an operational modality for cooperation with countries witnessing widespread violations of human rights and repression of human rights defenders;

*EU Special Representative for Human Rights*

19. Fully supports the work of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights in defending and advancing human rights in the world through engagement with third countries and cooperation with like-minded partners, and his important role in enhancing the effectiveness of the EU's human rights policies through efforts to increase their coherence; underlines the need for close cooperation between the EUSR for Human Rights and other EUSRs on countries and regions in order to further improve this consistency, and calls for greater visibility for the role of the EUSR for Human Rights; stresses the importance of the EUSR for Human Rights continuing to cooperate with international organisations, including the UN and its Special Rapporteurs appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, and with representatives of or envoys from other countries responsible for human rights; calls for the EUSR to publically engage more on individual human rights defenders and to closely cooperate with EU and country-based civil society organisations and human rights defenders; underlines the importance of EUSRs on country and regional situations engaging with national authorities on the protection of human rights and individual cases; encourages the EUSR for Human Rights to pursue diplomatic efforts to enhance the EU's support for international humanitarian law and international justice;

20. Reiterates that the appointment of the EUSR for Human Rights should be subject to a prior hearing in Parliament; recommends setting up a framework whereby the EUSR for Human Rights is accountable to Parliament for achieving the goals set out in the EUSR's working programme at the beginning of their mandate and must give a report on a regular basis on the progress towards those goals; stresses that, although Parliament maintains cooperation with the EEAS, enhanced by Council Decision 2010/427/EU [25] and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy's 2010 declaration on political accountability, it is necessary to further strengthen the framework for interinstitutional relations between Parliament and the EEAS, including its delegations, on human rights issues; emphasises that the EEAS needs to involve Parliament in the development of guidance notes for the implementation of EU human rights instruments, such as the EU Human Rights Guidelines and EU mechanisms on due diligence and the fight against corruption, among others, in third countries;

21. Highlights the importance of addressing the challenges that arise in coordinating between the EU institutions as regards the management of EU external relations in relation to human rights; welcomes the increased coordination among the EU delegations and the EEAS headquarters and the Directorate-General for International Partnerships in relation to urgent individual cases pertaining to human rights defenders;

*EU Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU*

22. Notes with regret that the post of the EU Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU has remained vacant for more than a year; reiterates its call for the Council and the Commission to carry out a prompt, transparent and comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness and added value of the mandate of the Special Envoy, including in terms of its institutional position, in order to provide the Special Envoy with adequate human and financial resources, and to adequately support the Special Envoy's institutional mandate, capacity and duties; welcomes the appointment on 7 December 2022 of Frans van Daele as Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU; recalls that the Special Envoy's duties should focus on promoting and protecting freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, and the rights to non-belief, apostasy and the espousal of atheistic views; emphasises that the Special Envoy should also pay particular attention to forced conversion, misuse of blasphemy laws and the situation of non-believers at risk;

23. Recommends that the Special Envoy work closely and in a complementary manner with EUSR for Human Rights and the Council Working Group on Human Rights; calls, in addition, for the Special Envoy to have regular consultations with Parliament and to cooperate with Member States' commissioners, envoys and ambassadors responsible for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief in order to coordinate actions;

*EU human rights dialogues and other bilateral contacts with third countries*

24. Underlines that human rights dialogues with third countries represent an opportunity to focus on human rights challenges and calls for them to be carried out in a result-oriented manner, regularly reviewed and harnessed to their full potential; reiterates its call for human rights dialogues to be based from the outset on a clear set of benchmarks that will enable the effectiveness of the dialogues to be monitored; calls for the EEAS to systematically carry out and communicate on evaluations of the outcomes of the dialogues and to follow up on them accordingly; stresses that in order to be effective, the dialogues must not be used as a stand-alone tool, but should instead be integrated within the EU's comprehensive set of activities, including those relating to EU trade policy, with the third countries concerned, which would streamline the human rights dimension and reinforce the messages conveyed in the dialogues; draws attention to the importance of raising individual cases, in particular those highlighted by Parliament in its resolutions and the Sakharov Prize laureates and finalists at risk, in the context of human rights dialogues and of ensuring adequate follow-up and reporting to Parliament on action taken on these cases;

25. Emphasises the importance of a systematic, genuine, accessible and inclusive consultation with all civil society organisations and stakeholders throughout the entire human rights dialogue process;

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[25] Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (OJ L 201, 3.8.2010, p. 30).

26. Welcomes the resumption of human rights dialogues with third countries stemming from a more favourable context for engagement; is of the opinion that, where no tangible progress is reported following a series of human rights dialogues, as has occurred in a number of instances, the EU should adjust its aims, including as regards the wider conduct of bilateral relations;

*EU Delegations*

27. Considers it of utmost importance to take every possible action to raise awareness on the EU's Human Rights Guidelines in EU delegations and urges all delegations to ensure the proper implementation of these Guidelines; reiterates, in this regard, its call for the EU delegations and their human rights 'focal points' in third countries to do more involved work by providing regular support to human rights defenders, including Sakharov Prize laureates and finalists at risk, and by thoroughly addressing topics and individual cases raised in Parliament's resolutions on breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law; calls for the officials in the EU delegations to raise cases of oppression and persecution of human rights defenders, democratic opposition and civil society activists to state authorities, and if the affected individuals are in detention, to monitor their situations, visit them in prison, attend their trial procedures and raise their cases in the human rights dialogues that the EU conducts with the countries concerned;

28. Draws attention to the instances in which EU Member States' missions and EU delegations have taken different approaches on human rights protection and promotion in third countries, although EU Member States share a common commitment on this matter; underlines that EU Member States' embassies, like EU delegations, should play an increasing role in promoting and protecting human rights, as well as supporting civil society in third countries; calls for EU delegations to establish human rights working groups bringing together the relevant services of Member States' embassies and EU delegations, and to cooperate closely with representatives from international and regional civil society organisations in third countries concerned;

*EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (GHRSR — EU Magnitsky Act)*

29. Welcomes the fact that the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime has been increasingly used as an essential tool that strengthens the EU's role as a global human rights actor through the use of targeted sanctions by the Council; calls for the restrictive measures that have already been adopted to be implemented effectively, in full and in a coordinated manner, and for the adoption of additional measures if necessary; calls for the EU to make more dynamic use of this tool as an integral component of its foreign human rights policy; calls for the rigorous, consistent and uniform application of restrictive measures and their monitoring in all Member States, as a condition for the credibility and effectiveness of the EU's external action; calls for the EU to work with like-minded partners to encourage more countries to adopt sanction regimes and to coordinate the adoption of targeted restrictive measures jointly in order to maximise their effectiveness at a global level; welcomes the President of the Commission's commitment in her 2022 State of the Union Address to present measures to update the EU legislative framework for fighting corruption and to include corruption in the EU GHRSR, which is in line with Parliament's position, in order to effectively target the economic and financial enablers of human rights abusers; reiterates its call for the introduction of qualified majority voting for the Council's decisions and the implementation of sanctions under the EU GHRSR; reiterates its call on the Commission and the Council to strive to incorporate Parliament's recommendations for future targeted sanctions, as stipulated in its resolutions and elsewhere;

30. Welcomes the listings made in 2021 under the EU GHRSR; calls on the Council, the Member States and the EEAS to develop a strategy to improve the interplay between the EU GHRSR and geographical sanction regimes, in particular through making better use of the EU GHRSR to tackle violations that cannot directly be linked to a state, for example in cases in which mercenaries commit human rights violations in territories outside of government control or in cross-border cases, such as human trafficking;

31. Expresses deep concern about and condemns some countries' deliberate policies of arresting, arbitrarily detaining and prosecuting foreigners, including EU citizens, on trumped-up charges for propaganda purposes, to use prisoners as an instrument of international negotiation and exchange or as a means of exerting political pressure; stresses that putting such a policy into action constitutes an act of hostage-taking within the meaning of the International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages; calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to take measures to prevent such acts and to warn EU citizens, especially dual nationals, about the risk of being arrested when visiting certain countries; calls on the Council to consider applying restrictive measures under the EU GHRSR to persons or entities responsible for the arbitrary arrest or detention of EU citizens as 'state hostages';

**Wednesday 18 January 2023**

*Corruption and human rights*

32. Stresses that corruption seriously weakens democratic governance, hinders the enjoyment of human rights worldwide, facilitates and perpetuates violations of human rights and the rule of law and disproportionately affects the most vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups in society; calls for the fight against corruption to be a part of all of the EU's efforts and policies to promote human rights and democracy, by formulating a dedicated global anti-corruption strategy, including programmes under the EU's external financial instruments and enhancing Parliament's role of scrutiny; underlines the utmost importance of the EU and its Member States leading by example by fighting corruption linked to EU-based actors, by applying the highest transparency standards to their external funding and by stepping up their support for civil society organisations, activists and investigative journalists engaged in the fight against corruption;

33. Calls for the EU to work towards proposing the creation of a set of anti-corruption standards that would be uniformly applicable worldwide, to promote the establishment of effective anti-corruption bodies and the adoption of robust regulatory frameworks and to address secrecy jurisdictions and tax havens; encourages the promotion of cooperation among the EU, its Member States, third countries and international organisations, particularly at judicial, law-enforcement and intelligence levels, with a view to exchanging best practices and effective tools in action to tackle and prevent corruption; calls for the creation of an international anti-corruption court under the supervision of the UN to be worked towards;

*Human rights clauses in international agreements*

34. Reiterates its call to include robust clauses on human rights in agreements between the EU and third countries, supported by a clear set of benchmarks and procedures to be followed in the event of violations; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to actively reflect on how to ensure that the human rights clauses in existing international agreements are monitored and effectively enforced; stresses that the EU should react swiftly and decisively to persistent breaches of human rights clauses by third countries, including by suspending the relevant agreements if other options prove ineffective; highlights that the review of the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), the ongoing legislative process for a new regulation on the GSP and the review of GSP beneficiary countries' implementations of international conventions related to human rights, including labour rights, offer an opportunity to strengthen the commitment to upholding respect for human rights in third countries concerned;

35. Calls on the Commission, when negotiating free trade agreements (FTAs) with third countries, to require them to ratify the main international conventions relating to human rights, labour rights and the environment, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; stresses that ratification of these conventions by third countries should ideally occur before concluding FTA negotiations, so that compliance with these conventions is elevated to an essential aspect of FTAs and that dedicated clauses are agreed upon; further calls for the substantive clauses of the FTAs to recognise that States Parties must respect and protect human rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, customary law and the international conventions to which they are party;

36. Stresses the importance and calls for the substantial enhancement of the quality of *ex-ante* and *ex-post* sustainability impacts assessments (SIAs); stresses that the objective of SIAs should be to ensure that the agreement being negotiated, in its detailed, worded clauses, provides sufficient tools to avoid negative impacts on human rights; recommends that civil society organisations be part of the steering of SIAs, that assessments be conducted by human and labour rights experts and that input from civil society organisations be taken into account;

*Democracy support activities*

37. Highlights that 2022 marks the 10th anniversary of Parliament's decision to exert political leadership in committing to a major advancement in its democracy support activities, which it has implemented through a comprehensive democracy support approach since 2014; welcomes, in particular, its support for capacity-building for partner parliaments, mediation and fostering a culture of dialogue, and compromise, including among young political leaders, as well as for empowering women parliamentarians, human rights defenders and representatives from civil society organisations and the free media; calls on the Commission to continue to pursue and step up its activities in these areas and to bolster funding and assistance for EU bodies and agencies, as well as other grant-based organisations, while respecting the principle of non-discrimination;

underlines that in the current context of heightened global tensions and repression in an increasing number of countries, direct support for civil society organisations, human rights defenders and people who express critical and dissenting opinions is of the utmost importance;

38. Stresses the importance of EU election observation missions and Parliament's contribution to developing and enhancing their methodology; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to consider updating the election observation methodology to reflect the developments of the last two decades; urges third countries to put into practice the recommendations made by the EU's election observation missions with a view to improving the organisation of and environment for future electoral processes and thus boosting their transparency and legality so as to improve the democratic standards of the states concerned; stresses the importance of stepping up EU support to local electoral observers, notably in terms of protection; reiterates its call for the EU to closely collaborate with domestic and international organisations, such as the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Council of Europe and the other organisations that have endorsed the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation;

*Multilateralism and EU work at a multilateral level*

39. Reaffirms that the effective protection of human rights around the world requires strong international cooperation at a multilateral level; underlines the particularly important role of the UN and its bodies as the main forum which must be able to effectively advance the efforts for peace and security, sustainable development and respect for human rights and international law; calls for the EU and its Member States to continue supporting the work of the UN, both politically and financially, including all UN human rights bodies, notably the treaty bodies and special procedures; calls on the UN Secretary-General, to this end, to provide appropriate resources from the UN budget and urges the Member States to increase their voluntary contributions; underlines the need for the EU and its Member States to strive to speak with one voice both at the UN and in other multilateral forums, and to promote the highest standards on human rights in this way; recalls the obligations of all UN member states to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, as enshrined in the Founding Charter of the United Nations and UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251; deplores the fact that two permanent members of the UN Security Council are responsible for gross human rights violations amounting to war crimes and even genocide; calls on the UN member states to refrain from taking backwards steps that weaken the protection of human rights; stresses the responsibility of the UN Human Rights Council to address all the grave violations of human rights around the world; deplores the fact that a number of members of the UN Human Rights Council have displayed blatant disregard for their human rights obligations, have proven track records of grave human rights violations and have failed to cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms; calls in this regard for a fundamental reform of the criteria for members of the UN Human Rights Council; calls on the EEAS to initiate and spearhead an effort towards a coordinated position of the EU and the Member States on UN Human Rights Council membership, which would promote greater transparency in the election process, notably by making EU Member States' votes public and providing the rationale for that vote, foster a genuinely competitive process by ensuring that the three regional blocks of which the EU Member States are members present more candidates than seats, and provide accountability for candidates by scrutinising their voluntary pledges and track records of cooperating with the UN Human Rights Council, UN treaty bodies and special procedures;

40. Strongly condemns all attacks against UN special procedure mandate holders and against the independence of their mandates; calls on the Member States and the EU's democratic partners to decisively counter these attempts and to enact all possible measures to help provide safe and open spaces for individuals and civil society organisations to interact with the UN, its representatives and its mechanisms; highlights the work of UN commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions, which are increasingly being used to respond to situations involving serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to combat impunity;

41. Calls for the EU and the Member States to support the strengthening of regional human rights systems, including through financial assistance and cross-regional experience sharing; highlights, in particular, the critical role of monitoring bodies and judicial mechanisms established under these regional systems and their complementarity with the UN human rights system;

42. Calls for the EU and the Member States to lead efforts in multilateral forums to promote the adoption of a universally recognised definition of terrorism, bearing in mind the objective of combating this scourge; calls for them further to lead efforts, in the context of the Eighth UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review in 2023, to insert strong

language recognising the negative impact that the misuse of counter-terrorism laws and policies has had on civic space and urging all states to take the necessary steps to reform or repeal their counter-terrorist legislation to ensure it does not negatively impact civil society and human rights defenders; calls for the EU and the Member States to lead efforts within UN forums to establish a constructive dialogue with civil society organisations and human rights defenders, and to ensure they are meaningfully involved at all stages of the development and implementation of counter-terrorist policies;

43. Is deeply concerned by growing attacks against the rules-based global order by authoritarian regimes, including through challenging the universality of human rights, relativising them, claiming them to be an instrument of cultural hegemony deployed by Western countries, eroding international human rights law by reinterpreting it, and undermining the functioning of UN bodies and mechanisms to hold states accountable for human rights violations; stresses that the EU must uphold the defence of the universality of human rights as a main priority, and to this end, lead a pact and work in alliance with other democracies and like-minded partners to strengthen multilateral organisations and to defend the rules-based global order against rising authoritarian powers; underlines that the diminished effectiveness of UN bodies brings with it real costs in terms of conflicts, lives lost and human suffering, and seriously weakens the general ability of countries to deal with global challenges; calls on the EU Member States and like-minded partners to intensify their efforts to reverse this trend;

44. Underlines the need to carry out an impartial, fair and transparent review of the applications for consultative status on the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) by non-governmental organisations (NGOs); calls for steps to be taken to establish an own seat for the Union in every multilateral forum, including the UN Security Council, in addition to the already existing, permanent seat of one of the Member States on the Security Council, which would strengthen the EU's ability to act, as well as its consistency and credibility in the world; calls for the EU and its Member States to participate in the general debate of the UN General Assembly and urge the ECOSOC members to continue to address the unjustified obstacles that NGOs face to obtain their ECOSOC accreditation, in particular those whose applications have been pending for a very long time;

*Upholding international humanitarian law*

45. Notes with concern the increasing disregard for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly in the ongoing conflicts around the world; underlines the utmost importance for humanitarian aid agencies and charitable organisations to be able to provide full, timely and unhindered assistance to all vulnerable populations and calls on all parties to armed conflicts to protect civilian populations and humanitarian, medical, media and educational workers; calls for the systematic creation of humanitarian corridors in regions at war and in combat situations in order to allow civilians at risk to escape the conflict, and strongly condemns any attacks on them;

46. Recalls that international humanitarian law should guide EU policies in relation to situations of occupation or annexation of territory and underlines the importance of ensuring their consistency regarding those situations; highlights the responsibility of EU-based companies to apply the most stringent due diligence policies towards any economic or financial activities in or with the territories concerned, and to ensure strict compliance with international law and EU sanctions policy when applicable;

*Combating impunity and strengthening international criminal justice*

47. Stresses the link between human rights violations and widespread impunity and the lack of accountability in regions and countries affected by conflicts; strongly welcomes the continuous contribution of the ICC to the fight against impunity; calls for the EU and its Member States to provide the ICC with sufficient support to enable it to carry out its work; reiterates its condemnation of continuous efforts to undermine the legitimacy and work of the ICC; calls for the EU and its Member States to continue their efforts to counter them and respond to threats and sanctions against human rights defenders and witnesses cooperating with the ICC; stresses the vital role of the ICC in carrying out investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity; calls for the EU and its Member States to continue cooperating with the ICC on combating and

preventing such crimes; welcomes the continued support of the EU and its Member States for the ICC and calls on the EU Member States to match this commitment to the sustainable funding needed to deliver justice in all situations that come before the ICC;

48. Calls for the EU to support the Prosecutor of the ICC in investigating and prosecuting suspected perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and, possibly, genocide by providing political support, gathering and making available any evidence in its possession, including open-source intelligence, information and data, satellite imagery and intercepted communications, and providing adequate human and financial resources to the general budget of the ICC in order to fully protect its independence and impartiality;

49. Calls for the EU and its Member States to encourage partner countries to ratify the Treaty of Rome and thus expand the ICC's jurisdiction; calls for the EU to act in line with Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP on the International Criminal Court ([26]), while maintaining a strong position on the crime of aggression as called for by Parliament's resolution of 17 July 2014 on the crime of aggression ([27]);

50. Reiterates its call on the Commission to develop a comprehensive EU action plan on fighting impunity, which should include, among others, chapters on the important role of civil society organisations in the struggle against impunity and their protection in all situations that require it, and on measures to fight impunity for gender-based sexual violence, including violations of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in conflict settings; calls for the EU and its international partners to make full use of all relevant instruments to fight impunity, including support for universal jurisdiction at national level, special tribunals at a national and international level including for the crime of aggression, as well as establishing flexible cooperation and funding mechanisms to swiftly collect and analyse evidence of crimes; calls on the Commission to ensure that these instruments are applied in a coordinated and complementary manner with other relevant EU and Member State instruments; calls on the Commission to develop a programme to build the capacity of both Member States and third countries to apply the principle of universal jurisdiction in their domestic legal systems;

*Making progress towards the universal abolition of the death penalty and the prevention of torture and other forms of ill-treatment*

51. Reiterates its principled opposition to the death penalty, which is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and is irreversible; stresses that the EU must be relentless in its pursuit of the universal abolition of the death penalty as a major objective of its human rights foreign policy; calls for the EU and its Member States to defend abolition in all international forums and advocate for the widest possible support for this position; encourages the continuing efforts of the UN bodies on the universal abolition of the death penalty, in line with the resolutions of the UN General Assembly; condemns in strong terms the enforcement of blasphemy laws that carry the possibility of the death penalty if convicted across the globe; reiterates that the freedom to choose one's religion, including whether to believe or not to believe at all, remains a fundamental human right that cannot be punished by death or any degrading treatment; calls on all countries that have not yet done so to abolish the death penalty or establish an immediate moratorium as a first step towards its abolition; calls, additionally, on the countries concerned to reduce the list of crimes or offences punishable by death; calls for transparency around death sentences and executions in countries that do not disclose these statistics;

52. Condemns any incidents of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and unlawful killings and deplores the fact that they continue to be common in many countries; notes with great concern the trend of increasing instances of torture worldwide and widespread impunity for its perpetrators; recognises the important role that civil society organisations and human rights defenders play in the fight against torture and other forms of ill-treatment;

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([26]) Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP of 21 March 2011 on the International Criminal Court and repealing Common Position 2003/444/CFSP (OJ L 76, 22.3.2011, p. 56).

([27]) OJ C 224, 21.6.2016, p. 31.

**Wednesday 18 January 2023**

***Responding to global human rights and democracy challenges***

*Response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic*

53. Is deeply concerned about the long-term negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on both the general state of democracy and human rights worldwide; highlights the disproportionate adverse impact on groups in the most vulnerable situations, including women, children, persons with disabilities, persons living with certain chronic diseases, the elderly, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) persons, impoverished people, persons belonging to ethnic, belief and religious minorities, refugees and migrants, and persons in prison or detention; is further concerned about delays and barriers in access to health services and the consequent increase in unintended pregnancies, sexual and gender-based violence, unsafe abortions, and maternal and neonatal deaths; notes with regret the use of COVID-19 prevention measures as a pretext to deny visits from family members or lawyers to detention facilities and to violate the rights of detainees; praises the role that human rights defenders and journalists have played, sometimes even risking their lives, in reporting or attempting to prevent human rights violations during the pandemic;

54. Reiterates that enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and universal access to healthcare are among the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction; calls for the EU and its Member States to support the defence of these rights, especially in countries and regions where health services are scarcest and urges countries to make progress in facilitating access to health services; asserts that the EU should continue to fund the development and global supply of COVID-19 vaccines, provide education about the benefits of vaccination and increase the availability, accessibility and affordability of vaccination in order to avoid vaccine-preventable diseases;

55. Reiterates that personal liberty, freedom of assembly, freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and freedom of expression are cornerstones of democracy; is deeply concerned by the growing use of mass surveillance technologies, in particular by authoritarian regimes, to curtail these freedoms, which increased further under the guise of COVID-19 prevention measures; calls for a strict and effective ban on sales of mass surveillance technologies; calls for a greater response to the mass infiltration of disinformation and conspiracy theories within the digital sphere, perpetuated largely but not exclusively by authoritarian regimes, as well as non-state actors;

*Women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality*

56. Condemns the fact that no country in the world has achieved gender equality yet; underlines the persistence of widespread gender-based violence and intersecting discrimination in every region of the world; underlines that women and girls continue to be the main victims in violent crises and that sexual, gender-based and reproductive violence has continued in many places around the world, and is notably used in armed conflicts as a weapon of war; stresses that women human rights defenders, activists, journalists and lawyers have been particularly targeted, and that they face rapidly increasing online harassment and intimidation and ongoing threats and attacks;

57. Highlights with deep concern the increase in gender-based and domestic violence and deplores setbacks to SRHR in both developing and developed countries; reiterates its call for the EU and its Member States to fully support the right of women to bodily integrity, dignity and autonomous decision-making and to effectively fight gender-based and domestic violence; draws attention to the fact that, despite the efforts of the EU, women are still a minority in leadership positions, they earn less than men for the same responsibilities and positions and their abilities and skills are underestimated or undermined because of their gender;

58. Calls for the EU and its international partners to strengthen their efforts to ensure full enjoyment of human rights by women, girls and vulnerable groups, and to ensure equal opportunities for all; calls for the worldwide eradication of laws and practices preventing women from exercising their rights, notably the rights to education, work and participation in political and public decision-making; deplores situations in which women and female-headed households, particularly in humanitarian crisis areas, are denied access to humanitarian aid and essential services because national and local authorities insist that these services be provided by female workers, while at the same time limiting women's access to employment; calls on states that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention;

59. Condemns in strong terms any use of early and forced marriage, house arrest, rape and other degrading treatment against women; calls on the Commission and the EUSR for Human Rights to address the issue of early and forced marriage;

60. Reminds states of their obligation to guarantee access to comprehensive SRHR services, including modern contraceptive methods, safe and legal abortion, maternal, prenatal and postnatal healthcare, assisted reproduction and access to education and information on SRHR, including comprehensive sexuality education, without any form of discrimination; calls for legal rights and protections to be further strengthened and for the removal of barriers to access SRHR globally; reiterates its call to include the right to safe and legal abortion in the Charter; welcomes the publication of the updated World Health Organization guidelines providing key recommendations to health systems for providing abortion care; calls for the EU and its Member States to fully support and promote SRHR, including access to abortion, in multilateral and bilateral relations in accordance with international human rights law and standards;

61. Calls for more concerted efforts to eliminate the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and to fight impunity for the perpetrators of such violence; calls on the Commission to pursue efforts to fully eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation worldwide; calls for a stronger EU commitment to and support for protecting the rights of women in third countries throughout its efforts in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and post-conflict reconstruction operations, transitional justice and the promotion of human rights and democratic reforms, with a particular focus on the rights of women who suffer hostility, discrimination or stigmatisation, who are pregnant or have newly born children, or who are unemployed or in poverty;

62. Reiterates the need for robust action to ensure full implementation of GAP III; calls for the EU, as set out in GAP III, to strongly address intersectionality by developing a policy to fight the multiple forms of discrimination faced by the millions of women and girls who are victims of caste-based, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights violations, including sexual abuse and violence, displacement, forced and/or bonded labour, prostitution and trafficking;

63. Reiterates its condemnation of the commercial practice of surrogacy, a global phenomenon that exposes women worldwide to exploitation and human trafficking, while targeting financially and socially vulnerable women in particular; highlights its severe impact on women, women's rights, women's health and gender equality, and underlines its cross-border implications; calls for a European legal framework to address the negative consequences of commercial surrogacy;

64. Condemns legislation, policies and practices that enable child selection on the grounds of sex, race, disability or any other ground;

*Rights of the child*

65. Calls for a systematic and consistent approach to promoting and defending children's rights throughout the EU's external policies; calls for more concerted efforts to protect children's rights in crisis or emergency situations and welcomes the Council conclusions on this subject; expresses concern that the growing number of such crisis situations around the world, coupled with the long-lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to increasing violations of child rights around the world, including violence, early and forced marriage, sexual abuse including genital mutilation, trafficking, forced separation of children from their parents and vice versa in the cases of modern slavery, child labour, child forced labour, recruitment as child soldiers, a lack of access to education and healthcare, malnutrition and extreme poverty; stresses the disproportionate and long-term effects of food insecurity on children, which directly affects not only their health and development but also their education, as well as increasing the outrageous practice of child marriage; highlights the still large number of children around the world forced to work under usually hazardous conditions in hard-to-reach places such as mine shafts, in the extraction of raw materials, including rare minerals, in industry and in agriculture; stresses that 2021 was the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour and recalls the EU's zero tolerance policy on this practice; calls on the remaining countries which that not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to do so as a matter of urgency;

66. Deplores the continuous targeting of children as a tool of war; reiterates that because of their vulnerability, minors are often the first to suffer violence in war-ridden territories, especially with regard to ethnic reprisals by warring tribes, groups and ethnicities; condemns the forced recruitment of underage children in areas of war, as well as their instrumentalisation and the targeting of sexual violence towards them; stresses the need to create paths for reintegration and reparations for children that have had their rights violated and that the UN agenda on children and armed conflict must be mainstreamed into all of the EU's external actions; calls on the Member States concerned to ensure the protection of children who are nationals of these Member States and who are imprisoned or detained in third countries; calls on the Commission to step up its efforts to combat impunity for war crimes against children, to strengthen its cooperation with child-focused humanitarian organisations and NGOs and to safeguard the rights of children when cooperating and partnering with third countries;

67. Stresses that the right to education has suffered particular setbacks, with unparalleled disruptions to education due to COVID-19 but also to religious extremism and gender discrimination against girls; expresses concern regarding the expulsion of pregnant teenagers from schools; recalls that every child has the right to comprehensive sexuality education that is non-discriminatory, evidence-based, scientifically accurate and age-appropriate and that tackles harmful gender norms; calls for the EU to step up its work to provide access to education, including innovative ways to circumvent the obstacles imposed by national authorities; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to step up their support for third countries to help them adapt to the challenges they have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic in the field of education; stresses that support could take the form of an increased funding allocation through NDICI — Global Europe, but could also include providing capacity-building and best practices based on the lessons learned through the EU delegations worldwide; highlights that the changing international environment may require a financial solution enabling a multi-donor response to cover the growing funding gap to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;

68. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to maintain robust funding for education through all EU external financing instruments, in line with the 10 % benchmark on education in the NDICI — Global Europe; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to also support the governments of third countries in building and further developing stronger gender-responsive and inclusive education systems; recalls that women's access to education has been established as a fundamental right by the UN; believes that increasing girls' access to education and supporting women's participation in education and careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as a matter of priority should be a central policy target for the EU; insists, in this regard, on the need for girls to be able to complete their education and have access to age-appropriate information and services, free from discrimination and gender bias and with equal opportunities to fulfil their potential; stresses the urgent need to address gender-related barriers to education, such as laws, policies and harmful socio-cultural norms that prevent girls from continuing education in the event of pregnancy, marriage or motherhood; encourages tackling gender stereotypes and harmful socio-cultural norms through education, and preventing violence through gender-sensitive education;

*Rights of elderly people*

69. Calls for the EU and its Member States to develop new avenues to strengthen the rights of elderly people; underlines the challenges to the full enjoyment of all human rights by the elderly, including age-based discrimination, poverty, violence, a lack of social protection, healthcare and other essential services as well as barriers to employment; underlines the work of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing on a legally binding instrument to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older people and calls for the EU and its Member States to consider providing active support to that work;

*Rights of persons with disabilities*

70. Welcomes the adoption of the 2021-2030 EU strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities as a tool to improve the situation of persons with disabilities and their rights worldwide, particularly poverty and discrimination, but also problems with access to education, healthcare and employment and participation in political life; calls for a systematic internal and external implementation of this strategy; underlines that the duty of caring for persons with disabilities is commonly borne by their families, in particular by women, and calls for the EU to assist third countries in the development of policies in support of carers for persons with disabilities;

71. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to increase their efforts to promote equal rights for persons with disabilities through EU external action; underlines the need for a structured dialogue with organisations of persons with disabilities, in partner countries to ensure their meaningful participation and successful involvement in planning, implementation and monitoring of EU external financing instruments; emphasises the need to urge candidate and potential candidate countries to implement reforms to improve the situation of persons with disabilities and calls on the Commission to assist them in developing a structured process for consulting persons with disabilities and their representative organisations; calls for EU delegations to be provided with investment, training, and capacity-building in order to implement the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on humanitarian action and international cooperation;

*Intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination*

72. Underlines its opposition to and condemnation of intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, social class, disability, caste, religion, belief, age, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, which in many of the world's regions leads to killings and persecution, especially in conflict situations; stresses that racism, discrimination, xenophobia, religious persecution and related intolerance continue to be a major problem worldwide, leading to rights violations in all spheres of life, including access to education, healthcare, work and access to justice, and that these issues have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; calls for the EU and its Member States to lead the global fight against antisemitism and welcomes the adoption of the EU strategy to this end; calls on the Commission, the EEAS and EU delegations to develop, in collaboration with the Member States and with input from Parliament, specific local strategies to help fight caste-based discrimination in the countries most affected by it, in dialogue with local representatives and civil society organisations, and to invite them to consultations resulting from EU agreements or instruments, including human rights dialogues;

73. Recommends that Parliament address caste-based discrimination in all its relevant committees (the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Development and International Trade and the Subcommittee on Human Rights) and delegations, appoint a focal point person on caste-based discrimination and, when visiting countries affected by the issue, consult with Dalit organisations, raise caste-based discrimination with Parliament's counterparts and with the authorities and hold a hearing to review EU actions and progress as part of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;

*National, ethnic and linguistic minorities*

74. Deplores that many countries, despite their commitments to protect minorities, are pursuing policies of forced assimilation of national, ethnic and linguistic minorities by disregarding their rights; emphasises that minorities should not become a target or instrument of any military tension or conflict; recalls the obligations of states based on international treaties and agreements to protect the rights of these minorities within their respective territories; calls on the governments of the EU's partner countries to respect the rights of national, ethnic and linguistic minorities, including their cultures, languages, religions, traditions and histories in order to preserve diversity and linguistic and cultural identity; calls for the EU and its Member States to provide active support for these partner countries to this end; calls on the Commission to support the protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons belonging to minorities worldwide, including within the human rights and democracy thematic programmes of NDICI — Global Europe;

*LGBTIQ rights*

75. Strongly condemns the human rights violations, including discrimination, stigmatisation, arbitrary detention, torture, persecution and killings, that LGBTIQ persons around the world continue to face; believes that practices and acts of violence against individuals on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics should not go unpunished and must be eradicated; stresses that LGBTIQ persons and their defenders around the world continue to face human rights violations, including discrimination, stigmatisation, persecution, violence and killings; calls for the EU to step up its efforts to ensure that LGBTIQ persons can fully enjoy their human rights both internally and externally, and to play a leading role in defending their protection in its external policies; calls for the full implementation of the 2020-2025 LGBTIQ equality strategy as the EU's tool for improving the situation of LGBTIQ people

around the world; calls for the EU institutions to lead by example by proactively defending the rights of LGBTIQ persons across the globe and by thoroughly and consistently applying the EU guidelines throughout EU foreign policy to promote and protect LGBTIQ persons' enjoyment of all human rights;

*Freedom of expression, media freedom and the right to information*

76. Underlines the utmost importance of freedom of expression — both online and offline — and access to reliable information for democracy and flourishing civic space; expresses deep concern about the growing limitations on and violations of the rights to privacy, freedom of expression, freedom of information and freedom of association and assembly imposed by state and non-state actors in many countries around the world, particularly for journalists, through censorship or the need for self-censorship and the abuse of laws on counter-terrorism, money laundering, defamation and corruption, which serve to silence journalists, civil society organisations and human rights defenders; denounces the use of overly broad terminology that allows authorities to outlaw countless acts and criminalise legitimate human rights work, and the lack of sufficient human rights safeguards in many of these pieces of legislation, in particular regarding the right to a fair trial; denounces, in addition, the use of technologies such as spyware to persecute journalists or hinder or control their work; expresses deep concern, moreover, about the physical safety of journalists, attacks against them, including extrajudicial killings and arbitrary detentions, and the fact that more than 61 journalists and media workers have been killed so far in 2022;

77. Calls on the Commission to safeguard freedom of expression and to ensure public access to information through the internet as means of achieving freedom of speech; condemns the brutal crackdowns and the use of force, harassment, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial killings against peaceful protestors in a number of third countries;

78. Calls for the EU to support credible media and information sources that contribute to accountability of the authorities and to democratic transitions; expresses concern over the widespread use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) to silence journalists, activists, trade unionists and human rights defenders, including environmental human rights defenders, worldwide; underlines that this practice further restricts space for civil society and human rights defenders across the globe, in a context in which civic space has been continuously shrinking for several years and public authorities and private actors have been increasingly attacking the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association and assembly; welcomes, in this regard, the Commission's proposal for a directive aimed at protecting journalists and human rights defenders from abusive court proceedings and SLAPPs;

79. Urges the Commission and the EEAS, in coordination with the Member States, to develop a strategy to address the widespread use of SLAPPs against human rights defenders, journalists, activists and trade unionists worldwide; further calls on the Commission and the EEAS to include guidance on ways to provide effective protection for victims of SLAPPs, including through financial assistance to cover legal fees, in such a strategy; calls on the EU delegations to document SLAPPs and include them in their monitoring, reporting and assessing activities; encourages legislators from third countries to draft laws with the same objective, as part of general initiatives aimed at supporting and safeguarding the freedom of expression, including media freedom and pluralism;

80. Welcomes the Commission's intention to fund projects to assist journalists on legal and practical issues, including outside the EU, through the European democracy action plan; calls for the EU to intensify its efforts to assist targeted journalists worldwide and to ensure their safety, including by providing a safe haven and means to continue their work in case they have to leave their place of residency and by working closely with partner countries on this matter, especially in the framework of EU partnership agreements with third countries; welcomes the role played by programmes such as Media4Democracy and the EU-funded activities of the European Endowment for Democracy to this end;

81. Expresses its serious concern about restrictions on academic freedom and an increase in the censorship and imprisonment of scholars worldwide, which have important consequences for the right to education; calls for the EU and the Member States to step up their diplomatic efforts and emergency protection and support through bilateral and multilateral engagement in relation to threats or attacks on academic freedom by state and non-state actors; calls for the EU to ensure continued high-level support to the Global Campus of Human Rights, as a flagship example of the EU's support for human rights education worldwide;

*Right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief*

82. Notes that 2021 marked the 40th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief; recalls that freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief is a fundamental right of every human being and applies to all persons equally; notes with grave concern that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to hold a belief, to not believe, or to identify as an atheist or agnostic, including the right to demonstrate religious or non-religious convictions through expression, teaching and practice and the right to change or leave one's religion, is still violated in many countries around the world; stresses the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as some governments are still using it as a pretext for further discriminatory practices, including violence against and scapegoating religious minorities; condemns violence against and persecution of people belonging to minorities on the grounds of their belief or religion; deplores that it affects many religious and belief communities, as well as groups of people who are atheists, humanists, agnostics or who do not identify with any religion; observes with deep concern that non-religious, secular and humanist organisations are facing growing persecution, including unprecedented waves of incitement to violence against them, hatred and killings, in a number of countries;

83. Denounces the attacks against countless individuals and civil society organisations for peacefully questioning, criticising or satirising religious beliefs and recalls that expressing critical opinions about religion is a legitimate expression of freedom of thought or artistic creation;

84. Further expresses concern about the misuse and instrumentalisation of religion to foment intolerance or undermine human rights, such as the rights of LGBTIQ persons and women's rights, namely SRHR, as well as children's rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

85. Calls for the EU and its Member States to step up their efforts to protect the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, to raise these issues at UN human rights forums and to work with the relevant UN mechanisms and committees; calls on the Commission and the Council to implement ambitious programmes to defend this right worldwide, including encouraging and supporting international efforts to collect evidence of atrocity crimes on the grounds of belief or religion, bringing the perpetrators to court, rendering effective criminal sentences and compensating the victims; calls on the Council, the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to work with third countries to adopt measures to prevent and fight hate crimes in all EU external policies; calls on the EEAS and the EU delegations, where appropriate, to include faith-based organisations in their dialogues with civil society in order to tailor human rights policies to country-specific religious and cultural contexts, owing to the role of some faith-based organisations in responding to humanitarian crises, among others; observes that the population that does not identify with any religion should not be neglected in the EU policy framework on freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief; calls for an evaluation of the 2013 EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, as provided for in Article 70 thereof;

*Human rights defenders and civil society organisations*

86. Strongly supports the work of human rights defenders and highlights the risks they face in their endeavours to protect human rights, including threats against them and their families, harassment and violence; condemns the fact that hundreds of human rights defenders have been killed for their work, the majority of whom were environmental defenders; welcomes the EU's efforts to support human rights defenders in their work, including the ProtectDefenders.eu mechanism; calls for such efforts to be intensified in order to mitigate the growing risks faced by human rights defenders around the world, including arbitrary detention and imprisonment, verbal and physical attacks, legal harassment and restrictions and transnational threats or repression; calls on the Member States to suspend all active extradition treaties with countries in which the human rights situation is incompatible with Member States' international non-refoulement obligations;

87. Calls for the EU and its Member States to address actively legislative or administrative attempts to close down the space for the defence of human rights; calls for the EU and its Member States to develop a strategic high-level vision to counter the mounting global attacks against human rights defenders, including through adopting strong EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions laying down a collective high-level strategy for EU global action on human rights defenders, and to fully implement their political commitments on the protection of at-risk human rights defenders, such as those included in

the 2020-2024 EU action plan for democracy and human rights and in the EU Guidelines on human rights defenders; calls for the EU and its Member States to also actively support the development and implementation of appropriate and effective protection systems for human rights defenders at risk or in vulnerable situations, including through meaningful consultation with them and based on comprehensive, qualitative risk analyses, ensuring that such mechanisms are holistic and appropriately resourced, assess and manage the risks in a preventive manner and build protection plans that truly respond to the protection needs of individuals, collectives and communities; calls for the EU and its Member States, in particular the EUSR for Human Rights and EU ambassadors, to be more active in publishing public statements and other forms of public and private political engagement in support of human rights defenders at risk and those imprisoned for long periods, as well as in helping to conduct prison visits for the latter and facilitating external visits by their families; insists that the EEAS and the EU delegations pay particular attention to the situation of the Sakharov Prize laureates and finalists at risk and that they take resolute action, in coordination with the Member States and Parliament, to ensure their well-being, safety or liberation; calls on the EEAS to report back regularly on action taken on the cases of Sakharov Prize laureates and finalists who are detained, face restrictions on their freedoms or whose whereabouts remain unknown;

88. Expresses concern over the obstacles encountered by human rights defenders worldwide in accessing EU humanitarian and/or short-term visas; recalls the importance of this essential security and protection tool that allows human rights defenders to access safe havens when necessary, to take advantage of existing opportunities for rest and respite, to benefit from temporary relocation programmes and to carry out essential international advocacy, mobilisation and networking activities in EU territory; calls for an EU-wide scheme for issuing short-term humanitarian visas for the temporary relocation of human rights defenders at risk, as well as a more coordinated EU policy regarding the issuing by Member States of emergency visas for human rights defenders; calls for the EU develop a more predictable, coordinated and consistent policy on visas for human rights defenders, allowing for flexible and reactive protocols, including in critical situations;

89. Deplores the various forms of bans and limitations on civil society organisations and their activities, such as laws, including counter-terrorism laws, whose aim is to shrink civil society space and silence dissenting voices or the promotion of organisations sponsored by third-country governments (government-organised NGOs (GONGOs)); deplores the widespread adoption of so-called foreign agents laws in many countries, which force individuals and entities receiving funding from abroad to register themselves as foreign agents; expresses particular concern over the use of these laws to stigmatise and restrict the work of civil society and human rights defenders, including through restricting the right to access funding; calls for the EU to work with counterparts in order to obtain the repeal or revision of such laws and calls for the EU institutions and bodies, in particular the EEAS in coordination with the Commission, to develop a coordinated strategy to this end;

90. Deplores that women human rights defenders face gender-based violence and suffer from a lack of access to adequate resources and protection mechanisms; rejects the fact that women human rights defenders and women's rights activists continue to be sexually assaulted, threatened, intimidated, criminalised and even killed; deplores, additionally, that women human rights defenders working on SRHR are particularly targeted worldwide, and calls for the EU and its Member States to publicly and privately condemn attacks and threats against human rights defenders working in this area and to proactively ensure adequate representation of SRHR defenders in its consultations; stresses the need for the EU to politically and financially support civil society organisations that promote the rights of women and girls in all areas;

*Migrants and refugees*

91. Reaffirms the inalienable human rights of migrants, refugees and forcibly displaced persons, which must be reflected in the EU's migration and asylum policy and in its cooperation with third countries in this area; stresses that the EU should step up its efforts to acknowledge and develop ways to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, in particular of women, children, ethnic, religious and belief minorities and persons with disabilities, who are among the most vulnerable, building the resilience of migrants' communities of origin and helping them offer their members the possibility of enjoying a decent and safe life in their home country; stresses the need to manage migration and

asylum policies in a manner governed by the principles of solidarity, balance and the sharing of responsibility between countries; calls for the EU and its Member States to support the countries hosting most refugees, as well as transit countries and countries of origin; calls for the EU and its Member States to ensure that migration-related European funding, training or other forms of support to third countries do not directly or indirectly facilitate the perpetration of human rights violations, nor reinforce or perpetuate impunity for such violations; reiterates that close cooperation and engagement with third countries remain key to preventing migrant smuggling and human trafficking; stresses in particular the need to expand the fight against organised crime groups that engage in human trafficking, which should strictly be in line with international human rights standards; stresses, in this regard, that the dissemination of information and awareness-raising campaigns on the risks of smuggling is crucial; calls for EU-funded humanitarian operations to take into consideration the specific needs of children and other vulnerable groups and to ensure their protection while they are displaced; condemns in this regard the placement of migrant children in detention centres, especially when they are separated from their parents or legal guardians; underlines the importance of developing an effective framework of safe and legal pathways to the EU and welcomes, in this regard, the Commission communication on attracting skills and talent to the EU, including the development of Talent Partnerships with partner countries;

92. Recalls its commitment to the rights of refugees, as provided by international human rights and refugee laws, in particular the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto; recalls the obligations of states to protect refugees and respect their rights in accordance with the relevant international law; deplores the number of migrant deaths occurring along migration routes and illegal pushbacks in violation of international law; recalls that the EU and its Member States, in their external and extraterritorial actions, agreements and cooperation in the areas of migration, borders and asylum, should respect and protect human rights, notably those enshrined in the Charter, including the right to life, liberty and to seek asylum, through the individual assessment of asylum applications and the principle of non-refoulement; highlights in this regard the importance of the Member States leading by example by strictly upholding their obligations under international refugee law, and of substantially increasing their assistance to those fleeing repression or war, their hosting capacity and their resettlement pledges;

93. Calls for the EU and its Member States to be fully transparent about the allocation of funds to third countries for cooperation in migration matters; reiterates its calls on the Commission to ensure transparent *ex-ante* risk assessments performed by independent EU bodies and experts on the impact of any formal, informal or financial EU cooperation with third countries on the rights of migrants, refugees and forcibly displaced persons, and to take full account of these assessments, as well as monitoring mechanisms, to evaluate the human rights impact of cooperation on migration with third countries; notes with concern that the number of people forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order reached an unprecedented 89 million by the end of 2021, 36,5 million of whom were children; recalls that refugees and migrants, especially undocumented migrants, face barriers in access to healthcare around the world, that sexual and gender-based violence is a frequent occurrence during displacements, and that in many settings, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence do not receive the essential sexual and reproductive healthcare they need; stresses, in this context, that international action and cooperation is more essential than ever to ensure protection for refugees;

*Indigenous peoples*

94. Notes with regrets that indigenous peoples continue to face widespread and systematic discrimination and persecution worldwide, including forced displacements; condemns arbitrary arrests and the killing of human rights and land defenders who stand up for the rights of indigenous peoples; recalls that indigenous peoples play an important role in the sustainable management of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity; urges governments to pursue development and environmental policies that respect economic, social and cultural rights, and that are inclusive of indigenous peoples and local populations, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals; reiterates its call for the EU, its Member States and their partners in the international community to adopt all necessary measures for the recognition, protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, including as regards their languages, lands, territories and resources, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, notably in relation to free, prior and informed consent; recommends that the EU and its Member States include references to indigenous peoples and the rights

contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the relevant and emerging frameworks for due diligence; reaffirms the need to create a grievance mechanism to lodge complaints regarding violations and abuses of indigenous peoples' rights resulting from the activities of state and non-state actors; recommends that countries that have not yet done so ratify the provisions of International Labour Organization Convention No 169 of 27 June 1989 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples;

*Wars and conflicts around the world and their impact on human rights*

95. Is seriously concerned by the persistence of the scourge of wars and military conflicts around the world; stresses the multitude of threats to human rights caused by modern warfare and conflicts around the world today; underlines that in addition to the States Parties themselves, such conflicts often involve non-state actors including private military and security companies as well as terrorist organisations; stresses the disastrous humanitarian consequences of these conflicts and their devastating impact on civilians, who are directly targeted, have to endure grave human rights violations, and often have no or limited access to justice or legal remedies; calls for the EU to continue developing and implementing tools to enable it to respond swiftly and efficiently to such conflicts, including by addressing their root causes, investing in conflict prevention and mediation efforts, seeking and maintaining space for political solutions, creating alliances with like-minded countries and regional organisations, providing further financial and technical support and personnel to peacekeeping civilian missions and military operations missions, and promoting trust-building initiatives between belligerents; calls for the EU to help put an end to the perpetration of human rights violations and to provide assistance to the victims;

96. Condemns the increase in violations of democratic constitutions in the world; reiterates its concern about the threat caused by military takeovers at the cost of civilian lives, security and peace; stresses the need to strengthen accountability and combat impunity for human rights violations and war crimes that have been committed as a result of violent regime changes;

97. Reiterates that humanitarian crises intensify healthcare-related challenges and recalls that in crisis zones, vulnerable groups such as refugees, women and girls are particularly exposed to sexual violence, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual exploitation, rape as a weapon of war and unwanted pregnancies; calls on the Commission and the Member States to give high priority to gender equality and sexual and reproductive health in their humanitarian aid response, including in terms of training for humanitarian actors and future funding; calls for the EU to adopt a gender-sensitive perspective to comprehend how conflicts affect women and the LGBTIQ community and to integrate it throughout its efforts in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and post-conflict reconstruction operations, transitional justice and the promotion of human rights and democratic reforms;

98. Reiterates its call on the Member States to help contain armed conflicts and serious violations of human rights or international humanitarian law by strictly abiding by the provisions of Article 7 on Export and Export Assessment of the UN Arms Trade Treaty and of the EU Common Position on arms exports ([28]), including by refusing any transfer of arms and surveillance equipment that would result in the risk that the importing actors may commit or facilitate violations of human rights or international humanitarian law;

*Right to food and food security*

99. Reiterates that the right to be free from hunger is a human right; underlines its grave concerns about the challenges to the right to food and food security and the affordability of food in many countries around the world; calls for the EU, the Member States and the international community to immediately step up their efforts to halt the trend of emerging serious food shortages; underlines that while the parlous food security situation has several causes, it has been aggravated by many conflicts occurring around the globe, including current conflicts in countries that are large global exporters of primary food products, with tremendous consequences in several areas of the world; strongly condemns the use or the threat of food insecurity as a political instrument of war;

([28]) Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment (OJ L 335, 13.12.2008, p. 99).

100. Highlights with concern the fact that religious, belief or ethnic background can be used as a discriminating factor in the distribution of food and humanitarian aid in the context of food insecurity and humanitarian crises; calls for the EU, its Member States and the Commission to bring this issue to the attention of the governments of third countries concerned;

*Climate change and environment*

101. Underlines that human rights, a healthy environment and combating climate change are dependent on one another; welcomes the progress towards the recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as laid out in Resolution 76/300 of the UN General Assembly; stresses its appreciation for the essential work undertaken by environmental human rights defenders, including land and water defenders, journalists, investigative journalists, whistleblowers, lawyers and indigenous activists, to preserve and safeguard the environment despite threats of violence against them and the risk to their lives; recognises, moreover, the important role of civil society organisations, as well as indigenous peoples for their invaluable work in the preservation and protection of the environment;

102. Stresses that climate change jeopardises the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to food security, safe drinking water, sanitation, health and adequate housing, as well as the rights of local communities; rejects the unlawful exploitation of natural resources, which constitutes a major sustainability and environmental challenge; draws attention, furthermore, to the risks posed by climate change to peace and security, as food insecurity and water scarcity can lead to competition over natural resources and then to instability and conflicts within and between states; stresses that biodiversity and human rights are interlinked and interdependent and recalls the human rights obligations of states to protect the biodiversity on which those rights depend, including by providing for the participation of citizens in biodiversity-related decisions and providing access to effective remedies in cases of biodiversity loss and degradation;

103. Calls for the EU to seek to counter the effects of climate changes by, inter alia, introducing effective and sustainable policy actions, and to comply with the goals of the Paris Agreement; calls for the EU and its Member States to step up their contribution to the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss globally, in particular by ensuring that goods imported by the EU are produced in accordance with human rights protected under international law, including the rights of indigenous people, and do not contribute to the destruction or damage of natural ecosystems, in particular primary and old-growth forests, using a balanced approach that does not harm populations in third countries; highlights that the least developed countries are the most vulnerable to climate change, as they find it hardest to withstand its devastating impacts, despite producing small quantities of greenhouse gases than richer countries;

*Business, trade and human rights*

104. Underlines that trade agreements often offer the possibility for the EU to work with third countries to address their domestic situation by providing some conditions that would serve to enhance living standards, as well as allow for conditionality to improve the human rights situation in those countries; notes, however, that in some cases there has been little to no improvement in the countries concerned; notes that excessive and exploitative business activities often have detrimental effects on human rights in third countries; recalls that the substantive clauses included in trade agreements provide that States Parties must respect, protect and foster human rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, customary law and the international conventions to which they are party;

105. Calls for the EU and its Member States to condemn, in the strongest terms, crackdowns against civil society, in particular when they happen in countries with which the EU has concluded FTAs, and to engage effectively with the national authorities in those countries, including at the highest level, to ensure that civil society may act freely, participate in public affairs and monitor and document the implementation of the FTAs; calls for the EU to address any violation of FTA commitments, including those laid out in the chapters on trade and sustainable development and in the essential elements clauses of partnerships and cooperation agreements; in cases of serious or widespread violations, asserts that the EU should trigger human rights clauses, envisaging dedicated conditionality and adequate measures, on this basis, including the setting up of a dedicated human rights monitoring body to assess the respect of human rights commitments under FTAs and to provide recommendations to the parties;

106. Calls for the EU to make consistent use of clauses in trade agreements that protect human rights, including closer monitoring and enforcement of human rights commitments, and to use the full potential of conditionality on human rights to grant preferential access to its market to third countries; calls, in particular, for a closer link between preferential treatment and progress on human rights in the updated Regulation on the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+); calls for greater transparency throughout all steps of the procedure for granting GSP+ status, including improved engagement with civil society and for following up on any possible violations; calls on the Commission to keep Parliament adequately informed about matters in this field; calls for the parties involved in negotiating EU agreements or establishing or strengthening EU relations with a third country to examine the possibility of extending a bilateral standing invitation to observe their respective elections; stresses that this possibility should also be addressed in already existing agreements; reiterates its calls for the Commission to systematically carry out human rights impact assessments focused on the risks of human rights violations prior to granting any preferential regime to a country and to swiftly investigate and respond to any violations, including the revocation of GSP+ status if warranted; underlines the need for adequate resources and clear procedures to properly carry out the human rights impact assessments and monitor the application of international human rights conventions; calls in this regard for the EU delegations concerned to receive an increase in human resources to contribute to these assessments and the EU monitoring of preferential trade access to the EU market under the GSP+ scheme;

107. Welcomes the Commission's proposal for a directive on corporate sustainability due diligence as a step towards fostering responsible corporate behaviour with regard to human, labour and environmental rights; highlights the importance of holding companies accountable through judicial mechanisms, including civil liability; emphasises that the directive's requirements as regards reporting on the sustainability and due diligence strategies should apply to all large undertakings and to small and medium-sized undertakings that are publicly listed or operating in high-risk world regions and economic sectors; calls for the inclusion in the directive of a specific article on consultation of stakeholders, in particular affected persons and local communities, trade unions, workers' representatives and human rights defenders;

108. Condemns all forms of forced labour and modern slavery; highlights that according to the latest 'Global Estimates of Modern Slavery' report, 2,7 million more people were subjected to forced labour between 2016 and 2021, with up to 17,3 million people in the private sector only; welcomes the Commission's proposal for a regulation on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union's market; highlights also that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this trend; stresses that the crisis also resulted in a deterioration in working conditions for many workers, in some cases leading to forced labour; calls for the EU and its Member States to lead actions in multinational forums to eradicate forced labour and modern slavery; reminds the Member States of the need to prosecute and condemn these activities carried out in both the countries of origin and in groups with international mobility; reiterates its call for all countries to fully implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and calls on the EU Member States that have not yet adopted national action plans on business rights to do so as soon as possible; encourages the EU and its Member States to constructively and actively participate in the work of the UN open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights and to adopt a negotiating mandate to this end; considers this to be a necessary step forward in the promotion and protection of human rights;

109. Denounces the increasing practice by authoritarian states of hosting mega sport or cultural events in order to boost their international legitimacy, while further restricting domestic dissent; calls for the EU and its Member States to engage with national sports federations, corporate actors and civil society organisations on their ways of participating in such events; calls for the development of an EU policy framework on sports and human rights;

*Human rights and digital technologies*

110. Stresses that human rights must fully encompass the digital sphere and must be protected from the illegal use of technology, either by state or non-state actors who provide or benefit from these technologies; underlines the risks posed by digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, to personal liberty, the right to privacy and democracy at large and condemns the role of digital technologies in human rights violations, in particular through surveillance, monitoring, harassment and limitations on freedom of expression; stresses the threats that disinformation campaigns, in combination with digital tools, pose; stresses also the specific threat that new digital technologies pose for human rights defenders, opposition figures, journalists and others in controlling, restricting and undermining their activities; calls for more intensive

efforts to establish a comprehensive global legal framework on digital technologies, which should take advantage of the possible gains such technologies can offer for human well-being, while strictly respecting human rights; insists on the importance of an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace that upholds the core values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law; strongly supports voluntary, non-binding norms on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, encompassing respect for privacy and the fundamental rights of citizens; calls for the swift adoption of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act as an effective tool to ensure that AI is used to this aim, with special focus on high-risk AI; calls for the attention economy — used by, among others, social media platforms — to be included within the scope of high-risk AI in order to protect vulnerable groups from being targeted by disinformation and the manipulation of public opinion;

111. Deplores practices by authoritarian regimes, among others, that limit citizens' access to the internet, including internet blackouts during public assemblies and protests; calls for the EU and its Member States, in cooperation with other democratic countries, to invest in research and technology allowing undisturbed and affordable global access to the internet; calls for the EU to fund research on effective digital ways to filter and counter digitally spread fake news, disinformation and malicious propaganda;

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112. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the EU Heads of Delegation.