



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

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*Plenary sitting*

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4.3.2015

B8-0230/2015

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU's priorities for the 28th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)  
(2015/2572(RSP))

**Andrzej Grzyb, Cristian Dan Preda, Elmar Brok, Dubravka Šuica,  
József Nagy, Lara Comi**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the EU's priorities for the 28th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)  
(2015/2572(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the UN human rights conventions and the optional protocols thereto, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
  - having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/251 establishing the Human Rights Council (UNHRC),
  - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,
  - having regard to the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, adopted on 25 June 2012,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on the United Nations Human Rights Council,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on the violation of human rights, including its urgency resolutions on the issues,
  - having regard to its resolution of ... on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2013 and the European Union policy on the matter<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 9 February 2015 on EU priorities at UN human rights fora,
  - having regard to Articles 2, 3(5), 18, 21, 27 and 47 of the Treaty on European Union,
  - having regard to the forthcoming 28th session of the UNHRC to be held from 2 to 27 March 2015,
  - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas respect for, and the promotion and safeguarding of, the universality of human rights is part of the European Union's ethical and legal *acquis* and one of the cornerstones of European unity and integrity;
- B. whereas human rights are inherent to all human beings irrespective of nationality, race, sex, ethnic origin, religion or any other status, and whereas respect for these rights is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)....

Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and in subsequent international human rights conventions, declarations and resolutions;

- C. whereas all human rights – whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural – are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, and whereas the deprivation of any one of these rights has a direct and adverse impact on the others;
- D. whereas failure to respect human rights and lack of legitimate democratic participation lead to instability, failed states, humanitarian crises and armed conflicts;
- E. whereas the Union’s action in its relations with third countries is guided by Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty, which reaffirms the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms and provides for the respect of human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law;
- F. whereas all states have an obligation to respect the basic rights of their respective populations and a duty to take concrete action to facilitate respect for those rights at national level, and to cooperate at international level with a view to eliminating obstacles to the realisation of human rights in all areas;
- G. whereas the regular sessions of the Human Rights Council, the appointment of Special Rapporteurs, the Universal Periodic Review mechanism and the Special Procedures addressing either specific country situations or thematic issues contribute to the promotion of, and respect for, human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- H. whereas, regrettably, some of the current members of the UNHRC are acknowledged as being among the worst human rights offenders and have bad records in terms of cooperation with the UN Special Procedures and compliance with their reporting requirements vis-à-vis the UN human rights treaty bodies;

#### **UN Human Rights Council**

- 1. Welcomes the EU’s priorities for the upcoming 28th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), as set out in the Council conclusions of 9 February 2015;
- 2. Welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Joachim Rücker as President of the Human Rights Council for 2015;
- 3. Congratulates Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein on his appointment as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and reiterates its strongest support for his efforts and for his mandate;
- 4. Welcomes the presence of Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) Federica Mogherini at the UNHRC high-level session, as this sends the right signal regarding the EU’s strong commitment to the multilateral human rights system;

5. Welcomes the annual report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) to the UN General Assembly, covering the period from December 2013 to November 2014, and expresses its full support for the independence and integrity of his Office; stresses that it is important to defend this independence, so as to ensure that the High Commissioner can continue to exercise his task in an effective and impartial manner; reiterates that the HCHR needs to be adequately funded;
6. Recalls the commitment of the European Parliament and its Subcommittee on Human Rights to supporting a strong multilateral human rights system under the aegis of the UN, including the Third Committee of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the work of related UN specialised agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and of UN Special Procedures;
7. Encourages the EEAS, in particular through the EU Delegations in New York and Geneva, to increase EU coherence by means of timely and substantive consultation in order to present the EU position with one voice; reaffirms the importance of integrating the work being done in New York and Geneva in the context of the UN General Assembly, the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council into the EU's relevant internal and external activities in order to ensure coherence;
8. Reiterates its position that UNHRC members should be elected from among states which uphold respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy and which have agreed to extend standing invitations to all Special Procedures, and urges the Member States to promote and adopt human rights performance criteria, which should apply to any state to be elected as a member of the UNHRC; urges the Member States to encourage transparent, open and competitive processes for the election of UNHRC members;
9. Reiterates its support for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism and its appreciation of the UPR's valuable work, and calls on members to actively prepare their UPR, including by involving civil society, to engage in the interactive dialogue during the UPR session and in the debates on the adoption of the UPR outcomes, to implement the UPR recommendations and to take concrete measures to improve and uphold the fulfilment of their human rights obligations;
10. Calls for the EU and its Member States to continue to follow up the UPR recommendations in all EU policy dialogues with the countries concerned in order to seek ways to support countries in implementing the recommendations;
11. Reiterates its support for the Special Procedures and the independent status of the mandate holders to enable them to fulfil their function in all impartiality, and calls upon all states to cooperate with these procedures by supporting their free and unfettered cooperation with relevant interlocutors;
12. Considers it important to send parliamentary delegations to the UNHRC sessions and to other relevant UN General Assembly sessions;
13. Considers it important to ensure room for interaction between civil society and the

UNHRC; urges the EU and the UNHRC to ensure that civil society representatives are allowed to contribute as fully as possible to the 28th session of the UNHRC, and to the Universal Periodic Review process and other UN human rights mechanisms, without fear of reprisals on their return to their home country;

### **Civil and political rights**

14. Reaffirms that freedom of expression, which is the cornerstone of every free and democratic society, is a fundamental right of any individual; strongly condemns the assassination in France in January 2015 of 12 people, including cartoonists, at the *Charlie Hebdo* newspaper and of 4 people in a Jewish supermarket, together with the assassination of a film director and a synagogue guard in Copenhagen, by terrorists targeting freedom of speech and religion;
15. Condemns the use of religion by extremist and jihadist groups in all countries, and particularly Syria, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Nigeria and Central Africa, whose actions including gun and bomb attacks, suicide bombings, kidnappings and other violent acts terrorising populations; is of the view that the fight against terrorism requires its root causes to be addressed, including social exclusion, political marginalisation and inequality; expresses its support for all victims of religious intolerance and hatred; notes that in the Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic 'Rule of Terror: Living under ISIS in Syria' of 14 November 2014, the public brutality and indoctrination by the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State' to ensure the submission of communities, including Christians, under its control are documented; expresses its solidarity with the members of the Christian communities being persecuted and facing the danger of extinction in their motherlands, Iraq and Syria; calls in this respect for greater efforts to protect the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities; urges that human rights and the rule of law need to be upheld in all counter-terrorism activities;
16. Expresses its concern about all restrictions on freedom of assembly and association, including bans on civil society organisations, the aggressive use of criminal defamation laws and other restrictive laws, excessive registration and reporting requirements, and overly restrictive rules on foreign funding, and reaffirms that freedom of association and peaceful assembly are fundamental elements of human rights;
17. Calls on all governments to promote and support civil society organisations and human rights defenders and to allow them to operate without fear, repression or intimidation, and to cooperate with the Human Rights Council as regards the UPR mechanism; notes that countries which are responsible for reprisals against human rights activists should be held accountable;
18. Reiterates its condemnation of the use of the death penalty and strongly supports the introduction of a moratorium on the death penalty, as a step towards abolition;
19. Reiterates the importance of the fight against torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and the priority that the EU has committed to place on this issue, including with regard to children, and to facilitating the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture; urges the EEAS, the Commission and the EU Member States to demonstrate their common

commitment to eradicating torture and supporting victims, in particular by continuing – or, where applicable, starting – to contribute to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and the Special Fund established by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture;

20. Supports the UNHRC Special Rapporteur's latest report and conclusions on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; calls on the EU and its Member States to implement the Special Rapporteur's recommendations in its internal policy to combat the spread of racial, ethnic and xenophobic hatred and incitement over the internet and through social media networks by taking appropriate legislative measures, with full respect for other fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and opinion;
21. Recognises that the rapid evolution of information and communication technologies has transformed the environment for the exercise of freedom of expression across the world, generating both significant advantages and serious concerns; welcomes, in this context, the Council's adoption in May 2014 of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline, and condemns all restrictions on digital communication, including those targeting civil society actors; reiterates the need to pay particular attention to the rights of journalists and bloggers;
22. Encourages the UNHRC to continue the debate on the right to privacy and, to that end, to appoint a UN Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, especially in the context of digital communications;

#### **Social and economic rights**

23. Takes note of the fact that the UN's post-2015 development agenda for the Millennium Development Goals has the target of ending poverty by 2030 with a holistic approach to economic, social and environmental issues; welcomes the UN Secretary-General's synthesis report ahead of the UN Special Summit on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals agenda; supports the UN Secretary-General's calls for an approach centred on people's needs and rights in order to end poverty;
24. Considers it important to address rising and extreme inequality in order to fight poverty in general and to promote social and economic rights by facilitating access to food, water, education, health care and adequate housing, in particular; highlights, in this context, the increasing problem of land grabbing, which needs to be addressed;
25. Is of the opinion that corruption, tax evasion, mismanagement of public goods and lack of accountability contribute to the violation of citizens' rights, as they divert funds from investment in much-needed public services such as education, basic health services and other social infrastructure, thus perpetuating the poverty of populations; recalls that under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, governments have an obligation to respect their citizens' rights by making adequate resources available; stresses, in this connection, that particular attention needs to be paid to the protection of human rights defenders working on the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights;

26. Reiterates its call for the EU and its Member States to support the establishment of a UN Special Rapporteur on financial crime, corruption and human rights;

### **Business and human rights**

27. Strongly supports the effective and comprehensive dissemination and implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights within and outside the EU; calls on all stakeholders to take an active role in the 11th session of the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and to support efforts to align their policies with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; reiterates its request to the Commission to report by the end of 2015 on the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by the EU Member States;
28. Requests that the Commission and the EEAS encourage EU Delegations around the world to engage with EU businesses in order to promote respect for human rights, and to ensure that 'business and human rights' is included among the focus themes in local calls for proposals under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR); calls for the EU and its Member States to engage in the emerging debate on a legally binding international instrument on business and human rights within the UN system;

### **Women's rights**

29. Calls for the EU to participate actively in the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and to continue to fight all attempts to undermine the UN Beijing Platform for Action, which will be reviewed on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women;
30. Critically observes that, despite progress made in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment so far, discriminatory laws remain in force in many countries, particularly in the areas of the family and of access to property; observes that women are still vastly under-represented in decision-making positions and that violence against women remains widespread, while access to justice remains limited despite the number of women who die every day as a result of domestic violence;
31. Strongly condemns the use of sexual violence against women as a tactic of war, including crimes such as mass rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, gender-based forms of persecution including female genital mutilation, trafficking, early and forced marriages, honour killings and all other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity; calls again for the EU and all its Member States to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;
32. Recalls the EU's commitment to mainstreaming human rights and gender aspects in common security and defence policy missions, in line with the landmark UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security; reiterates, in this connection, its call for the EU and its Member States to support, in the process of

building sustainable reconciliation, the systematic participation of women as a vital component of peace processes, and to recognise the need to mainstream gender perspectives in conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction and democratic transition processes;

### **Children's rights**

33. Expresses its concern that, while progress has been made since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, at least 58 million children, particularly girls, children from poor families, children with disabilities and children in conflict areas, do not attend school, and many children still suffer from diseases that can be easily prevented, while others are engaged in child labour;
34. Calls on all states to commit themselves to eliminating the worst forms of child labour as defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention No 182, which include child slavery, trafficking, prostitution and hazardous work affecting a child's physical and mental health;
35. Recalls that one of the primary obligations of the state is to provide all children with education by increasing opportunities, creating adequate institutions and addressing the structural causes of major impediments to universal primary education, including drop-out rates, which remain a major impediment to universal primary education;
36. Calls for adequate EU funding for demobilisation and reintegration programmes for children associated with armed conflicts and for ex-child soldiers; recalls its strong support for the 'Children, not Soldiers' campaign, as expressed during the hearing on the same topic held in the Subcommittee on Human Rights on 3 December 2014; welcomes the annual reports submitted by the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children, together with the report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;

### **Climate change and human rights**

37. Stresses that the impact of climate change on vulnerable groups and individuals is high, especially in low-income countries and in coastal and low-lying island states that lack the economic resources to adapt to severe environmental changes;
38. Welcomes the UNHRC's recognition that environmental changes have an adverse impact on the livelihood of populations, and are obstacles to the realisation of fundamental, internationally recognised human rights; urges the States Parties, therefore, to adopt urgent and ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures at the upcoming 2015 Climate Change Conference in Paris;

### **Fight against impunity and the International Criminal Court (ICC)**

39. Reiterates its full support for the work of the ICC in its role of ending the impunity of the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community and to provide justice for the victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and



genocide; remains vigilant regarding any attempts to undermine its legitimacy or independence; urges the EU and its Member States to cooperate with the Court and provide it with strong diplomatic, political and financial support, including in the UN; calls for the EU, its Member States and its Special Representatives to actively promote the ICC, the enforcement of its decisions and the fight against impunity for Rome Statute crimes;

### **Indigenous peoples**

40. Calls on the EEAS, the Commission and the Member States to support the review of the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in line with the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (UN General Assembly Resolution 69/2), in order to monitor, evaluate and improve the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; urges the Member States to request that all Special Procedure mandate holders give special attention to issues affecting indigenous women and girls, and systematically report such issues to the UNHRC; urges the EEAS and the Member States to actively support the development of the system-wide action plan on indigenous peoples, as requested by the UN General Assembly in its September 2014 resolution, especially as regards the organisation of regular consultation of indigenous peoples as part of that process;

### **International cultural and sports events and human rights**

41. Denounces the increasing practice by authoritarian states of hosting mega sports or cultural events in order to boost their international legitimacy while further restricting domestic dissent; calls for the EU and its Member States to actively raise this issue, including at the UNHRC, and to engage with national sports federations, corporate actors and civil society organisations on the modalities of their participation in such events, including with regard to the first European Games in Baku in 2015 and the FIFA World Cup in Russia in 2018;

### **EU human rights mainstreaming**

42. Calls for the EU to promote the universality and indivisibility of human rights, including civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights, in conformity with Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty and the General Provisions on the Union's External Action;
43. Calls for the EU, its Member States, the Commission and the EEAS to mainstream human rights in all their external policy areas with third countries; stresses also that EU human rights policy needs to ensure that its internal and external policies are coherent, in line with the EU Treaty obligation, and to avoid double standards when it comes to respect for human rights;
44. Calls on the EU to adopt a rights-based approach and to integrate respect for human rights into trade, investment, and development cooperation, and into its Common Security and Defence Policy;

### **EU priorities on country-related issues**

## **Ukraine**

45. Expresses its grave concern over the further escalation of violence and armed conflict in eastern Ukraine; condemns the large-scale human rights violations in the conflict and fully supports the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine; remains concerned about the discrimination and widespread human rights violations against the local population in Crimea, in particular the Crimean Tatars; calls on the EU Member States to support all possible efforts at UN level to fight impunity and to conduct impartial investigations into the violent events and human rights violations linked to the Maidan demonstrations, the annexation of Crimea, and the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine; calls for respect for international humanitarian law and principles to protect civilians in conflict in eastern Ukraine;

## **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)**

46. Welcomes the planned extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); welcomes too the UN General Assembly resolution encouraging the UN Security Council to take appropriate action to ensure accountability, including through consideration to referring the situation in the DPRK to the ICC;

## **Iran**

47. Welcomes the UNHRC resolution of March 2014 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the extension of the Special Rapporteur's mandate, and calls on Iran to allow the UN Special Rapporteur entry into the country as a crucial indicator of Iran's willingness to take steps towards opening up a dialogue on human rights; reiterates its condemnation of the death penalty in Iran and of the high rate of executions; supports the joint statement of August 2014 by the UN Special Procedures mandate holders condemning the wave of arrests and sentencing of civil society actors in Iran; calls for the EU and the UNHRC to continue to monitor the human rights situation, and to ensure that human rights remain a key priority in all dealings with the Iranian Government; calls on the Iranian authorities to abide by international human rights law, under which the execution of juvenile offenders is a violation of international minimum standards, and not to carry out the execution of any juvenile offenders;

## **Myanmar/Burma**

48. Supports the Special Rapporteur's report to the 69th session of the UN General Assembly on the human rights situation in Myanmar, which recognises the progress made so far while identifying remaining areas of major concern; calls on the government to mainstream human rights into the country's institutional and legal framework and all policy areas, and to respect freedom of expression and assembly so that the people can express their views freely on government policies without fear, intimidation or harassment; expresses its concerns over the proposed legislation on the 'protection of race and religion', which includes four draft bills on interfaith marriage, religious conversion, monogamy and population control which do not appear to be in line with international human rights treaties;

## **Belarus**

49. Expresses its profound concern at the continued violation of human rights in Belarus; Condemns the three executions carried out in 2014, the harassment of human rights defenders, the persecution of independent journalists, the censorship of all internet-based communications and the restrictive legislation on non-governmental organisations; calls for the renewal of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Belarus and calls on the government to grant full access to UN Special Procedure mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur; calls for the unconditional release and rehabilitation of all remaining political prisoners;

## **Bahrain**

50. Expresses its continued concern about civil discord in Bahrain, and the situation of human rights defenders and political opposition activists in the country; calls on all stakeholders in Bahrain to initiate constructive and inclusive talks with the aim of genuine reconciliation and respect for the human rights of all Bahraini communities; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience, journalists, human rights defenders and peaceful protesters, and expresses its support for the joint statement of 4 February 2015 by UN Special Procedures mandate holders regarding the arrest of a senior opposition politician and the disbanding of the subsequent demonstrations; calls for the EU Member States and other members of the UNHRC to continue to follow closely the human rights situation in Bahrain, focusing on the implementation of the commitments made by Bahrain during the UPR process and the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, which have been welcomed by the King of Bahrain;

## **Egypt**

51. Welcomes the proceedings of the UPR for Egypt in November 2014 and looks forward to its adoption at the upcoming session of the UNHRC; urges Egypt to immediately and unconditionally release all those detained for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association; demands, also, that the Government of Egypt enact legislation in line with international standards and safeguard the right to association enshrined in the Egyptian Constitution, including the right to receive and dispense funding, and that it revoke the Protest Law of November 2013 and introduce new legislation that would guarantee freedom of assembly; urges the Egyptian Government to open a judicial investigation to determine the identity of those responsible for ordering and carrying out unlawful killings in the course of the suppression of the mainly peaceful demonstrations that have taken place since 3 July 2013, including the dispersals of 14 August 2013 in Raba'a Square and Nahda Square, in which at least 1 000 protesters were killed;

## **Mali**

52. Welcomes the work of the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali, and calls on the UNHRC to extend his mandate; welcomes the progress made by the Government of Mali in re-establishing the judiciary in some parts of the country, and in the investigations into the 2012 torture and killing of 21 elite soldiers, together

with the establishment of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission; remains concerned about the deteriorating security situation and the continued use and recruitment of child soldiers, and calls on the Government of Mali to investigate and hold accountable those from all warring factions who were responsible for war violations committed during the 2012-2013 armed conflict, and to ensure that any future peace agreement calls for accountability, the strengthening of the truth-telling commission and the vetting of security force personnel;

### **South Sudan**

53. Calls on the African Union to make public the report of its Commission of Inquiry on human rights violations and abuses committed by all parties in South Sudan, as a step toward promoting justice vis-à-vis the human rights violations committed since the start of the conflict; condemns the abduction of a group of young children in Wau Shilluk in February 2015, with the purpose of making them child soldiers;

### **Sri Lanka**

54. Notes the pledges made by the newly elected Government of Sri Lanka, and calls on it to take concrete steps towards accountability, including serious investigations and prosecutions, together with other steps to address the wider problem of impunity and human rights abuses, and to cooperate fully with the Office of the UNHCHR and its international investigation concerning Sri Lanka;

### **Cuba and Venezuela**

55. Expresses its continued concerns about the increasing violations of human rights by government forces, in particular with regard to the human rights defenders and political opposition activists in these countries; recalls the number of political prisoners in jail and calls for their immediate and unconditional release; calls on the Cuban and Venezuelan authorities to launch constructive and inclusive dialogues with all political parties and civil society to ensure that freedom of expression and fundamental rights are respected; expresses its hope for a successful third round of negotiations for an EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, which are taking place on 4-5 March 2015;
56. 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 on Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the 69th UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.