



Plenary sitting

B8-0183/2017

13.3.2017

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 EU priorities for the UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2017
(2017/2598(RSP))

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**European Parliament resolution on EU priorities for the UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2017
(2017/2598(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the UN human rights conventions and optional protocols thereto,
 - having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/251 establishing the Human Rights Council (UNHRC),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the United Nations Human Rights Council sessions,
 - having regard to its recommendation to the Council of 7 July 2016 on the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly¹,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the violation of human rights, including its urgency resolutions of 2016,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2016 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World and the European Union's policy on the matter 2015²,
 - having regard to Articles 2, 3(5), 18, 21, 27 and 47 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to the 2015 annual report of the UNHRC to the UN General Assembly,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 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; whereas respect for human rights should be mainstreamed in all EU policy areas;
- B. whereas the EU is strongly committed to multilateralism and to the UN bodies as regards the promotion and protection of human rights;
- C. whereas the regular sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the appointment of Special Rapporteurs, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism and the Special Procedures addressing either country-specific situations or thematic issues all contribute to the promotion of and respect for human rights,

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0317.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0502.

democracy and the rule of law;

UN Human Rights Council

1. Welcomes the work done by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein and his Office (OHCHR); recalls the EU commitment to continue to support and defend its integrity, independence and functioning; welcomes the role played by the OHCHR in advancing cooperation between international and regional human rights mechanisms, and in identifying ways to increase the role of 'regional arrangements' in relation to universal human rights standards;
2. Is of the opinion that the UNHRC's effectiveness and credibility hinge on its members' genuine commitment to protect all persons in all countries from any human rights violations, in accordance with the international human rights conventions promoting universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, constructive dialogue and cooperation; urges that efforts be made to avoid the polarisation of the debates in UNHRC and encourages constructive dialogue;
3. Calls on states to grant access to the UNHRC's independent experts, Special Rapporteurs and OHCHR experts to investigate alleged human rights violations and to engage with them in a constructive fashion with a view to redressing the situation, to honour their commitments to the human rights conventions and to fully cooperate with the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council (including the UPR); encourages all states to take concrete steps to act on UPR recommendations and to overcome shortcomings by putting in place an implementation and follow-up mechanism, including the establishment of national plans of action and national coordination mechanisms;
4. Recalls the General Assembly's obligation, when electing the membership of the UNHRC, to take into account candidates' respect for the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law and democracy; welcomes the UNHRC decision requesting the UNHRC Advisory Committee to prepare an assessment report on the progress made in the establishment of regional and sub-regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights; calls on the EU and its Member States to reflect the equal importance of rights and voting patterns and to improve the coordination of EU positions in this sense; strongly requests that the EU speak with one voice and reach a common EU stance when voting in the UNHRC;
5. Reiterates the importance of ensuring that the EU engages actively and consistently in UN human rights mechanisms, in particular with the Third Committee, the General Assembly (UNGA) and the UNHRC; supports efforts made by the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU Delegations in New York and Geneva and the Member States to further increase EU coherence on human rights issues at the UN;

Thematic priorities

6. Underscores the importance of the role of human rights NGOs and defenders in the promotion and protection of human rights; highlights the fact that human rights and fundamental freedoms need to be protected in every dimension of their expression, including in the context of new technologies;

7. Expresses its serious concern at the numerous, ever-increasing attempts made to shrink the space of civil society and human rights defenders; condemns any act of violence, harassment, intimidation or persecution against human rights defenders, whistleblowers, journalists or bloggers, whether online or offline; calls on all states to promote and ensure a safe and enabling environment for NGOs, civil society, journalists, and human rights defenders, including a particular focus on all vulnerable groups, to operate in, independently and without interference; renews its call for those states that have adopted restrictive laws against independent human rights organisations to lift them;
8. Believes that free, independent, impartial media constitute one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, where open debates play a crucial role; supports the plea for the appointment of a Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General for the safety of journalists; calls for the issues of freedom of expression online, digital freedoms and the importance of a free and open internet to be raised in all international fora;
9. Recalls that the right to freedom of association and assembly continues to be a major challenge; warmly welcomes the work of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai; calls for the EU Member States to give the reports due consideration;
10. Urges all states to swiftly ratify the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) establishing complaint and inquiry mechanisms;
11. Opposes any kind of discrimination and persecution on grounds of race, colour, language, religion and belief, social origin, caste, birth, age or disability, or status; supports the EU's engagement with the relevant special procedures; calls for the EU to actively continue to promote equality and non-discrimination and to fight against violence and discrimination against all individuals;
12. Expresses its concern that many people, individually or collectively suffer violations of their right to freedom of religion or beliefs, in particular Christians, committed by states and non-state actors, leading to discrimination, inequality and stigmatisation; recalls the need to fight against intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief in order to ensure respect for other interdependent human rights such as freedom of expression;
13. Calls for the EU to work for greater protection of religious minorities against persecution and violence and for the repeal of laws criminalising blasphemy or apostasy that serve as a pretext for the persecution of religious minorities and non-believers; calls for the work of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to be supported;
14. Strongly encourages the EU's continued support for a zero-tolerance approach to the death penalty, and calls for it to further seek to reinforce cross-regional support for the next UN General Assembly resolution on a moratorium on the death penalty;
15. Urges the EU to speak out and support the UN's work against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, mass executions and executions for crimes including drug-related offences, and requests that the EEAS step up, at all levels of dialogue and in all fora, the EU's efforts in the fight against summary executions,

torture and other ill-treatment, in line with the Guidelines to EU Policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; calls for the universal ratification and effective implementation of the UN Convention against Torture and the Optional Protocol thereto;

16. Staunchly supports the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a key institution for holding perpetrators to account and assisting victims in achieving justice based on the principle of complementarity between war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity; requests that all parties provide political, diplomatic, financial and logistical support for the day-to-day operation of the ICC;
17. Requests that the EU continue to strengthen the work of the ICC; encourages strong dialogue and cooperation between the Court, the UN and its agencies and the UN Security Council; regrets the decision taken by some African countries to withdraw from the ICC, and calls on them to reconsider; calls on all UN member states to join the ICC by ratifying the Rome Statute, and to encourage the ratification of the Kampala amendments;
18. Condemns in the strongest possible terms ongoing serious human rights violations, particularly those caused by ISIS/Daesh and the attacks by Boko Haram targeting children, as well as all other attacks by terrorist or paramilitary organisations against civilians, particularly women and children; denounces the frequency and scale of acts of destruction of cultural heritage, and calls for support for relevant efforts undertaken in various UN fora;
19. Calls for the EU to work actively for an initiative for UN recognition of the genocide perpetrated against religious minorities committed by the so-called ISIS/Daesh, and for referral to the ICC of cases of suspected crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide; encourages strong dialogue and cooperation between the Court, the UN and its agencies, and the UN Security Council;
20. Requests that the EU call on all states to place human rights at the centre of their respective development policies and to implement the 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development; welcomes the recent appointment by the UNHRC of a Special Rapporteur on the right to development, whose mandate includes contributing to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right to development in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international development cooperation agreements; highlights that human rights for all must be a cross-cutting feature in the achievement of all goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda;
21. Calls for the EU to continue to promote equality between women and men and to actively support the work of UN Women and gender mainstreaming initiatives in its activities and programmes; calls for continued support measures strengthening the empowerment of women and girls and the eradication of all violence and discrimination against women and girls including gender-based violence; strongly requests the EU to pursue cross regional initiatives for the promotion, protection and fulfilment of women's rights;
22. Recalls the EU's commitment to mainstream human rights and gender aspects in line with the landmark UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) on

women, peace and security; calls for the EU to support internationally the recognition of the added value of women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction and sustainable reconciliation;

23. Calls for the EU to continue to promote children's rights, in particular by contributing to ensuring children's access to water, sanitation, healthcare and education, including in conflict zones and refugee camps, and by eliminating child labour, recruitment of child soldiers, deprivation of liberty, torture, trafficking, child, early and forced marriage, sexual exploitation and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation; calls for measures to support and strengthen international efforts through the UN to end the use of children in armed conflict, and to address more effectively the impact of conflict and post-conflict situations on women and girls; calls on all UN countries to uphold their treaty obligations and commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, in order to uphold the rights of all children under their jurisdiction irrespective of their legal status, and without discrimination of any kind;
24. Calls on states to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, including their equal participation and social inclusion; calls on all states to ratify and implement the UN Convention on Persons with Disabilities;
25. Calls for the EU to work with partners on the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including by encouraging more states to adopt national actions plans;
26. Welcomes the UN's New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which addressed the issue of large movements of refugees and migrants and led to the adoption of a global compact on a comprehensive refugee response (CRR) framework, and the commitment that applies to migrants and refugees and is aimed at saving lives, addressing specific needs, countering racism and xenophobia, combating human trafficking, ensuring equal recognition and protection before the law and ensuring inclusion in national development plans; calls on all the parties involved to ensure political engagement, funding and concrete acts of solidarity in support of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, and recalls that the question of migration should continue to be examined at a global scale and not only at European level; calls for the EU and its Member States to take the lead in these international efforts, and to uphold, in accordance with their obligations under international law, their commitments to protect the human rights of asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and all displaced persons, in particular women, children and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities;
27. Underlines the importance of promoting the universality and indivisibility of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union and the General Provisions on the Union's External Action;
28. Recalls the fact that internal and external coherence in the area of human rights is essential for the credibility of the EU's human rights policy in its external relations with third countries and calls for the EU to fulfil its commitments in this regard;

Country priorities

29. Ukraine

Deplores the fact that ongoing Russian aggression has caused a dire humanitarian situation in the Donbas, and that Ukrainian and international humanitarian organisations are being refused access to the occupied regions; expresses its deep concern over the challenging humanitarian conditions faced by more than 1.5 million internally displaced persons; is deeply concerned at the human rights violations in Russian-occupied Crimea, especially the dire situation of the Crimean Tatars, and stresses the need for further EU financial assistance for Ukraine; reconfirms its full commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and to its free and sovereign choice to pursue a European path; calls on all parties to immediately pursue the peaceful reintegration of the occupied Crimean peninsula into the Ukrainian legal system through political dialogue and in full compliance with international law; supports the prolongation of sanctions against Russia until the Minsk Agreement is fully implemented and Crimea is returned; calls on the European External Action Service and the Council to strengthen pressure on the Russian Federation to allow international organisations access to Crimea for the purpose of monitoring the human rights situation in view of the ongoing gross violations of fundamental freedoms and human rights in the peninsula, and of establishing permanent international monitoring and convention-based mechanisms;

30. Syria

Condemns in the strongest terms the atrocities and the widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the forces of the Syrian regime with the support of Russia and Iran, as well as the human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed by non-state, armed terrorist groups, in particular ISIL/Daesh, responsible for crimes amounting to genocide, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham /Al-Nusra Front and other jihadist groups; insists that the investigation of the use and the destruction of chemical weapons by all sides in Syria be continued and regrets the decision of Russia and China to block a new UNSCR on the use of chemical weapons; reiterates its call for full unhindered humanitarian access, and consequences and accountability for those guilty of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity; supports the EU initiative for referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court and calls on the UN Security Council to take action to this end;

31. Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

Expresses its deep concern about the persisting deterioration of the human rights situation in the DPRK; calls on the Government of the DPRK to fulfil its obligations under the human rights instruments to which it is a party, and to ensure that humanitarian organisations, independent human rights monitors and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK have access to the country and are provided with the necessary cooperation; calls on the DPRK to allow freedom of expression and press freedom for national and international media, and to allow its citizens uncensored access to the internet; seriously condemns the systematic use of the death penalty in the DPRK on a large scale; calls on the Government of the DPRK to

declare a moratorium on all executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty in the near future; demands that those most responsible for the crimes against humanity committed in the DPRK be held accountable, brought before the International Criminal Court and subjected to targeted sanctions; strongly condemns the nuclear tests as an unnecessary and dangerous provocation as well as a violation of the UN Security Council resolutions and a serious threat to the peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and the North East Asian region;

32. The Georgian regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia

Expresses its grave concerns about the instrumentalisation of justice and cases of political pressure on members of the Constitutional Court; remains concerned about freedom of expression, freedom of the media and the lack of access to the occupied regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia where human rights violations remain widespread; urges the strengthening of people-to-people contact between the Tbilisi-controlled territory and the two occupied regions; calls for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia to be fully respected, as well as the inviolability of its internationally recognised borders; stresses the need for the safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their place of permanent residence; calls on the Georgian Government to take appropriate measures with a view to ensuring a follow-up to the recommendations made in the UPR process;

33. Belarus

Expresses its deep concern at the continued restrictions to freedom of expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly; condemns the harassment and detention of independent and opposition journalists and human rights activists; condemns the continued use of the death penalty; calls for the renewal of the UN Special Rapporteur's mandate on the human rights situation in Belarus at the 35th session of the Council, and calls on the government to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur and to commit to engagement in long-overdue reforms to protect human rights, including by implementing the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur and other human rights mechanisms;

34. European Neighbourhood Policy

Believes in the continued value of the ENP's initially stated objectives of creating an area of prosperity, stability and security, based on the common values and principles of the Union, by providing assistance and incentives for deep structural reforms in the neighbouring countries, carried out under their own responsibility and agreed with them, which will allow for reinforced engagement with the EU; considers support for democracy, the rule of law, good governance, state-building and human rights and fundamental freedoms to be central to the ENP; stresses the importance of developing a thriving and active civil society in the process of transformation and democratisation, including the business community; calls for further support for civil society, local SMEs and other non-state actors, since these constitute a driving force in the reform process, and for a more engaged dialogue and partnership between the different civil society actors and sectors in the EU and the neighbouring countries in the ENP framework; underlines the importance of European companies and their role in the promotion and dissemination of international standards for business;

35. **Iran**

Calls on Iran to cooperate fully with all UN human rights mechanisms and to work towards the application of the recommendations set forth in that context, including the Universal Periodic Review, by enabling international human rights organisations to carry out their missions; calls on the Government of Iran to address the substantive concerns highlighted in the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur and the UN Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in Iran, as well as the specific calls to action found in resolutions of the UN General Assembly; notes with concern that Iran has the highest level of death-penalty executions per capita in the world; calls on Iran to declare a moratorium on the death penalty; calls for the release of all political prisoners; notes that some religious minorities and their basic religious freedoms are formally protected by the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran; is, however, concerned that the number of individuals imprisoned from religious minority communities or because of their beliefs has increased; calls on the Iranian authorities to ensure that the rights of religious and ethnic minorities are fully respected and protected in law and that religious freedom is extended;

36. **Burundi**

Expresses its deepest concerns regarding the worsening political and security situation in Burundi; condemns the violence that has been occurring in Burundi since 2015 and has led to deaths, torture and targeted violence against women including collective rapes and harassment; condemns the imprisonment of thousands of people and the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Burundians and violations of freedom of the press and of expression, as well as the prevalence of impunity regarding such acts; calls for a thorough and independent inquiry into the killings and abuses and for the perpetrators of these acts to be brought to justice; supports, in this connection, the decision by the EU Council, following the failure of the discussions launched under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, to suspend direct financial support to the Burundian administration, including budgetary support, but to maintain full financial support for the population and its humanitarian aid through direct channels;

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37. 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 71st UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human rights and the Secretary-General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.