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## **DRAFT REPORT**

on the annual report on human rights and democracy in the world 2012 and the  
European Union policy on the matter  
(2013/2152(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Eduard Kukan

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on the annual report on human rights and democracy in the world 2012 and the European Union policy on the matter**

**(2013/2152(INI))**

### *The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other UN human rights treaties and instruments,
- having regard to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012 adopted by the Council on 6 June 2013,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2012 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2011 and the European Union's policy on the matter<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (11855/2012), as adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 25 June 2012,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2012 on the Review of the EU's Human Rights Strategy<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Council Decision 2012/440/CFSP of 25 July 2012 appointing the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to its recommendation of 13 June 2012 on the EU Special Representative for Human Rights<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the Council Conclusions of 14 May 2012 on 'Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change',
- having regard to its recommendation to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, to the Council and to the Commission of 13 June 2013 on the 2013 review of the organisation and the functioning of the EEAS (2012/2253(INI)),<sup>5</sup>
- having regard to the European Union's Guidelines on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law<sup>6</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0503.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0504.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 200, 27.7.2012, p.21.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0250.

<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0278.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.eeas.europa.eu/human\\_rights/docs/guidelines\\_en.pdf](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/docs/guidelines_en.pdf).

- having regard to its resolution of 7 February 2013 on the 22nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (2013/2533(RSP))<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 17 November 2011 on EU support for the ICC: facing challenges and overcoming difficulties<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2011 on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the Joint Communications of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 20 March 2013 on ‘European Neighbourhood Policy: Working towards a Stronger Partnership’ (JOIN(2013)4), and of 25 May 2011 on ‘A new response to a changing Neighbourhood: A review of the European Neighbourhood Policy’ (COM(2011)0303),
  - having regard to its recommendation of 29 March 2012 to the Council on the modalities for the possible establishment of a European Endowment for Democracy (EED)<sup>4</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2011 on EU external policies in favour of democratisation<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to the UN General Assembly Resolution of 20 December 2012 (A/RES/67/176) on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty,
  - having regard to United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960 on women, peace and security,
  - having regard to the report on the EU indicators for the Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security, adopted by the EU Council on 13 May 2011,
  - having regard to the United Nations resolutions on the rights of the child, most recently its resolution of 4 April 2012,
  - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Development and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,
- A. whereas the various transitional processes, including popular uprisings, conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as trapped transitions in authoritarian countries, have posed increasing challenges to the EU’s policies in support of human rights and democracy in the world; whereas the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012 demonstrates the need for the EU to continue to develop flexible policy responses; whereas the most fundamental policy choice for the EU concerns the resilience and

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0055.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 59E, 28.2.2012, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 168E, 14.6.2013, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0113.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 291E, 4.10.2011, p. 171.

political determination to stay true to the founding values of the European Union in challenging times under the pressure of other policy objectives and interests;

- B. whereas Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty further strengthened the EU's commitment to act on the international scene guided by the principles of democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law;
- C. whereas the Copenhagen political criteria of 'stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities' remains a fundamental feature of the enlargement process;
- D. whereas the uprisings in the Arab world prompted the European Union to acknowledge the failure of past policies and to commit to a 'more for more' approach in the Review of the Neighbourhood Policy, based on a commitment to 'adapt levels of EU support to partners according to progress on political reforms and building deep democracy', including free and fair elections, freedom of association, expression and assembly, a free press and media, and the rule of law administered by an independent judiciary;
- E. whereas the Council Conclusions on the European Commission's Agenda for Change in EU Development Policy, adopted in May 2012, specifically state that 'support to partners will be adapted to their development situation and commitment and progress with regard to human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance'; whereas the latest EU Common Position regarding the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness pledges that systematic reference should be made in development co-operation to 'democratic ownership' where partner countries are responsible for promoting an enabling environment for civil society and for strengthening the role of parliaments, local authorities, national audit institutions and the free media;
- F. whereas the EU Council, in June 2012, adopted a Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, committing the EU institutions to the attainment of several tangible policy objectives; whereas the EU Council, in July 2012, created the position and named the first thematic EU Special Representative for Human Rights; whereas the procedure to adopt a new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, due to take effect in January 2015 when the current action plan expires, needs to start in the spring of 2014;
- G. whereas the European Endowment for Democracy was established in October 2012 with the main purpose of making direct grants to pro-democracy activists or organisations struggling for democratic transition in the European Neighbourhood and beyond;
- H. whereas the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) was accompanied by assurances that support for human rights and democracy would be a silver thread running through the new EU diplomatic service; whereas the network of EU Delegations around the world provide the Vice President of the Commission/EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) with a new capability to carry out EU human rights policy;
- I. whereas the European Parliament, in its resolutions on the previous Annual Report and on

the review of the EU human rights strategy (both of which were adopted in December 2012), stressed the need for a reform of its own practices to mainstream human rights in its activities and follow up its urgent resolutions on breaches of democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

- J. whereas the European Parliament Eurobarometer survey of public opinion, carried out in the 27 EU Member States in November and December 2012, shows again that the protection of human rights remains the most important value in the eyes of Europeans; whereas credible implementation of stated EU commitments to support human rights and democracy in its external policies is crucial to maintain the overall credibility of EU foreign policy;
- K. whereas in December 2012 the European Union received the Nobel prize for its contribution to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe;

### ***General points***

- 1. Considers human rights to be at the centre of EU relations with all third countries, including its strategic partners; stresses that EU human rights policy needs to be consistent in complying with the Treaty obligations and avoiding double standards in external policies;
- 2. Calls on the VP/HR, EU Special Representative for Human Rights and the EEAS to pursue these commitments and mainstream human rights and democracy in the EU's relations with its partners, including at the highest political level, by making use of all relevant EU external policy instruments;
- 3. Recognises the crucial role played by civil society in the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights; calls on the VP/HR to ensure close cooperation with civil society; considers also that the EU should throw its full weight behind all advocates of liberty, democracy, and human rights throughout the world;

### ***The 2012 EU Annual Report***

- 4. Welcomes the adoption of the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012; commends the VP/HR for her presentation of the report to the European Parliament's plenary session in June 2013; calls for this practice to continue and for active and constructive discussions among EU institutions in preparing future reports;
- 5. Believes that the Annual Report should become an essential tool for the communication and discussion of EU activities in the area of human rights and democracy; welcomes therefore the commitment of the VP/HR and the EEAS to use EU annual reports as implementation reports on the EU Strategic Framework and the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy;
- 6. Notes the references to actions by the EU Special Representative on Human Rights in the Annual Report and encourages the VP/HR and the EEAS to include more in-depth analyses, especially when it comes to his role in implementing the Strategic Framework and the Action Plan, in order to provide an adequate description of his role and work;

7. Acknowledges the efforts made to list the various EU actions in the field of human rights and democracy support in the country reports, which provide a wealth of information about the work of the EU institutions around the world; regrets, nevertheless, that the country reports still seem to lack a systematic, clear and coherent framework that would allow for more rigorous analysis on the impact and efficiency of EU action;
8. Reiterates its view that the country reports should contain specific benchmarks based on a set of indicators to assess both positive and negative trends, evaluate the efficiency of EU actions and provide grounds for adapting the levels of EU support according to progress on human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance;
9. Welcomes the effort to include activities by the European Parliament in the Annual Report and strongly encourages the VP/HR and the EEAS to specify which EU action has been taken to follow up on Parliament's resolutions;

### ***EU Policy Framework***

#### *Strategic Framework and the Action Plan*

10. Reiterates its appreciation of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy as an important milestone in integrating and mainstreaming human rights across all EU external policies; underlines the need for a general consensus and enhanced coordination of the EU's human rights policy between the EU institutions and the Member States;
11. Stresses the vital importance of efficient and credible implementation of the stated commitments, both in the Strategic Framework and in the Action Plan; points out that credibility requires adequate resourcing of dedicated human rights policies and consistent mainstreaming at a high political level, such as at ministerial and summit meetings with third countries;
12. Notes that the current Action Plan will be concluded at the end of 2014; expects the VP/HR and the EEAS to engage in a timely review and consultations with the Member States, the Commission, the Parliament and civil society, leading to the adoption of a new Action Plan that will take effect in January 2015;

#### *EU Special Representative for Human Rights*

13. Recognises the importance of the mandate given to the first EU Special Representative (SR) for Human Rights; encourages the EU SR to enhance the visibility, mainstreaming, coherence and effectiveness of EU human rights policy and to strike the right balance between silent and public diplomacy in carrying out his mandate; repeats its recommendation that the EU SR provide Parliament with a regular report on his activities;
14. Commends the EU SR on the openness of the dialogue conducted with the European Parliament and civil society, thus establishing an important practice that should be continued and consolidated to ensure due transparency and accountability; welcomes, furthermore, the attention given by the EU SR to a number of countries of concern, including Russia, Egypt and Bahrain;

15. Welcomes the fact that cooperation with the EU SR for Human Rights was included in the mandate of the geographic EU SR for the Sahel, and urges the Council and the VP/HR to also adopt this practice with regard to the mandates of future geographic EU SRs;

*EU Guidelines on Human Rights*

16. Welcomes the adoption of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion and Belief, and on LGBTI rights; reminds the EEAS, however, to respect good inter-institutional practice and engage in a timely manner with the proper political bodies within the European Parliament; commends the practice adopted by the EEAS and the Council of reviewing and revising older guidelines; encourages the EEAS to adopt a more rigorous review process involving the thorough consultation of stakeholders in order to adapt to changing circumstances;
17. Urges the EEAS and the Council to pay particular attention to the issue of proper implementation plans for the guidelines; recommends further training and awareness-raising among EEAS and EU delegation staff, as well as among Member State diplomats; expresses its particular concern regarding the implementation of the guidelines on international humanitarian law and the guidelines on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;

*Human rights dialogues with third countries*

18. Notes the continued difficulties in achieving concrete progress in several of the EU human rights dialogues and consultations; encourages the EU to seek new ways of making the dialogues with countries of concern more meaningful; underlines the need to pursue determined, ambitious, and transparent human rights policy in these dialogues; calls therefore on the EU to draw clear political conclusions when the human rights dialogue is not constructive and, in such cases, to put more emphasis on political dialogue, démarches and public diplomacy; warns furthermore against diverting human rights discussions away from high-level political dialogues;

*Human rights country strategies and human rights focal points*

19. Notes the efforts made by the EEAS to finalise the first cycle of EU human rights country strategies; reiterates its support for the objective of giving ownership of the country strategy to the EU delegation on the ground, while ensuring quality control at headquarters level; regrets, however, the lack of transparency regarding the contents of the country strategies;
20. Welcomes the nearly complete network of human rights focal points in EU delegations; calls on the VP/HR and the EEAS to develop a plan on how this network can be used to realise its full potential;

*Human rights conditionality in trade preferences and external agreements*

21. Supports the practice of including legally binding human rights clauses in the EU's international agreements, and considers that these clauses should also be included in all sectoral trade agreements;



22. Points out that Parliament may withhold its consent to international agreements on account of serious breaches of human rights, as in the cases of the conclusion of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Turkmenistan or the textile protocol of the EU-Uzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement;
23. Welcomes the continuation of the GSP+ scheme whereby countries can enjoy additional preferential tariffs as incentives for ratification and implementation of 27 core human rights, labour and environment conventions; stresses that GSP+ preferences must only be granted to countries that have ratified and effectively implemented the conventions; recalls also the possibility of temporal withdrawal of GSP+ preferences for countries in violation of human rights; calls therefore on the European Commission, when conducting the monitoring exercise, to open genuine channels of communication and carry out broad consultations with a wide range of partners, including the European Parliament and local civil society and social actors; calls on the European Commission to make the assessments for GSP+ eligibility publicly available, in order to increase transparency and accountability;
24. Calls, furthermore, on the EU to define and adopt specific policy guidelines on the effective inclusion of human rights in its trade and investment agreements in order to achieve methodological consistency and rigour in the human rights impact assessments;

#### ***European Union policy on transition processes***

25. Notes the overwhelming evidence from recent years indicating the crucial importance of EU foreign policy adequately addressing dynamic transition processes in third countries; encourages the EU to continue to learn from past experiences, both positive and negative, to avoid repeating certain policy mistakes, and to establish best practices in order to influence and consolidate democratisation processes; acknowledges the requirement for policy flexibility in diverging situations, and encourages the development of policy tools that could be applied in different transition scenarios in order to integrate human rights and democracy support measures into the EU approach in a flexible and credible manner;
26. Emphasises that political transition and democratisation need to be bonded with respect for human rights, the promotion of justice, accountability, reconciliation, the rule of law and the establishment of democratic institutions; stresses the importance of redressing human rights abuses committed by former regimes; insists that the EU always advocate a context-sensitive approach to transitional justice;
27. Emphasises that the EU should give its full support to countries that have dislodged authoritarian regimes and are undergoing a transition to democracy; recalls that the police, the military and the judiciary are often used as mechanisms to perform systematic violations of human rights; stresses therefore that institutional reform of these bodies needs to provide for greater accountability and transparency in transition processes;
28. Considers the EU's external financial instruments an important tool for promoting and defending EU values abroad; welcomes in this context the commitment to put human rights, democracy and the rule of law at the core of EU external action; calls for improvements in the coherence and effectiveness of different thematic and geographic instruments in order to achieve this strategic objective;

29. Strongly encourages the EU to support an active and independent civil society worldwide, both politically and financially, through, for example, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR);
30. Welcomes the establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) which aims to provide support for those striving for democratic change by offering them flexible funding tailored to their needs;

*Enlargement policy, democratisation and human rights*

31. Stresses the momentous importance of the enlargement process as a means of supporting democratisation and enhancing human rights protection;
32. Welcomes the European Commission's decision to place the rule of law at the heart of the enlargement process; urges the EU to remain vigilant during the enlargement processes and to demand rigorous implementation of provisions critical to human rights, such as protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, establishing the rule of law and effective access to justice, and guaranteeing fundamental freedoms;
33. Notes with concern that respecting the rights of minorities is one of the key challenges identified in the Commission's Enlargement Strategy for 2012-2013; encourages the Member States to launch a general public debate on the acceptance of minorities through education, civil society engagement, and awareness-raising in general; regrets that the Roma community is particularly disadvantaged throughout the Western Balkans; condemns the generally negative societal attitudes towards vulnerable groups such as the LGBT community and people with disabilities, which is a recurring issue in many enlargement countries;
34. Notes that media freedom has generally advanced in enlargement countries; deplores, however, the lack of measures to ensure freedom of expression in certain enlargement countries, which often leads to self-censorship, political interference, economic pressures, and the harassment of, or even violence against, journalists; is seriously concerned in this respect about increasing violations of the freedom of expression in Turkey;

*Challenge of transitions in the Neighbourhood policy*

35. Recognises the challenges related to democratic transitions in the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood; notes increasing divergence in democratic reforms across the EU neighbourhood;
36. Welcomes the new EU approach aimed at strengthening the partnership between the EU and the countries and societies of its Neighbourhood, based on mutual accountability and shared commitment to the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law; supports the 'more for more' approach which should provide greater support to partners engaged in building deep and sustainable democracy and protecting human rights; calls on the EEAS and the Commission to ensure the efficient and transparent implementation of this approach, giving due consideration to Parliament's reports;
37. Notes with concern the fragile state of democratic processes and the deterioration of human rights and fundamental freedoms in many Neighbourhood countries; emphasises

that good governance, the freedom of association, expression and assembly, a free press and free media, the rule of law and an independent judiciary are essential for underpinning democratic transitions; recognises the key role of civil society in building public support for democratic reforms in the Neighbourhood countries;

38. Regrets that in some countries civil society organisations continue to face serious constraints such as obstacles to the freedom of movement, lawsuits against NGO leaders, cumbersome administrative procedures, the aggressive use of criminal defamation laws against NGOs or a complete ban on their operation, restrictive rules controlling foreign funding or making the acceptance of financial support subject to authorisation;
39. Remains concerned about the lack of democracy, rule of law, fundamental freedoms and respect for human rights in Belarus;
40. Notes with concern instances of selective justice in certain Eastern Neighbourhood countries; recalls that the EU has continually asked for the release of political prisoners, such as Yuliya Tymoshenko in Ukraine; reiterates that political and criminal responsibility should be clearly separated in countries that are committed to democratic values;
41. Supports all steps leading to political dialogue, which is essential to move the transition in Egypt forward; expresses its deep concern about recent crises and calls on all political leaders in the country to find a way to break the dangerous stalemate and agree on implementing tangible confidence-building measures to avoid the risk of more bloodshed and polarisation in the country;
42. Remains deeply concerned about the crisis in Syria; strongly deplores the excessive use of force and violence against the civilian population in the country, and abhors the scale of state abuses that may constitute crimes against humanity; calls on all armed factions to put an immediate end to violence in the country; expresses grave concern at the ongoing humanitarian crisis and the implications for neighbouring countries; believes that the key to solving the conflict lies in political mechanisms and diplomatic processes;

*Transitional justice and the challenge of post-conflict peacebuilding*

43. Considers accountability for past violations to be an integral element in the process of building sustainable reconciliation; welcomes the intention of the EEAS to develop a dedicated policy on transitional justice to help societies deal with past abuses and fight impunity; stresses the need to deal with transitional justice in a manner that is consistent with the EU's support for international criminal justice in general, and the ICC in particular; draws particular attention to the EU's experience in the Western Balkans as a source of inspiration;
44. Emphasises that a key element of the EU approach to transitional justice should be support for institutional reform of the judiciary to enhance the functioning of the rule of law in line with international standards; stresses the need for former criminals to be prosecuted through national or international courts; emphasises the importance of public dialogue to confront the past and for proper victim consultation and compensation programmes, including reparations; considers that vetting the background of personnel working in the transitional institutions is a credibility test for transitional justice;

45. Notes the particular complexity of developing consistent policies for transitions in post-conflict contexts; emphasises, therefore, the need to enhance compliance with, and monitoring of, international human rights and humanitarian law norms in armed conflict situations;
46. Condemns in the strongest terms serious human rights violations perpetrated in armed conflict situations in recent and ongoing crises, such as Syria, Mali and the Central African Republic, and in particular summary executions, rape and other forms of sexual violence, acts of torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions; calls on the EU to fight against impunity in all of these cases, and to support action by domestic judiciaries as well as the ICC to bring the perpetrators to justice;
47. Calls on the VP/HR and the EEAS to conduct a thorough policy review of the tragic events in Syria, Libya and Mali and other recent conflicts in order to revise the EU Guidelines on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and to seek more effective implementation of those guidelines; calls on the EU to support the ongoing initiative of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Swiss government to reform the current international governance framework regarding IHL;

*Trapped transitions and countries of concern*

48. Calls attention also to the trapped transitions in countries where reform movements and transitional processes have been stopped or put down by the ruling regime; calls on the EU to continue its efforts to persuade the ruling elites in these countries, as well as in other countries of concern still under authoritarian rule, to initiate a reform process to develop strong and stable democracies in which the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms are upheld;
49. Recalls that countries trapped in transition lack democratic reforms and political accountability; reiterates that all citizens have the right to fully and freely participate in political life in which free, fair and open elections take place with more than one party and different alternative media sources;
50. Expresses its serious concerns about recent repressive laws and their arbitrary enforcement by the Russian authorities, often leading to the harassment of NGOs, civil society activists, human rights defenders and minorities;
51. Stresses the need for international monitoring of the human rights situation in China and calls on EU Member States to actively engage in establishing this monitoring in light of the failure of the EU-China dialogue on human rights to achieve significant and tangible results;
52. Expresses grave concern regarding the steadily deteriorating human rights situation in Iran, the continued repression of reformists, the growing number of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, the consistently high number of executions, including of minors, the widespread torture, the unfair trials and exorbitant sums demanded for bail, and the heavy restrictions on the freedom of information, expression, assembly, religion, education and movement;
53. Expresses its deepest concern regarding the deteriorating human rights situation in the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and calls on the DPRK to engage in a meaningful dialogue on human rights with the European Union; calls on the DPRK to put an end to extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, to release political prisoners and to allow its citizens to travel freely, both within and outside the country; calls on the DPRK to allow free expression and press freedom for national and international media, and to allow its citizens uncensored access to the internet;

54. Calls on the EU to build an efficient sanctions policy towards all regimes exercising repressive methods towards civilians;

*Election observation and democracy support policies*

55. Welcomes the EU's continued support for electoral processes around the globe by deploying Election Observation Missions (EOMs) and Electoral Expert Missions (EEMs) and providing electoral assistance and support for domestic observers; notes that these missions have recently contributed to support for democratic development in the EU's neighbourhood, and have witnessed the transfer of power to the opposition (Senegal) and the consolidation of democracy emerging from conflict (Sierra Leone);
56. Welcomes the initiative of the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) to strengthen the follow-up to EOM recommendations by using them as part of the 'road map for democracy' in the country concerned, and to charge the Chief Observer with a special role to ensure follow-up of the recommendations with the support of Parliament's standing bodies;
57. Emphasises the importance of enhancing the operational capacity of parliaments between elections; recalls, in this context, the EU pledge in the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to base development co-operation on 'democratic ownership', with a particular reference to the strengthened role of parliaments;

*Freedom of expression*

58. Emphasises the particular importance of freedom of expression, including free media in transition situations; welcomes the EU's commitment to produce Guidelines on Freedom of Expression (online and offline), and further recommends the EU to develop a methodology to monitor and react to changes in legislation which restrict pluralism and freedom of the press in third countries;

*EU support for universal human rights*

59. Supports fully the affirmative position taken by the EU in the Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy regarding the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as the pledge to 'speak out against any attempt to undermine respect for universality of human rights';

*UN human rights system*

60. Reiterates its support for strengthening the UN human rights system as fundamental to the advancement of universal human rights; acknowledges the EU's efforts in the Review of the UN Human Rights Council, and calls on all members of the Human Rights Council to

uphold the highest standards of human rights and to live up to their pledges made before their election; considers the independence of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the UN Special Procedures mandate holders as a key prerequisite to their efficient functioning, and emphasises the need for non-earmarked funding to ensure that;

61. Welcomes the start of the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, and calls for continued close EU attention to enhancement of the UPR procedure and the degree of implementation of UPR recommendations which countries have accepted and promised to carry out;
62. Calls on the EU Member States to build upon the commitment they made in the EU Strategic Framework to ratify and implement the key international human rights treaties, by ratifying and implementing, in particular, the ten core UN human rights treaties and the optional protocols thereto, and to make the relevant declarations on ensuring the acceptance of all individual complaints and inquiry procedures; stresses the importance of these ratifications for the internal and external credibility of the EU's human rights policy;
63. Encourages the EU and its Member States to support the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the implementation of her 2012 report on strengthening the UN Treaty Bodies which play a key role in monitoring the actual implementation of human rights obligations by states which are parties to the UN human rights treaties;

#### *International Criminal Court*

64. Reiterates its strong support for the International Criminal Court; considers the increasing number of state parties to be an important development in strengthening the universality of the Court, and welcomes the ratification of the Rome Statute by Guatemala in April 2012 and by Côte d'Ivoire in February 2013;
65. Regrets that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is still not included in the new GSP Regulation in the list of conventions required for GSP+ status; notes that a number of GSP+ applicants are not state parties to the Statute or have not ratified it (e.g. Armenia, Pakistan); reiterates its recommendation that the Rome Statute be added to the future list of conventions;
66. Invites the EU and its Member States to emphasise the ratification and acceptance of the Statute in negotiations and political dialogues with third countries, regional organisations and other regional groups, and to include provisions concerning the ICC and international justice in EU agreements with third countries;
67. Calls on the EU delegations and EU Special Representatives to actively promote the ICC, the enforcement of its decisions, and the fight against impunity for Rome Statute crimes;
68. Calls on the EU Member States to comply with the ICC's requests for assistance and cooperation at all stages of the Court's proceedings (preliminary examination, investigation, arrest and surrender, protection of victims and witnesses, interim release, enforcement of sentences);

#### *Death penalty and capital punishment*

69. Reiterates its univocal opposition to capital punishment, and considers the global abolition of the death penalty as a central objective of the EU's policy on human rights; emphasises that the death penalty has never been proved to be an effective deterrent to crime; applauds the efforts of the European Union and its Member States in the United Nations that led to the adoption of the General Assembly resolution regarding the moratorium on the use of death penalty in December 2012;
70. Deplores the fact that Belarus remains the last country on the European continent to retain the death penalty; reiterates again that the executions of Dmitri Kononov and Vladislav Kovalev are deeply regrettable; repeats its call on Belarus to implement a moratorium on the death penalty, which should ultimately lead to its abolishment;

#### *Eradication of discrimination*

71. Recalls the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and are entitled to the rights and freedoms therein without distinction of any kind, including race, colour, sex, language, religion, social origin, birth or other status; reiterates its call for the EU to combat discrimination and intolerance as a key part of its human rights policy, and to base this policy on an inclusive and comprehensive definition of non-discrimination; emphasises that respect for the rights of minorities is a crucial element for peace, development and democracy; welcomes and further encourages EU engagement with the United Nations and regional organisations in this cause;
72. Calls for the EU to pay particular attention to discrimination based on forms of social stratification, such as caste and analogous systems of inherited status, which have a seriously harmful and sometimes destructive impact on the prospects for equal enjoyment of human rights;
73. Stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, as encapsulated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, is a fundamental human right, encompassing the right to believe or not to believe, and the right to adopt, change and abandon a belief of one's choice;
74. Condemns in the strongest terms discrimination, intolerance, violence and killings on grounds of religion or belief, wherever and to whomever they occur; is particularly concerned about the threat of increasing sectarianism along religious lines in countries such as Egypt and Syria as an impediment to long-lasting peace and reconciliation;

#### *The rights and empowerment of women and children*

75. Expresses its full support for the UN's work on ensuring the rights and empowerment of women; supports the implementation of the Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development; calls on the EU delegations to introduce specific measures on the role of external assistance and development co-operation in their local strategies for the implementation of the EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them;
76. Draws attention to the inclusion of gender-related crimes and crimes of sexual violence in

the Rome Statute as a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide or torture; welcomes, in this context, UN Security Council Resolution 2106 on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict adopted on 24 June 2013, which reaffirms that the ICC plays a key role in the fight against impunity for sexual and gender-based crimes; calls on the EU to support the implementation of these principles in full; reiterates also the EU's commitment to mainstream human rights and gender aspects in CSDP missions in line with the landmark UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security;

77. Calls for a targeted campaign on the rights of the child with a specific focus on violence against children; looks forward to efficient implementation of the integrated EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016, which identified child labour as a root cause of trafficking in human beings;
78. Stresses the need to step up efforts to implement the Revised Implementation Strategy of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict; encourages the EU to further deepen its cooperation with the UN Special Representative for Children Affected by Armed Conflicts; welcomes the launch in 2012 of a new funding line to support children affected by conflict through humanitarian assistance providing access to education in emergencies;
79. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service, to the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the candidate countries, to the United Nations and the Council of Europe, and to the governments of the countries and territories referred to in this resolution.