



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA-PROV(2016)0502

Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter 2015

European Parliament 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 2015 (2016/2219(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations, in force since 24 October 1945,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other United Nations (UN) human rights treaties and instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted in New York on 16 December 1966,
- having regard to the core international human rights conventions, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which the EU is a party,
- having regard to the UN Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)¹,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to Parliament's resolution of 27 November 2014 on the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child²,
- having regard to the International Convention of 18 December 1990 on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families³,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Right to Development⁴,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Outcome document of 22 September 2014 of the high-level plenary meeting of the

¹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>

² OJ C 289, 9.8.2016, p. 57.

³ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CMW.aspx>

⁴ A/RES/41/128.

- General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples¹,
- having regard to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted on 25 June 1993²,
 - having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995³ and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) of 1994⁴, and to the outcomes of their review conferences,
 - having regard to the United Nations’ Paris Principles on national human rights institutions (NHRI)⁵,
 - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to Article 25 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights on the rights of the elderly,
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights,
 - having regard to Articles 2, 3, 8, 21 and 23 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
 - having regard to Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
 - having regard to the document published by the Vice-President of the European Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on 28 June 2016 entitled ‘Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy’⁶,
 - having regard to the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, as adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 25 June 2012⁷,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 8 December 2009 on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL)⁸ and the updated EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with IHL⁹,
 - having regard to the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019, adopted by the Council on 20 July 2015¹⁰,
 - having regard to the European Union’s Human Rights Guidelines,

1 http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/2

2 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Vienna.aspx>

3 <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

4 http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/programme_of_action_Web%20ENGLISH.pdf

5 http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/PTS-4Rev1-NHRI_en.pdf

6 <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/global-strategy-foreign-and-security-policy-european-union>

7 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11855-2012-INIT/en/pdf>

8 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/111817.pdf>

9 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52009XG1215\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52009XG1215(01))

10 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10897-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

- having regard to the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief¹,
- having regard to the Guidelines to Promote and Protect the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Persons², adopted by the Council on 24 June 2013,
- having regard to the Guidelines for EP Interparliamentary Delegations on promoting human rights and democracy in their visits outside the European Union,
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2015, adopted by the Council on 20 June 2016³,
- having regard to the Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020 (GAPII), adopted by the Council on 26 October 2015⁴,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 16 June 2016 on LGBTI equality⁵ and the List of actions by the Commission to advance LGBTI equality (2016-2019)⁶,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 26 May 2015 on Gender in Development⁷,
- having regard to the European Agenda on Migration of 13 May 2015 (COM(2015)0240) and the Council conclusions on migration of 20 July 2015⁸, 14 September 2015⁹ and 22 September 2015¹⁰,
- having regard to Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/260 of 17 February 2015 extending the mandate of the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights¹¹,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 5 December 2014 on the promotion and protection of children’s rights¹²,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 14 May 2012 on ‘Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change’¹³,
- having regard to the revised EU indicators for the Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace

1 OJ C 65, 19.2.2016, p. 174.

2 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/137584.pdf

3 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10255-2016-INIT/en/pdf>

4 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2015/10/st13201-en15_pdf/

5 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/06/16-epsco-conclusions-lgbti-equality/>

6 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/lgbti_actionlist_en.pdf

7 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9242-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

8 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/07/20-fac-migration-conclusions/>

9 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12002-2015-REV-1/en/pdf>

10 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12098-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

11 OJ L 43, 18.2.2015, p. 29.

12 <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2015559%202014%20INIT>

13 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130243.pdf

and security, adopted by the Council on 20 September 2016¹,

- having regard to the Council of Europe’s Istanbul Convention of 11 May 2011 on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence²,
- having regard to the Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP of 21 March 2011 on the International Criminal Court and repealing Common Position 2003/444/CFSP³,
- having regard to the Joint Communication from the Commission and the VP/HR on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (JOIN(2015)0050),
- having regard to the Valletta Action Plan of 11-12 November 2015⁴,
- having regard to the UN Security Council Resolution of 13 October 2015 on women, peace and security implementation⁵,
- having regard to the UN Security Council Resolution of 19 June 2008 on sexual violence as war crimes⁶,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolution of 31 October 2000 on women, peace and security⁷,
- having regard to the UN General Assembly Resolution of 18 December 2014 on the protection of migrants⁸,
- having regard to its urgency resolutions on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2016 on the EU Trust Fund for Africa: the implications for development and humanitarian aid⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2016 on the fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU’s external relations¹⁰,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2016 on attacks on hospitals and schools as violations of international humanitarian law¹¹,

1 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12525-2016-INIT/en/pdf>

2 <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168008482e>

3 OJ L 76, 22.3.2011, p. 56.

4 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/11/action_plan_en_pdf/

5 http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf

6 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CAC%20S%20RES%201820.pdf>

7 [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325\(2000\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325(2000))

8 http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/167

9 Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0337.

10 Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0300.

11 Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0201.

- having regard to its resolution of 12 April 2016 on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 February 2016 on the systematic mass murder of religious minorities by the so-called ‘ISIS/Daesh’²,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 December 2015 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2014 and the European Union’s policy on the matter³,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 September 2015 on migration and refugees in Europe⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2015 on the renewal of the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2015 on the death penalty⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2015 on ‘human rights and technology: the impact of intrusion and surveillance systems on human rights in third countries’⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2015 on the Annual Report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2015 on the EU’s priorities for the UN Human Rights Council in 2015⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Iraq and Syria and the ISIS offensive, including the persecution of minorities¹⁰,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed drones¹¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 October 2013 on caste-based discrimination¹² and to the report of 28 January 2016 on minorities and caste-based discrimination by the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues¹³,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 June 2013 on the freedom of press and media in the

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0102.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0051.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0470.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0317.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0350.

⁶ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0348.

⁷ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0288.

⁸ OJ C 316, 30.8.2016, p. 130.

⁹ OJ C 316, 30.8.2016, p. 178.

¹⁰ OJ C 234, 28.6.2016, p. 25.

¹¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0172.

¹² OJ C 181, 19.5.2016, p. 69.

¹³ http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session31/Documents/A_HRC_31_56_en.doc

- world¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2012 on a Digital Freedom Strategy in EU Foreign Policy²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 November 2011 on EU support for the ICC: facing challenges and overcoming difficulties³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2011 on EU external policies in favour of democratisation⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on EU policies in favour of human rights defenders⁵,
 - having regard to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs): Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework, endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in its resolution 17/4 of 6 July 2011⁶,
 - having regard to the Annual Report 2015 of the European Endowment for Democracy⁷,
 - having regard to Rule 52 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 (A8-0355/2016),
- A. whereas Article 21 TEU commits the EU to a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, and which it shall seek to advance in the world: 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;
- B. whereas Article 207 TFEU requires the EU’s commercial policy to be based on the principles and objectives of the EU’s external action;
- C. whereas Article 3 TEU affirms that ‘in its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter’;

¹ OJ C 65, 19.2.2016, p. 105.

² OJ C 434, 23.12.2015, p. 24.

³ OJ C 153 E, 31.5.2013, p. 115.

⁴ OJ C 33 E, 5.2.2013, p. 165.

⁵ OJ C 236 E, 12.8.2011, p. 69.

⁶ A/HRC/RES/17/4.

⁷ <https://www.democracyendowment.eu/annual-report/>

- D. whereas respect for and the promotion and safeguarding of the indivisibility and universality of human rights are among the key aims of the EU's foreign and security policies, as established by the human rights clause in all EU agreements with third countries;
- E. whereas respect for human rights, peace, security and development are closely linked and mutually reinforcing;
- F. whereas human rights and democracy support policies should be mainstreamed across all other EU policies with an external dimension, such as development, migration, security, counter-terrorism, neighbourhood policy, enlargement and trade, in particular through the implementation of human rights conditionalities;
- G. whereas internal and external coherence in the area of human rights is essential for the credibility of the EU's human rights policy abroad, and whereas increased coherence between EU internal and external policies, as well as among the EU's external policies is also an indispensable requirement for a successful and effective EU human rights and democratisation policy; whereas improved consistency should enable the EU to respond faster and more efficiently, already in the early stages of human rights violations; and whereas the challenge of coherence is particularly striking in relation to the current migration policy;
- H. whereas the values of freedom, respect for human rights and the principle of holding periodic and genuine elections are essential elements of democracy; whereas, in addition to the holding of free and fair elections, features of democratic regimes include transparent and accountable governance, respect for the rule of law, freedom of expression, respect for human rights, the existence of an independent judicial system, and respect for international law and international agreements on human rights;
- I. whereas respect for human rights is under threat worldwide, and whereas the universality of human rights is seriously being challenged by a number of authoritarian regimes; whereas there are numerous attempts worldwide to shrink the space of civil society, including in multilateral fora; and whereas the non-respect for human rights has negative consequences for the individual, for his or her relatives and for society;
- J. whereas the EU was a key player in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to realize human rights of all;
- K. whereas a new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019 was adopted by the Council on 20 July 2015, with a view to enabling the EU to meet these challenges through a more focused, systematic and coordinated use of its human rights instruments; whereas this Action Plan should be implemented in coherence with the Gender Action Plan 2016-2020;
- L. whereas the VP/HR has stated that human rights will be one of her overarching priorities and that she intends to use them as a compass with regard to all her relations with third countries; whereas she has also reiterated the EU's commitment to promote human rights in all areas of foreign relations 'without exception';
- M. whereas the EU's commitment to effective multilateralism, with the UN at its core, is an integral part of the Union's external policy, based on the belief that a multilateral

system founded on universal rules and values is best suited to addressing global crises, challenges and threats; whereas engaging with third countries, in all bilateral and multilateral fora, is one of the most effective tools for addressing human rights issues in third countries;

- N. whereas the regular sessions of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the appointment of Special Rapporteurs, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism and the Special Procedures addressing either specific country situations or thematic issues all contribute to the international efforts to promote and respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- O. whereas the EU considers close cooperation with civil society and human rights defenders (HRDs) in third countries to be one of its main priorities in advancing human rights and tackling human rights violations;
- P. whereas in its resolution of 22 October 2013 on local authorities and civil society: Europe's engagement in support of sustainable development¹, Parliament expresses great concern at the crackdown on civil society organisations (CSOs), stresses the importance of defining a monitoring system for the evaluation of progress in terms of policy and regulatory provisions, and calls for the promotion of an enabling environment for CSOs; whereas many countries have recently passed strict NGO legislation that declares foreign organisations undesirable when deemed a threat to their constitutional order, defence or security, and whereas only in 2015, 185 environmental human rights activists have been killed in the world, 66 % of which in Latin America;
- Q. whereas travel bans to prevent HRDs from attending international events are being used by a growing number of countries, particularly in Asia, the Middle East and Africa;
- R. whereas Articles 18 and 19 of the UDHR acknowledge that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom of opinion and expression, which includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers; whereas the number of cases of persecution relating solely to people peacefully exercising their right to freedom of opinion, worship and expression has risen sharply;
- S. whereas Article 20 of the UDHR acknowledges that everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; whereas UN Human Rights Council Resolution 21/16 reminds States of their obligation to respect and fully protect the rights of individuals to assemble peacefully and associate freely, online as well as offline, and whereas freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief must be supported through interreligious and intercultural dialogues;
- T. whereas the basic rules of IHL and human rights are provided by the Geneva Conventions and the additional protocols, and are at the core of all humanitarian actions; whereas the protection of civilians and of displaced persons in conflict areas must be guaranteed in total neutrality and impartiality, and whereas aid independence must prevail;
- U. whereas illegal occupation of a territory is an on-going violation of international law,

¹ OJ C 208, 10.6.2016, p. 25.

triggering under IHL the responsibility of the occupying power for the civilian population of that territory;

- V. whereas evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity is difficult to preserve – especially at a time of unprecedented flows of refugees fleeing violence; whereas the preservation of evidence is essential to bringing perpetrators to justice;
- W. whereas attempts to shut down the US Guantánamo Bay prison failed and only 20 detainees were released or relocated in 2015;
- X. whereas, worldwide, more and more people are fleeing from war, armed conflicts or other degrading conditions, and whereas these refugee flows and various forms of migration represent a significant challenge, both for the EU and in global terms, requiring immediate, effective and sustainable solutions in line with our common European values; whereas the humanitarian aid provided by the Commission, being the leading global donor, helps refugees and displaced people in over 30 countries;
- Y. whereas the fight against migrant smuggling, trafficking and labour exploitation necessitates both short-, medium- and long-term responses, including measures to disrupt criminal networks and to bring criminals to justice, the gathering and analysis of data, measures to protect victims and to return irregularly staying migrants, as well as cooperation with third countries, along with longer-term strategies, to address the demand for trafficked and smuggled persons and the root causes of migration that force people into the hands of criminal smugglers;
- Z. whereas justice is essential to advancing respect for human rights, and the EU and its Member States have been unconditional supporters of the International Criminal Court (ICC) since its inception, while promoting the universality of the Rome Statute and defending its integrity with the purpose of strengthening the Court’s independence;
- AA. whereas substantial progress has been made so far towards abolishing the death penalty, and whereas many countries have suspended capital punishment, while others have taken legislative measures towards this end; whereas 2015 saw a dramatic rise in the overall number of executions, of which nearly 90 % happened in just three countries, namely Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia; whereas Belarus remains the only country in Europe which has not abolished capital punishment;
- AB. whereas gender equality is at the core of European values and is enshrined within the EU’s legal and political framework, as well as being central to the UN Agenda 2030; whereas violence and discrimination against women and girls has dramatically increased in recent years, especially in war zones and under authoritarian regimes;
- AC. whereas, according to UNICEF, 250 million of children around the world are living in countries affected by conflict, and nearly 50 million children have either been forcibly displaced by violence, war and its atrocities, terrorism and insurgency, or have migrated across borders, and many continue to suffer from all forms of discrimination, violence, exploitation, abuse, forced labour, poverty and malnutrition;
- AD. whereas, according to UNICEF, 1 in 200 children in the world is a child refugee, nearly one third of the children living outside their country of birth is a refugee and the number of child refugees doubled between 2005 and 2015;

- AE. whereas Article 25 of the UDHR recognises the right of every person to a ‘standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family’, in which motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance, which includes medical care; whereas access to education, nutrition and healthcare should be guaranteed for all children; whereas UNHRC Resolution 26/28(36) calls for the next UNHRC Social Forum meeting to focus on access to medicines in the context of the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; whereas the Constitution of the WHO states that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition;
- AF. whereas according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, authorities must respect the rights of the child who is separated from one or both parents;
- AG. whereas violence against and unlawful prosecution of minorities, including LGBTI people, continues in many places around the world, and discrimination in health care, education, employment and other sectors is widespread;
- AH. whereas reports of violations of civil and political, economic, labour, social and cultural rights, as well as environmental damage resulting from malpractices by some private sector actors, continue to be heard from around the world; whereas there is a strong link between corruption, tax evasion, illicit capital flows and human rights violations;
- AI. whereas the UNGPs on Business and Human Rights apply to all states and to all business enterprises, whether transnational or other, regardless of their size, sector, location, ownership and structure, but whereas effective control and sanction mechanisms remain a challenge to the worldwide implementation of the UNGPs; whereas the special features of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) must be taken proper account of and integrated in a flexible corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach adapted to their potential;
- AJ. whereas in October 2015, the Commission released its new trade strategy ‘Trade for All’, in which it sets out its aim to use trade as a means to strengthen human rights in third countries;
- AK. whereas in 2015, the EU started working on legislation to tackle the trade in minerals that fuels conflict;
- AL. whereas national and international sporting events such as the Olympic Games and the football World Cups should not be used for political purposes, but organised in full respect of all human rights, as enshrined in the Olympic Charter, and should aim at a harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human rights and human dignity, and with no discrimination based on any grounds such as nationality, race, religion, politics, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics;
- AM. whereas environmental changes are undermining access to water, natural resources and food;

Centrality of human rights in EU external policies

1. Expresses its serious concern that the promotion and protection of human rights and

democratic values are under threat worldwide, and that the universality of human rights is seriously being challenged in many parts of the world, including under authoritarian regimes as well as by terrorist groups such as Daesh;

2. Expresses its serious concern at the numerous, ever-increasing attempts made to shrink the space of civil society and HRDs, the increasing limitations on freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, and the growing number of repressive laws affecting civil society adopted throughout the world in countries such as Russia, Turkey and China, including under the pretext of combating terrorism (through the introduction of counter-terrorism laws, emergency situations and security measures), whereas there is often a negative impact on human rights as well as frequent abuse of these laws for repression; recalls that such legislation should not, in any way, serve to shrink the space in which civil society groups are able to operate; calls for a clear condemnation of these abuses and violations;
3. Stresses firmly that the EU is committed to a CFSP and to all other policies with an external dimension founded on the advancement 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 human rights and humanitarian law; reiterates that these principles are also intrinsic to external action beyond the CFSP, including development and humanitarian policies;
4. Calls on all the EU institutions and the Member States to act on their commitments to promote democracy and the rule of law, protect and realise human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development by all peaceful means, and to place human rights at the centre of the EU's relations with all third countries – including its strategic partners – and at all levels;
5. Reiterates its call on the Member States to lead by example, by speaking with one voice in support of the indivisibility, interdependence, interrelation and universality of human rights and, in particular, by ratifying all international human rights instruments set up by the UN;
6. Emphasises that, in order for the EU to be a credible actor in external relations, it should ensure increased coherence between its internal and external policies with regard to respect for human rights and democratic values (with human rights strategies on the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI people being crucial to this end), and it should aim towards a systematically consistent and coherent implementation of the EU's human rights policy;
7. Draws attention to its long-term commitment to promote human rights and advance democratic values as reflected, inter alia, in the annual award of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, in the work of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, Democracy Support and Election Observations and of the European Endowment for Democracy, in the monthly plenary debates and resolutions on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and in the many parliamentary delegations;
8. Is deeply concerned that many human rights defenders are under attack nowadays; calls on the EU, and the VP/HR in particular, to adopt a policy to denounce, systematically and unequivocally, the killing of HRDs and any attempt to subject them to any form of

violence, persecution, threat, harassment, disappearance, imprisonment or arbitrary arrest, to condemn those who commit or tolerate such atrocities, and to step up public diplomacy in open and clear support of HRDs, also when it comes to their testimony in multilateral fora; calls on the EU to issue guidance on this policy, as this adds consistency to the EU's current priorities as set out in the various existing EU Guidelines; encourages the EU Delegations and the Member States' diplomatic representations to continue actively to support HRDs, notably by systematically monitoring trials, visiting HRDs in jail and issuing statements on individual cases, where appropriate; calls for the establishment of a system to monitor civil society space effectively and with clear benchmarks and indicators; reiterates the importance of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in providing urgent direct financial and material support for HRDs at risk and the emergency fund that allows the EU Delegations to give direct ad-hoc grants to defenders whose lives are under imminent threat;

9. Calls on the EU and its Member States to encourage the establishment of national human rights institutions (NHRIs), in accordance with the United Nations' Paris Principles, with sufficient mandate, resources and expertise to fulfil the safeguarding and respect for human rights;
10. Highlights the need to further inter-parliamentary relations between the Union and its partner countries in a framework of honest dialogue underpinned by mutual understanding and trust, with the aim of promoting human rights effectively;

EU Strategic Framework and the new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy

11. Welcomes the adoption of the second EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019), and urges the EU and its Member States to fully, consistently, transparently and in a timely manner implement the actions therein, and to strengthen democracy support; underlines that consensus and coordination between the EU and its Member States are needed for the coherent implementation of the Action Plan, and strongly encourages the Member States to take greater ownership of the implementation and review of the Action Plan; stresses that the Member States should report back on their implementation of the Action Plan;
12. Stresses that, in order to fulfil the ambitious objectives set out in the second Action Plan, the EU must set aside sufficient resources and expertise, both in terms of dedicated human resources in delegations and at the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), and in terms of funds available for projects;
13. Considers a free civil society to be one of the foundations for the protection and support of human rights and democratic values, and is therefore concerned that the public space for civil society is shrinking, and that HRDs and journalists are increasingly under attack worldwide; welcomes the inclusion in the Action Plan of an objective to address threats to civil society space, and urges the EU to implement outlined actions; encourages all parties involved in EU external action to identify and address existing gaps in the protection of human rights and democratic freedoms, and to step up cooperation with civil society, parliaments, political parties and local authorities, and with regional and international organisations on the ground; draws attention to the fact that the Action Plan does not include a separate objective on fostering democratic standards in partner countries; calls on the Commission to develop EU guidelines for

democracy support;

EU Annual Report

14. Welcomes the attempts made to improve and make the thematic part of the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy more concise and systematic, and to make it more widely available to the general public; reiterates its belief that the Annual Report should be strengthened by a more objective approach whereby, in addition to achievements and best practices, the report would highlight very specific challenges and constraints faced in third countries, as well as make recommendations for corrective action and information of measures taken by the EEAS to overcome these challenges; reiterates its view that country reports that form part of the Annual Report should be as little descriptive as possible and should reflect the implementation of Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategies and give an overview of the impact of the EU's actions on the ground;
15. Reiterates its call for systematic and comprehensive reporting on the steps taken, the results achieved and the political conclusions drawn from action in response to resolutions adopted by Parliament on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law; insists on the need to ensure a rapid and appropriate responses to human rights infringements, even in the early stages of such violations; welcomes, in this regard, the follow-up made by the EEAS within the Subcommittee on Human Rights on resolutions concerning debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law; recalls its request for a comprehensive written response from the Commission and the EEAS to Parliament's resolution on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy, which play an important role in a systematic and in-depth follow-up to all the points raised by Parliament, and in parliamentary scrutiny; reiterates its invitation to the VP/HR to participate in a debate with the Members of the European Parliament in two plenary sessions per year, one at the time the EU Annual Report is presented, and the other in response to Parliament's resolution;

EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights

16. Recalls the importance of a stronger and more flexible mandate for the EUSR in enhancing the EU's effectiveness, consistency and visibility in advancing human rights and democratic principles around the world; reiterates its call for this mandate to become a permanent one; considers, moreover, that the EUSR should have the right to speak publicly, and to have own-initiative powers, higher public visibility and adequate resources and expertise;
17. Stresses the importance of systematic support for, and genuine and in-depth consultation with, civil society in preparation of the EUSR's visits to partner countries; welcomes in this respect the EUSR's strong engagement with HRDs and civil society, including local representatives, youth and children, as well with relevant international organisations, ahead of, during and in follow-up to their visits to third countries, and stresses the importance of continued and ever-stronger engagement on these lines, as well as the need for clear and transparent follow-up mechanisms; fully supports the EUSR's focus, as a key priority during his mandate, on the promotion and protection of an open space for civil society and HRDs; calls on the EUSR regularly to report to Parliament after his visits; regrets that the work and the impact of the EUSR can only be partially accessed through a review of the Annual Report on Human Rights, his social

media accounts and available speeches; regrets as well that there is no official information on his activities and plans, nor any progress reports or reviews;

18. Encourages the EUSR to continue systematically to advocate for the EU's human rights priorities, and to enhance the EU's engagement with all relevant regional and international human rights organisations and mechanisms; calls on the Council to adopt as a general principle the practice of systematically including cooperation with the EUSR in the mandate of future geographic EUSRs;

Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategies (HRDCSs) and the role of EU Delegations

19. Welcomes the addition of democracy to the HRDCSs as a necessary element of any comprehensive analysis of the state of human rights and democracy in partner countries;
20. Reiterates the importance of taking into account HRDCSs at all levels of policy-making vis-à-vis third countries, including in the preparation of high-level political dialogues, Human Rights Dialogues, country strategy papers and annual action programmes;
21. Reiterates that the HRDCSs should correspond to EU actions to be implemented in each country depending on specific situations, and should contain measurable progress indicators and the possibility to adjust them if necessary; points to the need continuously to assess HRDCSs; calls for further improvements in cooperation, communication and the exchange of information between EU Delegations, Member States' embassies and EU institutions when drawing up and implementing the HRDCSs; reiterates its demand that the Members of the European Parliament be given access to the HRDCSs and to obtain information on how the EU implements these strategies, and that these are to be presented in a format that enables the Members to fulfil their duty of scrutiny properly;
22. Stresses the need to implement a coherent and visible EU policy on civil society, and stresses the need for a more articulated understanding of the use of public diplomacy; encourages the publication of HRDCSs and roadmaps, and the establishment of an effective feedback, follow-up on cases and the sharing of information;
23. Welcomes the nomination of human rights and/or gender focal points in all EU Delegations, and recalls its recommendation to the VP/HR and the EEAS to develop clear operational guidelines as to the role of human rights focal points; insists that the work of the human rights focal points should also be supported by Member States' diplomatic staff; requests that the work of the human rights focal points be independent and free of political interference and harassment from national authorities of third countries, especially in their contacts with human rights activists and civil society; insists on the importance of training all EU Delegations staff on the contents of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights;
24. Welcomes the increased budget and streamlined procedures of the EIDHR 2014-2020, and calls for the foreseen allocation to the EIDHR mid-term review to be maintained for the remainder of the current Multiannual Financial Framework period; reiterates the need for coherence and complementarity between the different EU funding instruments and the need to ensure that such reinforcement is applicable to all instruments that serve human rights;

25. Calls for an annual adoption of EIDHR Annual Action Programmes, rather than, as most recently, a biennial one (2016-2017), to ensure maximum flexibility in response to developing situations, and optimal complementarity with the other EU External Financing Instruments;

Human Rights Dialogues and consultations

26. Reiterates its support for dedicated Human Rights Dialogues and acknowledges that they can be an efficient and effective tool for bilateral engagement and cooperation, provided they allow counterparts to engage on issues of substance, send meaningful political messages and are result-oriented, with consistent follow up, that should go beyond merely exchanging information on best practices and challenges; invites the EU systematically to include discussions on the situation of the rights of women and children in all Human Rights Dialogues;
27. Recognises the importance of engaging in human rights-specific dialogues also with countries with serious human rights problems; underlines, however, the need for the EU to draw clear political conclusions when these Human Rights Dialogues do not lead to positive outcomes; warns against side-lining human rights discussions in high-level political dialogues;
28. Insists that discussions about human rights should never be subordinated to other interests in high-level political discussions; reiterates its call for the EEAS to develop a mechanism for reviewing Human Rights Dialogues, with a view to improving them; believes that, if such dialogues persistently fail, alternative tools to support the advancement of human rights in the country concerned should be used;
29. Urges the EEAS systematically to carry out preparatory dialogues with civil society, also at local level, with the purpose of feeding directly into the Human Rights Dialogues; stresses the importance that the VP/HR and the EEAS systematically raise individual cases of HRDs during Human Rights Dialogues; calls on the EEAS systematically to follow up on the commitments made during Human Rights Dialogues and to systematise debriefing meetings with CSOs;

EU Guidelines on human rights

30. Welcomes the EU Guidelines on human rights as a valuable EU human rights foreign policy tool providing practical guidance for EU Delegations and for the Member States' diplomatic representations; reiterates its call for the adoption of new EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child without further delay;
31. Underlines firmly the importance of a continuous assessment of the implementation of the Guidelines by using clear benchmarks; urges the Commission to conduct and publish a thorough evaluation of the implementation of the Guidelines by EU Delegations and Member States' diplomatic representations in all third countries in order to detect possible differences and gaps in implementation and remedy them; considers that, in order to ensure a proper implementation of the Guidelines, systematic and effective training is needed among EEAS and EU Delegation staff;

Fight against all forms of discrimination

32. Condemns in the strongest terms all forms of discrimination, including those based on

race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, language, culture, religion or belief, social origin, caste, birth, age, disability or any other status; reiterates its call for a strengthened EU policy and diplomacy that should aim to eradicate all forms of discrimination, and to use every opportunity to express its grave concern over such discriminations; urges, furthermore, that the EU continues to promote the ratification and full implementation of all relevant UN conventions, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; welcomes the EEAS work on an anti-discrimination handbook;

Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations

33. Recalls the EU's commitment to mainstream 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, and the recently adopted UN Security Council resolution 2242 making women a central component in all efforts to address global challenges; reiterates, in this context, its call on 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; calls, in this regard, on the EU to support, at the international level, the recognition of the added value of women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction;
34. Stresses that the CSDP is an instrument that not only ensures European security, but is part of the EU's foreign policy instruments and must therefore be used towards the strengthening of furthering human rights and democracy in third countries;
35. Calls for further European military integration to improve European armed forces' readiness and flexibility, in order to allow them to respond to threats and to instances of grave violations of human rights, genocide or ethnic cleansing; stresses, in this regard, that the concept of 'Responsibility to Protect' should be consolidated into international law and that the EU, as a community of values, should lead initiatives and meaningful actions to protect civilians also when they are threatened by their own state;
36. Stresses that migrant smuggling is linked to human trafficking and is a serious violation of human rights; points out that CSDP missions such as European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean Operation Sophia (EUNAVFOR MED) are an effective way of tackling migrant smuggling; calls on the EU to continue and step up operations of this kind;
37. Calls on the Foreign Affairs Council and the VP/HR to request that the EU Heads of Mission and appropriate EU representatives (heads of EU Civilian Operations, Commanders of EU Military Operations and EU Special Representatives) report on cases of serious violation of IHL, and to promote the Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, committing UN Member States to support action by the Security Council aimed at preventing or ending such crimes; calls for the integration of child safeguarding policies in the operations of all EU civilian and military operations in contact with children;
38. Requests that the EU strengthens its cooperation with the UN in the context of formulating a common strategic vision on security on the basis of, on the one hand, the new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy and, on the other, the UN's

revision of its peace operations and its peacebuilding architecture; insists that there be cooperation with the UN in strengthening the role and capacity of regional and sub-regional organisations in peacekeeping, conflict prevention, civilian and military crisis management, and conflict resolution, and that procedures for the use of the CSDP in support of UN operations be developed further, including through the deployment of EU battlegroups, or through capacity-building and Security Sector Reform initiatives, while human rights and gender are mainstreamed into the work of the mission and operation;

Multilateral engagement for human rights

39. Firmly reiterates that human rights, as enshrined in UN conventions, are universal, indivisible, inter-dependent and inter-related, as agreed in the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and that respect for these rights must be enforced; recalls the Union's commitment to promote and develop international law under the UN; stresses that it is important that the Member States ratify all international human rights instruments established by the UN, including those enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and, notably, the Optional Protocol establishing complaints and inquiry mechanisms, in conformity with Article 21 TEU;
40. Underlines the need for the EU leadership to push for reforms of the UN with the goal of strengthening the impact and strength of the rules-based multilateral system, and of ensuring more efficient human rights protection and the advancement of international law; reiterates, furthermore, 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, in order to improve its credibility; supports efforts made by the EEAS, the EU Delegations in New York and Geneva, and the Member States further to increase EU coherence on human rights issues at the UN; encourages the EU to intensify the practice of cross-regional initiatives, to initiate and co-sponsor resolutions, and to closely follow the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) procedure; condemns the fact that seats on the UNHRC are often occupied by countries with proven track record of grave human rights violations, and calls on the EU Member States to publicise their UNHRC votes; calls, in this regard, on the EU and its Member States to reflect the equal importance of rights in their voting patterns, and to determine their vote on UNHRC resolutions on the basis of the substance rather than on the authors of these texts; stresses the importance of, and the need for, permanent EU representation in all multilateral forums and for stronger visibility of EU action;
41. Calls on the EU to bear particular attention to the disputed territories of its Eastern neighbourhood, where around five million people live without real human rights protection and access to justice; calls on the EU to put this issue on top of the bilateral agenda for solutions with the concerned States and to use the full range of its instruments to support concrete solutions to advance human rights in these entities and to support the work of HRDs there;

Promoting a free space for civil society and supporting human rights defenders (HRDs)

42. Strongly condemns any attack, intimidation, arrest, killing, harassment or repression of prosecutors, judges, lawyers, academics and journalists, or of members of any other profession whose independence and professional freedom are essential to the building

of a democratic society;

43. Regrets the increasing number of attacks against environmental and HRDs worldwide; strongly condemns impunity towards their murders and calls on the EEAS to advocate demands that those responsible be brought to justice;
44. Strongly condemns the fact that many countries worldwide have recently passed strict NGO laws that debilitate civil society and lead to their arbitrary application, with punishments including imprisonment, the freezing of assets and access bans for NGO staff members, especially towards those receiving foreign public funds;
45. Strongly condemns the issuing of travel bans by authorities as a tool to intimidate and silence independent voices of HRDs and activists, as well as of lawyers and journalists, and emphasises that these measures are often taken arbitrarily and without judicial grounds;
46. Highlights the role of EU Delegations in reaffirming and promoting the crucial role civil society plays in a democracy, and in creating an enabling environment for civil society, requiring a maximum of transparency and inclusion in their cooperation with CSOs and HRDs; regrets, therefore, that, ten years after the adoption of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, the contact information of Human Rights Focal Points / Liaison Officers for Human Rights Defenders are still not included on the websites of all EU Delegations;
47. Calls on the VP/HR and the EU foreign ministers to place on the agenda of the Foreign Affairs Council, on a regular basis, a discussion of EU efforts to pursue the release of HRDs, aid workers, journalists, political activists and others, and to arrange a public annual Foreign Affairs Council with an agenda that includes the shrinking space for civil society and the jailing of HRDs, as well as to address these cases with relevant counterparts on all occasions, including those raised in Parliament's resolutions concerning debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
48. Calls on the international community to bring political leaders to justice when they abuse police and military force in a structural way to silence protests against (the prolonging of) their leadership;

Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs)

49. Expresses its solidarity with the refugees and migrants who suffer grave human rights violations in high numbers, as victims of conflicts, governance failure and trafficking networks; condemns the dramatic number of deaths at sea in the Mediterranean; is extremely concerned about the growing number of human rights abuses against refugees, irregular migrants and asylum seekers on their route to Europe; highlights the fact that women and child refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants are particularly vulnerable on migrant routes and within the EU itself; calls urgently for measures to improve the coherence of the migration policies, and stresses the need for a holistic approach to find sustainable, long-term and coherent solutions, based on international human rights standards and principles while tackling the root causes of the refugee crisis; underlines the need for solidarity in order to protect migrants and refugees, in line with human rights-based EU policies; highlights, in this regard, the

importance of differentiating between refugees and migrants;

50. Underlines the fact that conflicts, wars, failures of governance and the lack of respect for human rights and democracy constitute key causes for migration and displacement; stresses that full access to free, public and quality education and healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and access to the labour market, and to housing that meets the needs of refugees, should be provided by host countries; emphasises that the migrants' and refugees' willingness to integrate, together with appropriate welfare policies, are key to integration; calls on the EU to increase efforts to support Lebanon and Jordan, which shelter unprecedented numbers of refugees, who often face multiple threats;
51. Highlights the need to strengthen cooperation with countries of origin and transit with a view to facilitating both the structured management of migration flows and action to address the underlying causes of emigration; stresses that it is vital to combat the groups involved in migrant smuggling; points out that the EU needs to encourage the countries concerned to sign the Palermo Protocol against migrant smuggling; recalls the commitments agreed on at the Valletta summit;
52. Stresses the urgent need to develop and introduce a comprehensive, coherent and well-coordinated Common European Asylum System, sharing the responsibility among the Member States;
53. Calls on the EU and the Member States to establish full transparency concerning the funds allocated to third countries for cooperation on migration, and to communicate the safeguards set to ensure that such cooperation does not benefit, directly or indirectly, security, police and justice systems involved in human rights violations;
54. Acknowledges the recent Commission proposal for a Union list of safe countries of origin, amending the Asylum Procedures Directive;
55. Considers that, in order to increase the efficiency of readmissions and to ensure the coherence of returns at a European level, it will be necessary to adopt new EU readmission agreements, which should take preference over bilateral agreements between Member States and third countries;
56. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that implementation of the Returns Directive goes hand in hand with respect for the procedures, standards and fundamental human rights which allow the EU to ensure humane and dignified treatment of returnees, in line with the principle of non-refoulement; urges the EU and the Member States to pay particular attention to asylum cases relating to possible political persecution, so as to prevent any return that could potentially entail a violation of human rights in the country of origin or a third country;
57. Reiterates its call on the EU to ensure that all migration, cooperation and readmission agreements with non-EU states comply with international human rights, refugee law and international maritime law, as well as with EU principles and values; calls on the Member States to respect the international principle of non-refoulement, in accordance with international law; requests that monitoring mechanisms be integrated in such a way that allows the human rights impact of cooperation on migration with non-EU states, and border control measures, to be evaluated; insists that human rights need to be

mainstreamed and monitored in all activities carried out by Frontex; calls on the EU actively to participate in the debate on the term "climate refugee", including its possible legal definition in international law;

58. Calls, furthermore, for a clause to indicate that these agreements could be suspended until the parties effectively grant sufficient guarantees regarding the individual examination of asylum claims and, more generally, the respect for the human rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees;
59. Recalls the need to respect the principle of non-refoulement in European and international waters, as upheld by the European Court of Human Rights and existing EU legislation; recalls the commitment to develop adequate legal and safe migration channels while better protecting the EU's external borders; calls on the EU and more developed third countries to conclude partnership agreements with other nations to facilitate family reunification and mobility for persons of all skills levels, including the least qualified;
60. Calls on the Member States to respect and fully implement the adopted EU common asylum package and the common migration legislation, particularly to safeguard vulnerable asylum seekers such as children, women, elderly people and LGBTI people, against violence and discrimination during the asylum process, and to provide appropriate training to Member States to enable appropriate and sensible proceedings; calls on the Member States to participate in resettlement programmes, giving access to family reunification and granting humanitarian visas; stresses the importance of addressing administrative and political obstacles to a speedy implementation of relocation commitments; understands that the safe return of those who, following individual assessment of their asylum application, are not eligible for protection in the Union must be carried out;
61. Is deeply concerned about the growing numbers of child refugees and about the situation of unaccompanied, missing or separated children; urges the Member States to make it an absolute priority swiftly to reunite unaccompanied minors with family members; stresses the importance of providing children with access to health care and education as part of EU programmes to address the root causes of migration; calls on states to end the detention of children, as well as to take into account the best interest of the child in all procedures and ensure protection for children according to international law; highlights the importance of allocating adequate resources to the protection of refugee and migrant children from violence, exploitation and abuse; calls on the Commission to ensure that unaccompanied minors do not disappear, and to design a strategy for avoiding that, in the future, unaccompanied migrant minors go missing on EU-territory and for finding the whereabouts of missing children;
62. Recognises that during their journey and on arrival in the country where they seek asylum, LGBTI asylum seekers are often at risk of additional dangers, which can take the form of harassment, exclusion, sexual violence or other forms of violence; recalls that a number of third countries deemed 'safe' for asylum seekers discriminate against LGBTI people or even criminalise homosexuality; emphasises that vulnerable groups require additional safeguards, and calls on states to ensure that LGBTI refugees are protected as required by IHL;
63. Highlights the importance of investing in preventive measures, namely through the

development of strategies of integration and social inclusion; stresses the need to implement specific de-radicalisation and re-integration programmes targeting returnees;

64. Draws attention to the problematic situation concerning refugees in Syria's neighbouring states, and considers it important for the EU to do everything in its power to help ensure that refugees in these countries are guaranteed decent living conditions, and, in particular, access to healthcare, education and employment possibilities;
65. Highlights the dramatic situation of IDPs, especially of the enormous number of IDPs in Iraq and Syria, as well as of the increasing number of IDPs in Ukraine, together totalling 1,4 million in 2015; stresses that programmes on refugees in a region need to acknowledge and incorporate the potential fate of IDPs as well; calls on the Commission, the Member States and the international community to take steps to improve their situation on the ground and to ensure that displaced persons have access to housing, food, healthcare and education;
66. Recalls how, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 19,3 million people were displaced in 2015 alone in the wake of environmental disasters; recalls that this displacement above all concerns regions of the South; points out that 85 % of these displacements occur in developing countries, primarily within one country or parts of countries;

Trafficking in human beings

67. Calls on the EU to make the fight against trafficking in human beings a priority in its external policies, addressing both the demand and supply side of the phenomenon, to pay particular attention to the protection of victims and to increase communication and cooperation with relevant actors in the fight against trafficking in human beings; reiterates the need for all Member States to implement Directive 2011/36/EU and the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings;
68. Recalls that criminal networks are taking advantage of the increasing migration pressures, the lack of safe migration channels and of the vulnerability of migrants and refugees, especially women, girls and children, in order to subject them to smuggling, trafficking in human beings, slavery and sexual exploitation;
69. Urges the EU and its Member States to pay attention to the identification of refugees and migrants as victims of trafficking in human beings or as victims of violations and abuse as part of smuggling; calls, in this context, for training of border guards to ensure accurate identification, which is fundamental to the realisation of the rights to which victims are legally entitled;
70. Welcomes the increase in resources for the Triton and Poseidon operations; notes the launch of the EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia against smugglers and traffickers in the Mediterranean and supports the reinforcement of the management of the Union's external borders;
71. Calls on the EU and its Member States to ratify and implement the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;

The links between development, democracy and human rights

72. Expresses its profound concern over the rise of extreme poverty and inequality across certain parts of the world, which jeopardises the full enjoyment of all human rights; believes that respect for human rights and the right to development are intrinsically linked; stresses that respect for human rights, including social and economic rights, gender equality, good governance, upholding democracy and the rule of law, and peace and security are prerequisites for eradicating poverty and inequalities;
73. Welcomes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; emphasises that EU development cooperation with third countries should aim at creating an international environment conducive to the realisation of social and economic rights, and calls for the implementation of the 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development; recalls the crucial importance of the principle of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), as enshrined in Article 208 TFEU, in achieving respect for human rights; calls on the EU to ensure that the necessary guidelines, impact assessments and monitoring and reporting mechanisms make PCD a reality in EU policies and in those of its Member States; believes that the implementation of PCD, as enshrined in Article 208 TFEU, and clearly defined results frameworks in all EU instruments and human rights mechanisms are crucial to fulfil the 2030 Agenda, ensure the inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups, and mainstream a human rights-based approach (RBA); insists on strengthening coherence and coordination among all EU external policies and instruments while implementing the RBA; calls on the Member States to take action within the scope of their powers and in keeping with the development commitments entered into and with EU policies in this area; calls on the Commission to carry out an evaluation of the use of the RBA toolbox in Delegations and to provide Parliament with an overview of that evaluation;
74. Recalls the introduction of an RBA in EU development policy aimed at integrating human rights principles into EU operational activities for development, covering arrangements, both at headquarters and in the field, for the synchronisation of human rights and development cooperation activities; calls for greater dissemination of the RBA toolbox among our partners, including local authorities, civil society and the private sector, and for its implementation to be closely monitored by the Commission;
75. Takes the view that human rights for all must be a cross-cutting feature in the achievement of all goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda; calls for an inclusive human-rights-sensitive and rights-based Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework to be established at national and international level in order to ensure strong transparency and accountability in this regard, so that the resources allocated to development really reach people in need;
76. Reaffirms the urgent need properly to address the global challenge of poverty and of malnutrition-related and neglected diseases; calls for an ambitious long-term political strategy and plan of action on global health, innovation and access to medicines that includes, inter alia, investment in research and development, so as to safeguard the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of every human being, without discrimination on grounds of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition, gender identity or sexual orientation;
77. Is concerned about any attempts to use funding earmarked for action to combat poverty and foster development – which also gives practical effect to policies whose ultimate aim is to uphold human rights – for non-development-related purposes; stresses that

development aid should aim at eradicating poverty, and not merely become an instrument aimed at controlling migration, and recalls the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions for pursuing improvements in human rights and effective democratic governance; believes that in order to ensure the transparency of EU aid and the accountability of the recipient countries, an anti-corruption clause should be introduced in all development programmes, and that consolidation of the rule of law, good governance, institutional capacities with the use of budget support, democratic participation and representative decision-making, stability, social justice, and inclusive and sustainable growth, allowing fair redistribution of the wealth produced, should be key objectives of all EU external policies; warns against populism, extremism and constitutional abuses that legitimise breaches of human rights;

78. Notes the persistent financing gap, due to increasing humanitarian needs, with regard to humanitarian aid, and the shortcomings in the World Food Programme resulting in the cutting of food supplies; calls on the UN Member States, and on the EU and its Member States to, at the very least, honour their financial pledges; notes, in this regard, that most EU Member States have not reached their 0,7 % GDP commitment to development aid, but welcomes the EU's commitments with regard to humanitarian aid and civil protection, the EU and its Member States being the largest donor;
79. Welcomes the new European External Investment Plan (EEIP) and the Africa Trust Fund that aim to address the root causes of poverty, inequalities and irregular migration by creating sustainable growth and jobs, and to encourage respect for human rights and private investment in Africa and the EU Neighbourhood; requests that the European Regional Development Fund be temporarily used in the EU neighbouring countries so as to contribute to their stabilisation;
80. Welcomes the inclusion of a development chapter in the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2015 and calls for this to become standard practice for future years' reports;

Trade, business and human rights

81. Calls for the swift, effective and comprehensive implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; urges all UN Member States, including the EU Member States, to develop and implement national action plans; considers that trade and human rights can go hand in hand and that the business community has an important role to play in promoting human rights and democracy;
82. Reaffirms the urgent need to act in a continuous, effective and coherent manner at all levels, including national, European and international, in order effectively to address human rights abuses and corruption by international corporations when they occur, and to ensure that they can be held accountable, including by addressing the legal problems resulting from the extra-territorial dimension of companies and their conduct;
83. Calls on the UN, and on the EU and its Member States, to raise with multinational and European enterprises the issues of land grabbing and the treatment of land rights defenders, who are often victims of reprisals, including threats, harassment, arbitrary arrest, assault and murder;

84. Warmly welcomes the work initiated in preparation for a binding UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights; regrets any obstructive behaviour in relation to this process, and calls on the EU and its Member States to engage constructively in these negotiations;
85. Recalls the different but complementary roles of states and companies with regard to human rights protection; strongly reiterates that, where human rights abuses occur, states must grant the victims access to effective remedy; recalls, in this context, that respect for human rights by third countries, including guarantees of effective remedy for all victims of such abuses, constitutes an essential element of the EU's external relations with these countries; welcomes the fact that the EU has played a leading role in negotiating and implementing a number of initiatives for global responsibility, which go hand in hand with the promotion of, and respect for, international standards; welcomes the Council's conclusions on business and human rights adopted on 20 June 2016 and the fact that they invite the National Action Plans (NAPs) on Business and Human Rights to include access to remedy;
86. Reiterates that attention needs to be drawn to the special features of SMEs, which mainly operate at local and regional level inside specific sectors; considers it essential, therefore, for Union CSR policies, including national CSR action plans, to take proper account of the specific requirements of SMEs, to be in keeping with the 'think small first' principle, and to recognise the informal, intuitive SME approach to CSR; voices again its opposition to all measures that could result in additional administrative or financial constraints for SMEs, and its support for measures enabling SMEs to take joint action;
87. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to guarantee policy coherence on business and human rights at all levels, in particular in relation to the Union's trade policy; invites the Commission and the Member States to report regularly on the steps taken to ensure effective protection of human rights in the context of business activity;
88. Reiterates its strong call for the systematic introduction of human rights clauses in all international agreements, including trade and investment agreements concluded and to be concluded between the EU and third countries; sees a need, moreover, for ex ante monitoring mechanisms before any framework agreement is concluded, and on which such conclusion is made conditional as a fundamental part of the agreement, and for ex post monitoring mechanisms that enable tangible action to be taken in response to infringements of these clauses, such as appropriate sanctions as stipulated in the human rights clauses of the agreement, including (temporary) suspension of the agreement;
89. Calls for the setting up of mechanisms aimed at ensuring respect for human rights by states and companies alike, and for the setting up of complaint mechanisms for people whose rights are violated by trade and investment agreements;
90. Notes the Commission's legislative proposal of 28 September 2016 amending Regulation (EC) No 428/2009 for the control of exports of dual-use items and technologies (COM(2016)0616), which seeks to strengthen this control in view of the fact that certain items and technologies can be misused to commit serious human rights violations;
91. Welcomes the agreement to update the EU's export controls with regard to goods that

could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and calls for the effective and full implementation of this key legislation; encourages the EU and its Member States to encourage third countries to consider adopting similar legislation, as well as to launch an initiative to promote an international framework on tools of torture and capital punishment; welcomes the initiative for a regulation setting up a system of supply chain due diligence for responsible sourcing of minerals from conflict-affected areas; welcomes the Commission's proposal to update the EU's dual-use export control legislation; stresses that human rights as a criteria for export licences is a priority for Parliament, and calls on the Member States finally to agree to move towards a more modern, flexible and human rights-based export policy; calls on the Member States to exercise stricter and more human rights-based arms export controls, especially when it comes to countries with proven track records of violent internal repression and human rights violations;

92. Welcomes the adoption of the Commission's new trade strategy 'Trade for All', in which it aims to mainstream human rights in trade policy and use the EU's position as a trading bloc to leverage human rights in third countries; stresses that this will need full consistency and complementarity of trade and foreign policy initiatives, including close cooperation between the different Directorate Generals, the EEAS and Member States authorities; notes the Commission's plans to strengthen European economic diplomacy and stresses that trade policy should also contribute to sustainable growth in third countries; calls on the Commission to engage all stakeholders in the discussion on the regulatory framework and business obligations in countries where private and public investment are likely to increase; urges the Commission to ensure that the projects supported by the EIB are in line with EU policies, and recommends improving ex-post controls assessing the economic, social and environmental impact of EIB-supported projects;
93. Welcomes the new Generalised Scheme of Preferences Regulation (GSP), which entered into force on 1 January 2014, as a key EU trade policy instrument to promote human and labour rights, environmental protection and good governance in vulnerable developing countries; welcomes, in particular, that GSP+ trade benefits are inherently and legally conditional upon the continued implementation of international human rights conventions; welcomes the publication of the Commission's first biennial status report on the implementation of the GSP+, and the dialogue on this report with Parliament before its publication; notes that infringements of core labour standards have been reported in several countries with GSP+ status, and urges the genuine enforcement of GSP+ to be implemented; calls on the Commission to explore possibilities to include the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in the list of conventions required for GSP+ status, and calls on GSP+ applicants that are not state parties to the Statute to ratify it;
94. Welcomes the fact that 14 countries have been granted especially advantageous trade preferences under the new GSP+, in force since 1 January 2014, and welcomes as well the much-urged compliance with 27 international conventions (including conventions on fundamental human rights and labour rights);
95. Reiterates its strong call for comprehensive, prior human rights impact assessments that in a substantive way take into account the views of civil society for all trade and investment agreements;

96. Welcomes the adoption of new guidelines on the analysis of human rights impacts in impact assessments for trade-related policy initiatives¹, but is deeply concerned by the quality of the human rights considerations in the Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) of the EU-Myanmar Investment Protection Agreement, and by the fact that the Commission did not carry out a human rights impact assessment for the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement; reiterates its support for a comprehensive assessment to be conducted as part of the ex-post evaluation of these agreements;

Sport and human rights

97. Is concerned about the awarding of the hosting of mega-sporting events to countries with very poor human rights records, such as the FIFA World Cup in Russia in 2018 and in Qatar in 2022, and the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2022, and human rights abuses caused by mega-sporting events, including forced evictions without consultation or compensation of the populations concerned, the exploitation of vulnerable groups such as children and migrant workers, which may amount to slavery, and the silencing of CSOs denouncing such violations of human rights; calls on the International Olympic Committee and the International Association of Football Federations (FIFA) to align their practices with the ideals of sport by putting in place safeguard mechanisms to prevent, monitor and provide remedy to all human rights abuses connected to mega sporting events; calls for the development of an EU policy framework on sport and human rights; calls on the EU and its Member States to engage with national sports federations, corporate actors and CSOs on the modalities of their participation in such events;

Persons with disabilities

98. Welcomes the new Objectives 12 and 16, especially sub point 16f, in the Council Conclusions on the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019, and calls on the Commission to ensure that implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is raised systematically in human rights dialogues with third countries; notes that the specific nature of the needs of persons with disabilities in the context of non-discrimination efforts have to be taken into account; urges the thorough examination of the effectiveness of disability-related projects and of the proper involvement of disabled persons' organisations in the planning and implementation of these projects;
99. Calls on the Member States to ensure that people with a disability have genuine freedom of movement in public spaces and thus equality of opportunity to participate in public life;
100. Strongly urges the mainstreaming of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all EU external policies and actions, especially in EU migration and refugee policies, providing an appropriate response to their specific needs, as they suffer from multiple discrimination; recalls that women and children with disabilities experience multiple discrimination and are often at greater risk of suffering violence, abuse, maltreatment or exploitation; strongly supports the recommendation to mainstream a gender perspective in all the EU's disability strategies, including its external policies and action;

¹ http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/july/tradoc_153591.pdf

101. Encourages the VP/HR to continue to support the process of ratification and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by those countries that have not ratified or implemented it as yet; notes that the EU should lead by example through the domestic effective implementation of the UN CRPD; calls for the EU to take a leading role in the implementation of an inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which would ensure that no one is left behind, as advised by the CRPD Committee in the Concluding Observations to its review of the implementation of the Convention in the EU;

Rights of women and children

102. Welcomes the adoption of the Gender Action Plan (2016-2020) which provides a comprehensive list of actions to improve the situation of women with regard to equal rights and empowerment; stresses that it should be implemented together with the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, to ensure the recognition of women's rights as such; welcomes as well the adoption of the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality (2016-2019), which promotes gender equality and women's rights across the world; reaffirms that women's rights cannot be compromised in deference to specific proscriptions by any religion or belief; requests that the EU step up its support to the implementation of the obligations and commitments in the area of women's rights arising from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Declaration on Population and Development and their respective outcome reviews, and the Sustainable Development Goals; stresses the importance of not undermining the acquis of the Beijing and Cairo Platforms for Action regarding access to education and health as a basic human right, and the protection of sexual and reproductive rights, and to ensure that all necessary safe medical and psychological assistance and services are provided to female war rape victims, including safe abortion, as foreseen under IHL; points out that family planning, maternal health, easy access to contraception and safe abortion, and the full range of sexual and reproductive health services are important elements in saving women's lives, as well as in reducing infant and maternal mortality; highlights the need to place these policies at the core of development cooperation with third countries; stresses that upholding all rights of women, safeguarding the respect of their human dignity, and eliminating violence and discrimination against them are essential to realizing their human rights; stresses the right of every individual to decide freely on matters related to their sexuality, sexual and reproductive health; recognises, in this regard, the inalienable rights of women to autonomous decision-making, including on access to family planning;
103. Reaffirms its condemnation of all forms of abuse and violence against women and children, and gender-based violence, including the harmful practices of early and forced marriages, female genital mutilation (FGM), exploitation and slavery, domestic violence, as well as the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war; considers that violence towards women is also expressed psychologically, and stresses the need to integrate gender considerations that, inter alia, promote the active participation of women in humanitarian aid, and incorporate protection strategies against sexual and gender-based violence, as well as basic health measures comprising sexual and reproductive health services; stresses that the Commission and the Member States must not only combat all violence perpetrated against women, but must also, as a matter of priority, promote access to education and fight gender stereotyping for girls and boys from an early age; calls on the EU and its Member States swiftly to ratify the Istanbul

Convention in order to ensure coherence between EU internal and external action on violence against women and girls, and gender-based violence; welcomes the proposal put forward by the Commission on 4 March 2016 for the EU to accede to the Istanbul Convention, the first legally binding international instrument seeking to prevent and combat violence against women; believes that this will lend greater effectiveness and coherence to EU internal and external policies, and strengthen the EU's responsibility and role in combating violence against women and gender-based violence at the international level; urges the Commission and the Council to do their utmost to enable the EU to sign and conclude the Convention, while also encouraging the 14 Member States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention and ensure that the Convention is properly implemented; points to the need to ensure that health professionals, police forces, prosecutors, judges, diplomats and peacekeepers, both within the EU and in non-member countries, are properly trained to help and support victims of violence, especially women and children, in conflict situations and operations on the ground;

104. Is deeply concerned about human rights violations affecting women and children in refugee camps and reception centres, including reported cases of sexual violence and unequal treatment of women and children; urges the EEAS to push for stricter rules and good practices in third countries; stresses the need for access to health and psychological care for women and children abused in conflict, in line with international law, and the need for continuity in the education, healthcare and food supply of children in refugee camps, in conflict areas, and in areas affected by extreme poverty and environmental extreme areas;
105. Notes that measures to tackle gender-based violence must also address online violence, including harassment, bullying and intimidation, and work to create an online environment that is safe for women and girls;
106. Welcomes the adoption, and supports the implementation, of the UN Security Council's recent Resolution 2242 making women a central component in all efforts to address global challenges and calling for additional efforts to integrate the women, peace and security agendas in all the different dimensions of peacekeeping; stresses the importance of women's equal, full and active participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in the peace negotiation and peace-building process; recommends that a quota system be introduced in order to provide a way of promoting women's participation at all political levels;
107. Deeply regrets that Roma people, and in particular Roma women, continue to suffer from widespread discrimination and anti-Gypsyism, which feeds the cycle of disadvantage, exclusion, segregation and marginalisation; calls on the EU and its Member States to respect in full the human rights of Roma people by ensuring the right to education, health services, employment, housing and social protection;
108. Strongly regrets the lack of gender equality in the political sphere and women's under-representation in political, social and economic decision-making, which undermines human rights and democracy; considers that governments should aim for gender equality in democracy-building and maintenance processes, and should combat all forms of gender discrimination within society; stresses that the electoral observation missions' reports offer precise guidelines for the EU's political dialogue with third countries with a view to improving women's participation in the electoral process and

the democratic life of the country;

109. Deplores the fact that some countries still restrict women's participation in elections;
110. Deplores the fact that women worldwide continue to face enormous challenges in finding and keeping decent jobs, as demonstrated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) report 'Women at work 2016';
111. Regrets that the glass ceiling for women in business, the gender pay gap and the societal discouragement of female entrepreneurship are still global phenomena; calls for initiatives to empower women further, especially in the areas of self-employment and SMEs;
112. Recalls that access to education, professional training and microcredit are essential tools for empowering women and preventing violations of their human rights;
113. Encourages women to become actively involved in trade unions and other organisations, as this will do much to introduce gender aspects into working conditions;
114. Urges the Member States, the Commission and the EEAS to focus on the economic and political emancipation of women in developing countries by promoting their involvement in business and in the implementation of local and regional development projects;
115. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement gender budgeting in all relevant EU funding;
116. Calls for investment in women and young people, since this is an effective way to combat poverty, and female poverty in particular;
117. Is deeply concerned that the rapidly growing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) threat is expected to become the world's largest cause of death, victimising in particular the vulnerable and the weak in developing countries; calls on the Commission to develop without delay a truly effective public health strategy;

Children's rights

118. Reaffirms the urgent need for universal ratification and effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Child and its Optional Protocols, requests that the EU systematically consult with relevant local and international child rights organisations, and raises, in its political and human rights dialogues with third countries, the issue of State parties' obligations to implement the Convention; welcomes the ratification of the Convention by South Sudan and Somalia; reiterates its call to the Commission and the VP/HR to explore ways and means for the EU to accede to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
119. Requests that the EU continue to promote the EU-UNICEF Child Rights toolkit 'Integrating child rights in development cooperation' through its external Delegations, and to train EU Delegations staff adequately in this field; highlights the serious issue of non-registered children born away from their parents' home country, an issue particularly serious in relation to refugees, and calls on the EU to raise the issue in its political dialogues with third countries, where relevant; calls on the Commission to

develop policies on, and promote in international fora, the protection of children of imprisoned parents, in order to overcome their discrimination and stigmatisation; stresses that millions of children continue to suffer from malnutrition, with large numbers facing irreversible, long-term consequences and even death; calls on the Commission and the international community to introduce innovative ways to address malnutrition effectively, particularly among children, through the fullest use of the entire food chain, and thus including public-private-people partnerships (PPPPs), as well as all other available resources, in particular social media;

120. Expresses the need for international assistance in efforts to search for and liberate women and children who still remain in the captivity of Daesh and other terrorist groups and paramilitary organisations, and in promoting special programmes for the treatment of former captives within the EU and worldwide; expresses concern over the recruitment of children and their participation in terrorist and military activities; stresses the need to establish policies to guide the search for, and the liberation, rehabilitation and reintegration of these children; stresses the need to promote policies for the disarmament, rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers; reiterates its request that the Commission proposes a comprehensive Child Rights Strategy and Action Plan for the next five years, in order to prioritise children's rights within both EU external and internal policies, and 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;

Rights of the elderly

121. Welcomes Objective 16g in the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019 that aims at increasing awareness of the human rights and specific needs of older persons; is concerned about the negative effects of age discrimination; underlines the particular challenges older persons face in the enjoyment of their human rights, such as when accessing social protection and healthcare; invites the Member States to use the current review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing to map the implementation of existing instruments and to identify potential gaps; calls on the EU and its Member States to be actively involved in the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing and to step up their efforts to protect and promote the rights of older people, including by considering the elaboration of a new legal instrument;

Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons

122. Is deeply concerned about the increase in violence and discrimination against LGBTI people; firmly condemns the recent increase in discriminatory laws and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics, and the fact that 73 countries still criminalise homosexuality (including by charges of 'debauchery' against LGBTI people), of which 13¹ countries allow the death penalty, while 20 countries still criminalise transgender identities; expresses strong concern over so-called 'propaganda laws' that seek to limit the freedom of expression and assembly of LGBTI people, and of those who support their rights; calls on all states with such laws to withdraw these provisions; strongly condemns the increasing restrictions of, and the challenging operating conditions on, the freedom of

¹ Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Nigeria, Somalia, Mauritania, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Qatar, Iran and the Maldives.

assembly and association of LGBTI groups and rights defenders, and events and protests such as Pride marches, where in some instances protesters have been met with violent responses from authorities; reaffirms the crucial role of these fundamental freedoms in the functioning of democratic societies, and the responsibility of states in ensuring that such rights are upheld and that those exercising them are protected; requests that the EEAS prioritise and strengthen its actions in countries with a prevalence of violence, killings, abuse and discrimination directed against LGBTI people, by condemning these practices in accordance with the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty and the EU Guidelines on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and by continuing to work with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in this field; stresses the importance of supporting the work of LGBTI HRDs, through increased support and resources for effective programming, by launching awareness campaigns, also financed via the EIDHR, among the general public on the discrimination and violence directed against LGBTI people, and by ensuring the provision of emergency assistance to those in need of such support; calls on the EU Delegations and the relevant institutions actively to promote these rights and fundamental freedoms;

123. Welcomes the Foreign Affairs Council Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTI persons, adopted on 24 June 2013; calls on the EEAS and the Commission to push for a more strategic and systematic implementation of the guidelines, including through awareness raising and training of EU staff in third countries, in order to effectively raise the issue of LGBTI rights in political and human rights dialogues with third countries, and in multilateral fora; emphasises the importance of making the EU Guidelines to Promote and Protect the Enjoyment of all Human Rights widely available to LGBTI persons; calls for concrete actions to increase coherence between internal and external EU policies on LGBTI rights;
124. Encourages the EU institutions and the Member States to contribute further to reflections on the recognition of same-sex marriages or same-sex civil unions as a political, social, human and civil rights issue; welcomes the fact that an increasing number of countries respect the right to found a family through marriage, civil partnership and adoption without discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to elaborate proposals for the mutual recognition of these unions and of same-sex families across the EU so as to ensure equal treatment with regard to work, free movement, taxation and social security, protecting the incomes of families and children;

Rights of indigenous people and of persons belonging to minorities

125. Is deeply concerned that indigenous peoples are still in particular danger of being discriminated against, and are especially vulnerable to political, economic, environmental and labour-related changes and disturbances; notes that most live below the poverty threshold and have little or no access to political representation and decision-making, contrary to their right to free, prior and informed consent, as ensured in the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and recognised in the 2005 European Consensus on Development; is particularly concerned about reported widespread and growing human rights abuses against indigenous peoples, such as the persecution, arbitrary arrests and killings of HRDs, and forced displacement, land-grabbing and corporate violations;

126. Notes with deep concern that indigenous peoples are particularly affected by human rights violations related to resource extraction; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to support rigorous legal frameworks and initiatives aiming at ensuring transparency and good governance in mining and other resource sectors, and thereby respect for local people's free, prior and informed consent and for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; calls on the EU Delegations to strengthen the dialogue with indigenous peoples on the ground further in order to identify and prevent human rights violations;
127. Emphasises that as minority communities have specific needs, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a minority and those belonging to the majority should be promoted in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life; urges the Commission to follow closely the implementation of provisions protecting the rights of persons belonging to minorities throughout the enlargement process;

Rights of persons affected by caste discrimination

128. Condemns the continuing human rights violations committed against people suffering from caste hierarchies and caste-based discrimination, including the denial of equality and of access to the legal system and to employment, and the continued segregation and caste-induced barriers to the achievement of basic human rights and development; is deeply concerned by the alarming rate of caste-based violent attacks on Dalits and of institutionalised discrimination with impunity; reiterates its call for an EU policy development on caste discrimination, and calls on the EU to use every opportunity to express its grave concern over caste discrimination;

International Criminal Court (ICC) / transitional justice

129. Recalls the universality of the ICC and reiterates its full support for its work; stresses the important role it plays in ending impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community, and in providing justice for the victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide; remains vigilant against any attempts to undermine the ICC's legitimacy or independence;
130. Recalls its resolution of 4 February 2016 calling on the members of the UN Security Council to support a referral by the Security Council to the ICC in order to investigate violations committed in Iraq and Syria by the so-called ISIS/Daesh against Christians (Chaldeans/Syriacs/Assyrians), Yazidis and other religious and ethnic minorities;
131. Welcomes the declaration issued by Ukraine accepting the jurisdiction of the ICC for crimes committed in the country since 20 February 2014, as this declaration paves the way for the ICC prosecutor to consider whether the court could investigate abuses committed during the armed conflict, even though Ukraine is not yet an ICC member country;
132. Welcomes the Council conclusions on the EU's support to transitional justice, and welcomes the EU's Policy Framework on support to transitional justice, the EU being the first regional organisation to adopt such a policy; calls on the EU, its Member States and its Special Representatives actively to promote the ICC, the enforcement of its decisions and the fight against impunity for Rome Statute crimes, and expresses serious concern about the fact that several arrest warrants have still not been executed; urges the

EU and its Member States to cooperate with the Court, and to continue to provide strong diplomatic and political support to efforts to strengthen and expand the relationship between the ICC and the UN, in particular in the context of the UN Security Council, and to take steps to prevent and respond effectively to instances of non-cooperation with the ICC; reiterates its call on the EU to adopt a common position on the crime of aggression and on the Kampala Amendments, and calls on the Member States to align their national legislation with the definitions set out in the Kampala Amendments, and to enhance cooperation with the Court; deplores the defiance towards the ICC shown by several countries by withdrawing or threatening to withdraw from the ICC's jurisdiction;

133. Reiterates its call for the creation of an EU Special Representative on International Justice and International Humanitarian Law in order to give these topics the prominence and visibility they deserve, to advance the EU agenda effectively and to mainstream the EU's commitment to the fight against impunity and for the ICC across EU foreign policies;
134. Calls on the EU and its Member States to provide the ICC with adequate funding and to enhance their support for the international criminal justice system, including transitional justice;

International humanitarian law (IHL)

135. Condemns the lack of respect for IHL, and expresses its grave concern over the alarmingly increasing rate of collateral damage in armed conflicts around the world, and of deadly attacks against hospitals, schools, humanitarian convoys and other civilian targets; expresses its serious concerns about the rising influence of non-state actors' actions in conflicts around the world, and urges the EU to use all instruments at its disposal to enhance compliance by state and non-state actors with IHL; welcomes the pledge of the EU and the Member States to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to strongly support the establishment of an effective mechanism for strengthening compliance with IHL, and asks the VP/HR to report to Parliament on the objectives and strategy devised in order to deliver on this pledge; urges the international community to convene an international conference to prepare a new international mechanism for tracking and collecting data, and for publicly reporting on violations of IHL, including attacks on hospitals, medical workers and ambulances; takes the view that such a mechanism could build on the existing mechanism for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC); asks the VP/HR to present, on an annual basis, a public list of alleged perpetrators of attacks on schools and hospitals, for the purpose of defining appropriate EU action to halt such attacks;
136. Deplores the fact that seven Member States have yet to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions; calls on the EU and its Member States to support a global ban on the use of white phosphorus, notably through the conclusion of a new protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons banning the use of such weapons;
137. Calls on the Member States to ratify the principal IHL instruments and other relevant legal instruments that have an impact on IHL; acknowledges the importance of the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with IHL, and reiterates its call on the VP/HR and the EEAS to revise their implementation in the light of the tragic events in the Middle East, notably in the context of widespread and systematic impunity for gross violations

of IHL and human rights law; calls on the EU to support initiatives aiming at spreading knowledge of IHL and good practices in its application, and calls on the EU to seize all bilateral tools at its disposal effectively to promote compliance with IHL by its partners, including through political dialogue; reiterates its call on the Member States to join international efforts to prevent attacks against, and the military use of, schools by armed actors by endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration, which is designed to help end widespread military attacks on schools during armed conflict;

138. Urges the international community to convene an international conference with a view to strengthening the effectiveness of international humanitarian rules;
139. Reiterates its call to the VP/HR to launch an initiative aimed at imposing an EU arms embargo against countries that are accused of serious allegations of breaches of IHL, notably with regard to the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure; stresses that the continued licensing of weapons sales to such countries represents a breach of the Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008; calls on the Member States to consider accepting Guantanamo inmates in the EU; emphasises the need to close the Guantanamo Bay prison as soon as possible;

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief

140. Condemns, in line with Article 10 TFEU, all acts of violence and persecution, intolerance and discrimination on the basis of ideology, religion or belief; expresses its serious concern over the continued reports of violence and persecution, intolerance and discrimination against religious and belief minorities around the world; stresses that the rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief are fundamental rights, interrelated with other human rights and fundamental freedoms, and encompassing the right to believe or not to believe, the right to manifest or not to manifest any religion or belief, and the right to adopt, change and abandon or return to a belief of one's choice, as enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in Article 9 of the European Convention of Human rights; calls on the EU and its Member States to engage in political discussions to repeal blasphemy laws; calls on the EU and its Member States to ensure that minorities are respected and protected worldwide, including in the Middle East, where Yazidis, Christians, Muslim minorities and atheists are being persecuted by Daesh and other terrorist groups; deplores the abuse of religion or belief for terrorist purposes;
141. Supports the EU's commitment to promote the right to freedom of religion or belief within international and regional forums including the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and other regional mechanisms, and encourages the EU to continue tabling its yearly resolution on freedom of religion or belief at the UN and supporting the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; encourages the VP/HR and the EEAS to engage in a permanent dialogue with NGOs, religious or belief groups and religious leaders;
142. Fully supports the EU practice of taking the lead on thematic resolutions at the UNHRC and at the UNGA on freedom of religion and belief, encourages the EU to support the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and urges countries not currently accepting requests for visits from the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to do so;

143. Calls on the EU to reinforce its existing instruments, and to adopt any other within its mandate, to ensure that the protection of religious minorities is effective worldwide;
144. Calls for concrete action to ensure the effective implementation of the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief, including: systematic and consistent training of EU staff at Headquarters and in Delegations; reporting on country and local situations; and engaging in close cooperation with local actors, especially leaders of religious or belief groups;
145. Is deeply concerned that in some parts of the world the position of religion or belief communities is endangered, with entire religious communities disappearing or fleeing;
146. Highlights the fact that Christians are currently the religious group most harassed and intimidated in countries throughout the world, including in Europe, where Christian refugees routinely suffer religiously motivated persecution, and that some of the oldest Christian communities are in danger of disappearing, especially in North Africa and the Middle East;
147. Encourages the international community and the EU to provide protection for minorities and to install safe zones; calls for the recognition, self-administration and protection of ethnic and religious minorities living in areas where they have historically had a strong presence and lived peacefully alongside each other – for example in the Sinjar mountains (Yazidis) and the Nineveh plains (Chaldean-Syrian-Assyrian peoples); calls for special assistance in efforts to preserve (mass) graves in areas of current or recent conflicts, with the aim of exhuming and forensically analysing the human remains therein, in order to allow for decent burial, or release to the family, of the victims' remains; calls for the establishment of a dedicated fund that can help finance initiatives to preserve evidence, in order to enable investigation and prosecution of suspected crimes against humanity; calls for actions from the EU and its Member States to set up, as a matter of urgency, a group of experts tasked with collecting all evidence of any on-going international crime, including genocide, against religious and ethnic minorities, wherever they may happen, including the preservation of mass graves in areas of current or recent conflicts, with the aim of preparing international prosecution of those responsible;

Freedom of expression online and offline, and through audiovisual and other media sources

148. Stresses that human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal and need to be defended globally in every dimension of their expression;
149. Stresses the role of freedom of expression, media independence and pluralism as fundamental elements towards democracy, and the need to empower citizens as well as civil society to ensure transparency and accountability in the public sector;
150. Expresses concern at the increasing arrests and intimidation of journalists in many countries, and stresses that these practices seriously impede the freedom of the press; urges the EU and the international community to protect independent journalists and bloggers, reduce the digital divide and facilitate unrestricted access to information and communication, and uncensored access to the internet (digital freedom);

151. Expresses its serious concern at the proliferation and spread of monitoring, surveillance, censoring and filtering technologies, which represent a growing threat to human rights and democracy activists in autocratic countries;
152. Strongly condemns the increasing number of HRDs facing digital threats, including compromised data through confiscation of equipment, remote surveillance and data leakages; condemns the practice of online surveillance and hacking to gather information that can be used in legal cases or defamation campaigns, as well as in defamation trials;
153. Strongly condemns authorities' control of the internet, media and academia, and the increased intimidation, harassment and arbitrary arrests faced by HRDs, lawyers and journalists;
154. Condemns restrictions on digital communication, including the closing down of websites and the blocking of personal accounts by authoritarian regimes in order to restrict freedom of expression and as a means to silence opposition and suppress civil society; calls on the EU and its Member States to publicly condemn regimes that restrict the digital communication of their critics and opposition;
155. Highlights the importance of promoting unrestricted access to the internet in all forms of contact with third countries, including in accession negotiations, trade negotiations, human rights dialogues and diplomatic contacts, and of making information about human rights and democracy as accessible as possible to people all around the world;
156. Is concerned about the growth of hate speech, especially on social media platforms; calls on the Commission to involve representatives of CSOs to ensure that their views are taken into account in negotiations on codes of conduct; firmly condemns the dissemination of hate messages that incite violence or terror;
157. Calls for increased support in the areas of promoting media freedom, protecting independent journalists, bloggers and whistleblowers, reducing the digital divide and facilitating unrestricted access to information and communication, and safeguarding uncensored access to the internet (digital freedom);
158. Calls for the active development and dissemination of technologies that help protect human rights, and that facilitate people's digital rights and freedoms as well as their security and privacy;
159. Calls on the EU to adopt free and open-source software, and to encourage other actors to do so, as such software provides for better security and for greater respect for human rights;
160. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to raise the issues of freedom of expression online, digital freedoms and the importance of a free and open internet, in all international fora, including the UN Internet Governance Forum, the G8, the G20, the OSCE and the Council of Europe;

Counter-terrorism

161. Reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of terrorism and its full support for actions aimed at eradicating terrorist organisations, in particular Daesh, which poses a clear

threat to regional and international security, while recalling that such actions should always be in full respect of international human rights law; supports the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) on countering threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters, and of the Madrid Guiding Principles on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters;

162. Recalls that the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy underlines the need to ensure that respect for freedom of opinion and expression are integrated into the development policies and programmes relating to terrorism, including the use of digital surveillance technologies; stresses that Member States should make full use of existing instruments to address the radicalisation of European citizens, and should develop effective programmes for countering terrorist and extremist propaganda and recruitment methods, notably online, and for preventing radicalisation; stresses that concerted EU action is required, as a matter of urgency, and insists that Member States cooperate in sensitive areas, in particular information and intelligence sharing;
163. Requests that the EU continue to work with the UN in combating the financing of terrorism, including through the use of existing mechanisms to designate terrorist individuals and organisations, and to strengthen asset-freezing mechanisms worldwide, while upholding international standards on due process and the rule of law; calls on the Commission and the Member States effectively and urgently to raise this matter with those states that finance or support terrorist organisations, or that allow their citizens to do so;

The death penalty

164. Recalls the EU's position on zero tolerance for the death penalty, and reiterates its long-standing opposition to the death penalty, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, in all cases and under all circumstances;
165. Welcomes the abolition of the death penalty in Fiji, Suriname, Mongolia and the US State of Nebraska;
166. Is deeply concerned about the reinstatement of executions in some countries in recent years; deplores that political leaders in other countries are also considering reintroducing the death penalty; expresses its grave concern at the reported rise in the number of death sentences handed down worldwide in 2015, in particular in China, Egypt, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia; reminds the authorities of these countries that they are state parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which strictly prohibits the death penalty for crimes committed by anyone below the age of 18;
167. Is particularly concerned about the increasing number of death sentences imposed in mass trials, without guarantees of the minimum fair trial standards required by international law;
168. Strongly denounces the increase in the handing down of the death sentence for drug-related offences, and calls for the exclusion of the use of capital punishment and summary executions for such offences;
169. Calls on those states that have abolished the death penalty, or that have a long-standing moratorium on it, to uphold their commitments and not to reintroduce it; calls on the EU

to continue to use cooperation and diplomacy in all possible forums worldwide to advocate against the death penalty, while seeking to ensure that the right to a fair trial is fully respected for each and every person facing execution; stresses the importance of the EU continuing to monitor the conditions under which executions are carried out in those countries that still impose the death penalty, in order to ensure that the list of persons sentenced to death is made public and that their bodies are returned to their families;

170. Insists that it is important that the EU maintains a high-profile policy aimed at the global abolition of the death penalty, in line with the 2013 revised EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty, and that it continues to advocate against the death penalty; calls on the EU to work further towards its universal abolition, to explore new ways of campaigning toward that end and to support actions, in the context of the EIDHR, aimed at preventing death sentences or executions; requests that the EU Delegations continue to organise awareness-raising campaign activities to this end;

Fight against torture and ill-treatment

171. Expresses its grave concern at the continued use of torture and ill-treatment of persons held in detention, inter alia in order to extract confessions that are then used in criminal trials that fall manifestly short of international standards of fairness;
172. Deplores the widespread use of torture and ill-treatment against dissenting members of society in order to silence them, and against vulnerable groups, such as ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, LGBTI persons, women, children, asylum-seekers and migrants;
173. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the torture and ill-treatment caused by Daesh and other terrorist or paramilitary organisations; expresses its solidarity with the families and communities of all victims affected by such violence; condemns the practices of Daesh and other terrorist or paramilitary organisations involving discrimination and targeting of minority groups; calls on the EU, its Member States and the international community to step up their efforts to address the urgent need to prevent further suffering in an effective way;
174. Considers that the detention conditions and the state of prisons in a number of countries are a matter of grave concern; considers it essential to combat all forms of torture and ill-treatment of detainees, including psychological torture, and to step up efforts to ensure compliance with the relevant international law, particularly as regards access to health care and medicines; strongly condemns the violations of this law and believes that the refusal to treat detainees for diseases such as hepatitis or HIV is tantamount to failure to assist persons in danger;
175. Urges the EEAS, in the light of continued reports of widespread practice of summary executions, torture and ill-treatment around the world, to 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;
176. Urges the EEAS to continue to raise concerns, in a systematic way, about torture and ill-treatment in political and human rights dialogues with the countries concerned, and in

public statements, and calls on the EU Delegations, and on Member State embassies on the ground, to monitor torture and ill-treatment cases, to take concrete steps to promote their complete eradication, to follow relevant criminal trials and to use all instruments at their disposal to assist the individuals concerned;

Drones

177. Expresses its grave concern over the use of armed drones outside the international legal framework; urges the Member States to articulate clear policy and legal positions on armed drones, and reiterates its call for an EU common position on the use of armed drones, which upholds human rights and IHL, and which should address issues such as a legal framework, proportionality, accountability, protection of civilians and transparency; urges once again that the EU ban the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons that enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention; calls for the EU to oppose and ban the practice of extrajudicial and targeted killings, and to commit to ensuring appropriate measures, in accordance with domestic and international legal obligations, where there are reasonable grounds for believing that an individual or entity within its jurisdiction may be connected to unlawful targeted killings abroad; calls on the VP/HR, the Member States and the Council to include armed drones and fully autonomous weapons in relevant European and international disarmament and arms control mechanisms, and urges the Member States to engage with and strengthen these control mechanisms; calls on the EU to guarantee greater transparency and accountability on the part of its Member States, not least vis-à-vis third countries, in the use of armed drones with regard to the legal basis for their use and to operational responsibility, to allow for judicial review of drone strikes and to ensure that victims of unlawful drone strikes have access to effective remedies;
178. Emphasises the EU ban on the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons, which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention; calls for the EU to oppose and ban the practice of unlawful targeted killings;
179. Calls on the Commission to keep Parliament properly informed about the use of EU funds for all research and development projects associated with the construction of drones, for civil as well as military purposes; calls for human-rights impact assessments to be conducted of future drone development projects;
180. Stresses that the impact of technologies on the improvement of human rights should be mainstreamed in EU policies and programmes, in order to advance the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy, the rule of law, good governance and peaceful conflict solution;

Support for democracy and elections, and election observation missions

181. Recalls that open space for civil society, freedom of expression, assembly and association and due respect for the rule of law are key elements of fair and democratic elections; calls on the EU to ensure that local NGOs have space for legitimate observation and monitoring of the conduct of elections; underlines that corruption is a threat to the equal enjoyment of human rights and undermines democratic processes; considers that the EU should emphasise the importance of integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs in all dialogues with third countries, as stipulated

in the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC); recalls the need for the EU to maintain the commitment it has made to its partners, especially in its neighbourhood, to support economic, social and political reform, to protect human rights and to help establish the rule of law, as the best means of strengthening the international order and ensuring the stability of its neighbourhood; emphasises, in this regard, that the review of the ENP provided an opportunity to restate that the defence of universal values and the promotion of human rights are key objectives of the Union; recalls that the experience gained by the EU, politicians, academics, the media, NGOs and civil society, and the lessons learned from transitions to democracy in the framework of the enlargement and neighbourhood policies, could also contribute positively to the identification of best practices that could be used to support and consolidate other democratisation processes worldwide; welcomes, in this context, the work of the European Endowment for Democracy and of EU programmes in support of CSOs, notably the EIDHR;

182. Recommends that the EU develop a more comprehensive approach to democratisation processes, as observing elections is only one dimension of a longer and broader cycle; reiterates that political transition and democratisation can only be sustainable and successful when combined with respect for human rights and equal access to the democratic process for women, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups, the promotion of justice, transparency, accountability, reconciliation, the rule of law, economic and social development, measures to combat extreme poverty, and the establishment of democratic institutions; stresses that fighting corruption in countries undergoing democratisation processes should be made a priority by the EU as this phenomenon hinders the protection and promotion of good governance, fuels organised crime and is linked to electoral fraud;
183. Welcomes the Joint Communication on the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy and recalls that, as stipulated in the TEU, the EU's relation with its neighbouring countries should be founded on the values of the Union, which include human rights and democracy; underlines that contributing to the stabilisation of the neighbourhood and promoting democracy, the rule of law, good governance and human rights, go hand in hand;
184. Stresses that the EU should continue to support democratic and effective human rights institutions and the civil society of neighbouring countries; is pleased to note in this context the European Endowment for Democracy's consistent engagement in the EU's Eastern and Southern neighbourhood in promoting respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, and democratic principles;
185. Stresses that enlargement policy is one of the strongest tools for reinforcing respect for democratic principles and human rights; calls on the Commission to continue to support the reinforcement of democratic political cultures, the respect of the rule of law, the independence of media, as well as of the judiciary, and the fight against corruption in candidate and potential candidate countries;
186. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to continue to provide full support to on-going democratic processes in third countries, as well as to political dialogue between ruling and opposition parties, and civil society; insists on the importance of consistently following up on recommendations of election observation missions as part of the EU's engagement in democracy support, and as part of the human-rights country strategies

for the countries concerned; calls for closer coordination and cooperation between Parliament and the Commission / EEAS to ensure a follow up of the implementation of these recommendations, as well as the use of the targeted financial and technical assistance that the EU could offer; calls on the Commission to provide global assessment on electoral monitoring processes;

187. Calls on the Council and the EEAS to include in the geographical part of the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World a specific section – in the countries concerned – addressing the issue of implementation of the recommendations adopted in the framework of election observation missions; recalls the commitment made in the Action Plan by the EEAS, the Commission and the Member States to engage more firmly and consistently with election management bodies, parliamentary institutions and CSOs in third countries, in order to contribute to their empowerment and, thereby, to the strengthening of the democratic processes;
188. Calls on the Commission to ensure that its work on elections – observation and assistance – is combined with similar support for other important actors within a democratic system such as political parties, parliaments, local authorities, independent media and civil society;
189. Calls on the EU to continue to work for the definition of best practices in this area, including in the context of conflict prevention measures, mediation and facilitation of dialogue, in order to develop a coherent, flexible and credible EU approach;
190. Recognises the successful work of the EEAS and EU Delegations in completing the second generation of Democracy Analyses, and the progress made on Democracy Action Plans, and calls on the VP/HR to ensure that the Action Plans translate into concrete support to democracy in the field;
191. Calls on the EEAS to build on the experience of the Democracy Analyses to prepare the ground for streamlining such analysis into its foreign action, and notes that while the addition of democracy to Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategies is welcome, it is not sufficient for a truly comprehensive understanding of democracy in a partner country;

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192. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the VP/HR, and to the EU Special Representative for Human Rights.