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## TEXTS ADOPTED

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### **P8\_TA(2017)0494**

#### **Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world 2016 and the EU policy on the matter**

**European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2017 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2016 and the European Union's policy on the matter (2017/2122(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN human rights treaties and instruments,
- having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to CEDAW general recommendations 12, 19 and 35 on violence against women, 26 on women migrant workers and 32 on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women,
- having regard to UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 69/167 of 18 December 2014<sup>2</sup>, on protecting and promoting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status,
- having regard to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families of 18 December 1990<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242 on women, peace and security,
- having regard to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees<sup>4</sup>, and ILO Conventions Nos 43 and 97,
- having regard to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights<sup>5</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/167](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/167)

<sup>3</sup> [https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/docs/A\\_RES\\_45\\_158-E.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/docs/A_RES_45_158-E.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf)

- having regard to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted by the UNGA on 19 September 2016<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seek to ensure peace and prosperity for people and the planet<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) of 12 April 2011, which was signed by the EU on 13 June 2017<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, adopted in 1976 and revised in 2011<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- 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 EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy adopted by the Council on 25 June 2012<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019, adopted by the Council on 20 July 2015<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the joint staff working document of the Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled ‘EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019): Mid-Term Review – June 2017’ (SWD(2017)0254),
- having regard to the joint staff working document of the Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled ‘Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020’, adopted in 2015 (SWD(2015)0182),
- having regard to the Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy presented by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) Federica Mogherini on 28 June 2016<sup>7</sup>, as well as the first report on its implementation entitled ‘From Shared Vision to

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_71\\_1.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_71_1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/corporate/mne/oecdguidelinesformultinationalenterprises.htm>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10897-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [http://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/regions/files/eugs\\_review\\_web\\_0.pdf](http://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/regions/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf)

- Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy’, published in 2017<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP of 21 March 2011 on the International Criminal Court and repealing Common Position 2003/444/CFSP<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the European Agenda on Migration of 13 May 2015 (COM(2015)0240) and the Commission communication of 7 June 2016 on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration (COM(2016)0385),
  - having regard to the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, adopted in 2007 and reviewed in 2017<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission entitled ‘The new European Consensus on Development: “Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future”’<sup>4</sup>, adopted by the Council, Parliament and the Commission on 7 June 2017,
  - having regard to the EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline, adopted in 2014<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to the protection of freedom of expression offline and online afforded by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
  - having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, adopted in 2013<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to the international protection of freedom of religion or belief afforded by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief, Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
  - having regard to the Council Conclusions on intolerance, discrimination and violence on the basis of religion or belief, adopted on 21 February 2011<sup>7</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> [http://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/full\\_brochure\\_year\\_1.pdf](http://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/full_brochure_year_1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 76, 22.3.2011, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu\\_guidelines\\_rights\\_of\\_child\\_0.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_guidelines_rights_of_child_0.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu\\_human\\_rights\\_guidelines\\_on\\_freedom\\_of\\_expression\\_online\\_and\\_offline\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_human_rights_guidelines_on_freedom_of_expression_online_and_offline_en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/137585.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/CofEU\\_119404.pdf](http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/CofEU_119404.pdf)

- having regard to the EU Guidelines on Death Penalty, adopted in 2013<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines to EU Policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, adopted in 2001 and reviewed in 2012<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime<sup>3</sup> and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, adopted in 2013<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on human rights dialogues with third countries, adopted in 2001 and reviewed in 2009<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on Promoting Compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL), adopted in 2005 and reviewed in 2009<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them, adopted in 2008<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on children and armed conflict, adopted in 2003 and reviewed in 2008<sup>8</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2017/821 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas<sup>9</sup>,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on human rights defenders, adopted in 2005 and reviewed in 2008<sup>10</sup>,
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2015<sup>11</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2017 on ‘Arms export: implementation

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1 [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/guidelines\\_death\\_penalty\\_st08416\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/guidelines_death_penalty_st08416_en.pdf)

2 [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/20120626\\_guidelines\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/20120626_guidelines_en.pdf)

3 <https://www.osce.org/odihr/19223?download=true>

4 <https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/137584.pdf>

5 [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu\\_guidelines\\_on\\_human\\_rights\\_dialogues\\_with\\_third\\_countries.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_guidelines_on_human_rights_dialogues_with_third_countries.pdf)

6 OJ C 303, 15.12.2009, p. 12.

7 [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/16173\\_08\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/16173_08_en.pdf)

8 [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/10019\\_08\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/10019_08_en.pdf)

9 OJ L 130, 19.5.2017, p. 1.

10 [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu\\_guidelines\\_hrd\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_guidelines_hrd_en.pdf)

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

of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP<sup>1</sup>,

- having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2016 on the Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union’s policy on the matter 2015<sup>2</sup>, and previous resolutions on the topic,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2016 on human rights and migration in third countries<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2016 on corporate liability for serious human rights abuses in third countries<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2016 on the fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU’s external relations<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2016 on the EU’s priorities for the UNHRC sessions in 2016<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 February 2016 on the humanitarian situation in Yemen<sup>7</sup>, which calls on the VP/HR to launch an initiative to impose an EU arms embargo on Saudi Arabia,
- having regard to its resolutions on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law,
- having regard to its Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought which in 2016 was awarded to Nadia Murad and Lamiya Aji Bashar,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 October 2013 on caste-based discrimination<sup>8</sup>, to the report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues of 28 January 2016 on minorities and discrimination based on caste and analogous systems of inherited status<sup>9</sup>, and to the UN Guidance Tool on descent-based discrimination,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 November 2011 on ‘EU support for the ICC: facing challenges and overcoming difficulties’<sup>10</sup>,
- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0365/2017),

A. whereas Article 21 of the TEU commits the EU to a common foreign and security

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0344.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0502.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0404.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0405.

<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0300.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0020.

<sup>7</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0066.

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 181, 19.5.2016, p. 69.

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session31/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_31\\_56\\_en.doc](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session31/Documents/A_HRC_31_56_en.doc)

<sup>10</sup> OJ C 153 E, 31.5.2013, p. 115.

policy (CFSP) guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, and which it seeks 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 principle of equality and solidarity, and compliance with the UN Charter, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international law; whereas the Union is to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights;

- B. whereas today's worldwide abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide, necessitate determined efforts on the part of the whole international community;
- C. whereas respect for and the promotion, indivisibility and safeguarding of the universality of human rights are cornerstones of the CFSP; whereas in its role of scrutiny over the CFSP, Parliament has the right to be kept informed of and consulted on its main aspects and basic choices (Article 36 of the TEU);
- D. whereas the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, adopted by the Council in June 2016, affirms that human rights must be mainstreamed systematically across all policy sectors and institutions, including international trade and commercial policy;
- E. whereas increased coherence between the EU's internal and external policies, as well as among the external policies themselves, is a fundamental requirement for a successful and effective EU human rights policy; whereas improved consistency should enable the EU to respond more rapidly in the early stages of human rights violations and, in certain cases, predict and prevent their perpetration, including in the field of international trade and commercial policy;
- F. whereas the EU's commitment to effective multilateralism, with the UN at its core, is an integral part of the Union's external policy and is rooted in the conviction that a multilateral system founded on universal rules and values is best suited to addressing global crises, challenges and threats;
- G. whereas Article 207 of the TFEU stipulates that the EU's commercial policy is to be based on the principles and objectives of the Union's external action; whereas trade and human rights can have an impact on each other in third countries, and whereas under a system of corporate liability, as is currently being discussed in the UN, and global value chains, the business community has an important role to play in offering positive incentives in terms of promoting human rights, democracy and corporate responsibility; whereas good governance and public authorities acting in the general interest play an important role in business behaviour; whereas the EU is participating in efforts to draft a binding treaty on business and human rights;
- H. whereas the protection of the human rights of the most vulnerable groups, such as ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, the LGBTI community, women, children, asylum seekers and migrants, deserves special attention;
- I. whereas women and children face threats, discrimination and violence, particularly in war zones and under authoritarian regimes; whereas gender equality incorporates core European values and is enshrined in the EU's legal and political framework; whereas violence and discrimination against women and girls has increased in recent years;

- J. whereas states have the ultimate responsibility to safeguard all human rights by enacting and implementing international human rights treaties and conventions, monitoring human rights violations and ensuring effective recourse for victims;
- K. whereas an increasing number of human rights violations amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including genocide, are being committed by state and non-state actors;
- L. whereas freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to believe or not to believe and to practise or not to practise the religion of one's choice, and to take on, abandon or change a religion, must be guaranteed all over the world and preserved unconditionally, in particular through interreligious and intercultural dialogue; whereas laws prohibiting blasphemy are widespread, with states laying down punishments ranging from prison sentences to lashings and the death penalty;
- M. whereas freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of assembly and association, and the holding of regular, transparent and genuine electoral processes, are essential elements of democracy; whereas in fragile, conflict-prone or oppressive societies, elections can at times trigger widespread violence;
- N. whereas engaging with third countries in all bilateral and multilateral fora, for example during human rights dialogues, is one of the most effective tools for addressing human rights concerns;
- O. whereas appropriate resources must be made available and deployed in the most efficient manner in order to enhance the promotion of human rights and democracy in third countries;
- P. whereas access to water and sanitation is a fundamental human right and limiting this access is one of the causes of geopolitical tension in certain regions;
- Q. whereas cultural heritage sites face increasing threats in the form of illicit looting and vandalism, especially in the Middle East;
- R. whereas education has a crucial role to play in preventing human rights violations and conflicts and helps to boost citizens' participation in decision-making processes within democratic systems; whereas educational institutions that promote human rights, respect and diversity should be supported by states; whereas communication channels, whose numbers have increased, represent an important tool through which to communicate human rights abuses quickly and reach a significant number of victims or potential victims of human rights violations in third countries, providing them with information and assistance; whereas collecting comprehensive disaggregated data is essential in order to safeguard human rights, particularly those of the most vulnerable groups, marginalised groups and groups that are at risk of marginalisation; whereas the use of appropriate indicators is also an effective way of assessing the progress of the fulfilment of states' obligations under international treaties;

### *General considerations*

1. Expresses profound concern about the pushback against democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which continue to be under threat worldwide; recalls that the EU has committed to promoting the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms and values, as well as to advancing democratic principles, which

must be enhanced worldwide;

2. Reiterates its firm belief that the EU and its Member States must actively pursue the principle of mainstreaming human rights and democracy, as mutually reinforcing fundamental principles at the core of the EU, in all EU policies, including those with an external dimension, such as in the fields of development, migration, security, counter-terrorism, enlargement and trade; reiterates, in this regard, the crucial importance of ensuring increased coherence between the EU's internal and external policies and greater coordination between the external policies of the Member States; stresses that the growing complexity of conflicts around the world necessitates an integrated, united and vigorous international approach and cooperation; recalls that the EU's objective to increase its international influence as a credible and legitimate international actor is greatly shaped by its ability to pursue human rights and democracy internally and externally, in line with the commitments enshrined in its founding treaties;
3. Emphasises the importance of enhanced cooperation between the Commission, the Council, the European External Action Service (EEAS), Parliament and the EU delegations to promote and ensure a consistent and united voice in defence of human rights and democratic principles; underlines, moreover, the importance of a strong commitment to promoting those values in multilateral fora, including through timely coordination at EU level and an active approach during negotiations; encourages the EU, in this context, to initiate and co-sponsor resolutions and to intensify the implementation of cross-regional initiatives under all UN human rights mechanisms;
4. Welcomes the fact that in 2016, the rule of law, democratic principles and breaches of human rights were debated regularly in its plenary sessions, targeted in various parliamentary resolutions, and raised in committee and interparliamentary delegation meetings;
5. Highlights the work of its Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), which maintains close working relations with the EEAS, other EU institutions, civil society, multilateral human rights institutions and the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights;
6. Recalls that in 2016, DROI drafted three reports, namely on human rights and migration in third countries, corporate liability for serious human rights abuses in third countries, and the fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU's external relations; calls on the Commission to take concrete action following these own-initiative reports;
7. Notes that in 2016, numerous DROI missions travelled to different countries with a view to collecting information and exchanging it with local governmental and non-governmental human rights actors, presenting Parliament's position and encouraging improvements to the protection of and respect for human rights;

### ***Addressing human rights challenges***

8. Expresses grave concern about the increasing number of attacks against religious minorities, which are often committed by non-state actors such as ISIS/Daesh; deplors the fact that many countries have and enforce anti-conversion and blasphemy laws, which effectively limit the freedom of religion or belief and the freedom of expression of religious minorities and atheists and even deprive them of these freedoms altogether; calls for measures to protect religious minorities, non-believers and atheists who are victims of blasphemy laws and calls for the EU and the Member States to engage in



political discussions to repeal such laws; calls for the EU and its Member States to step up their efforts to enhance respect for freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue when engaging with third countries; requests concrete action towards the effective implementation of the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, including by ensuring the systematic and consistent training of EU staff at headquarters and in delegations; supports fully the EU practice of taking the lead on thematic resolutions on freedom of religion and belief at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the UNGA; supports fully the work of the EU Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief outside the EU, Mr Ján Figel;

9. Reiterates the fact that freedom of expression online and offline is a vital component of any democratic society, as it nourishes a culture of pluralism that empowers civil society and citizens to hold their governments and decision-makers to account, and supports respect for the rule of law; emphasises that restriction of online or offline freedom of expression, such as via the removal of online content, is to occur only under exceptional circumstances, where prescribed by law and justified by the pursuit of a legitimate aim; stresses, therefore, that the EU should intensify its efforts to promote freedom of expression through its external policies and instruments; reiterates its request for the EU and its Member States to enhance their monitoring of all types of restrictions on freedom of expression and the media in third countries, to rapidly and systematically condemn such limitations and to use all available diplomatic means and instruments to reverse such restrictions; emphasises the importance of ensuring the effective implementation of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline and of regularly monitoring their impact; condemns the death and imprisonment of many journalists and bloggers in 2016 and calls for the EU to protect them effectively; welcomes the new European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) launched in 2016, with its specific focus on training EU delegations and media actors in third countries, on how to apply the Guidelines; stresses the importance of disclosing and condemning hate speech and incitements to violence, both on the internet and elsewhere, since they constitute a threat to the rule of law and the values embodied by human rights;
10. Is deeply concerned that civil society, including faith-based organisations, is increasingly under attack worldwide, through, inter alia, a growing number of repressive laws adopted throughout the world, in some cases under the pretext of combating terrorism; underlines that the phenomenon of shrinking civil society space is a global one; recalls that independent civil society plays an essential role in the defence and advancement of human rights and in the functioning of democratic societies, notably by promoting transparency, accountability and the separation of powers; calls for the EU and its Member States to constantly monitor and raise cases of violations of freedom of assembly and association, including the various forms of bans and limitations on civil society organisations (CSOs) and their activities, such as laws whose aim is to shrink civil society space or the promotion of NGOs sponsored by authoritarian governments (government-organised non-governmental organisations (GONGOs)); calls, in addition, for the EU, its Member States and the EU delegations to use all available means, such as human rights dialogues, political dialogues and public diplomacy, to systematically raise individual cases of human rights defenders (HRDs) and civil society activists at risk, particularly those who have been detained or imprisoned for arbitrary reasons and/or on account of their political convictions or social engagement, and to unequivocally denounce the repression, harassment and killing of HRDs, including those active in the environmental sphere; calls for the

establishment of a system to effectively monitor civil society space, with clear benchmarks and indicators to ensure an enabling and favourable legal environment for civil society;

11. Encourages the EU delegations and the Member States' diplomatic staff to continue to actively support HRDs, by systematically monitoring trials, visiting detained activists and issuing statements on individual cases, where appropriate; highlights the importance of silent diplomacy tools in this regard; welcomes the fact that the EU raised HRD cases in dialogues and consultations at EU level with over 50 countries in 2016; highlights the fact that the EIDHR Emergency Fund supported more than 250 HRDs at EU level in 2016, representing an increase of 30 % compared with 2015; welcomes the establishment and successful operation of the EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism, ProtectDefenders.eu, which has been implemented by civil society and has provided critical support to a large number of HRDs; urges the Commission to ensure the continuation of the programme after October 2018 and to increase its capabilities in order to provide more support to HRDs worldwide;
12. Considers it deeply regrettable that torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and the death penalty continue in many countries all over the world, and calls for the EU to intensify its efforts to eradicate them; welcomes, in this regard, the revision of EU legislation on trade in certain goods which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; urges the EEAS and the VP/HR to engage more strongly in the fight against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, including the death penalty, through increased diplomatic efforts and more systematic public positioning; highlights, in this connection, the worrisome conditions of incarceration in some prisons, including the non-treatment of health issues, and recommends that the EEAS, the EU delegations and the Member States use all existing instruments, such as the EU Guidelines on Torture, to their full potential; welcomes the fact that the UN's resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty was adopted by the UNGA in December 2016 with the support of 117 countries; notes that in 2016, the number of executions carried out globally fell compared with the previous year and expresses its grave concern that the overall number of executions nevertheless remains higher than the average recorded for the previous decade; emphasises that those targeted are often dissenting members of society and vulnerable groups; calls on countries that still pursue this practice to adopt a moratorium and abolish the death penalty;
13. Acknowledges the potentially great importance of modern information and communication technologies in promoting, defending and redressing human rights worldwide, and invites the EU institutions and the Member States to use their information channels to systematically reiterate within their specific frameworks and remits Parliament's position on different human rights issues, while contributing to the efficiency and visibility of the EU's common efforts; expresses its concern about the ever-increasing use of certain cyber-surveillance dual-use technologies against politicians, activists and journalists; welcomes, in this regard, the ongoing work of the EU institutions to update Council Regulation (EC) No 428/2009 of 5 May 2009 setting up a Community regime for the control of exports, transfer, brokering and transit of dual-use items<sup>1</sup>; strongly condemns the increasing number of HRDs facing digital threats, including compromised data through confiscation of equipment, remote surveillance and data leakages; expresses concern over online platforms deleting

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 134, 29.5.2009, p. 1.

legitimate video evidence of potential war crimes as part of the removal of terrorist content and propaganda from the platforms;

14. Expresses its concern about the increasing privatisation of the rule of law online, where private companies make decisions about the limitations of fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech, on the basis of their terms of service as opposed to democratically adopted laws;
15. Calls on the Commission to adopt a notice-and-action directive that increases the transparency and proportionality of takedown procedures, while providing effective remedies for users whose content has been wrongly taken down;
16. Condemns the use of sexual violence against women and girls, including mass rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, gender-based forms of persecution, trafficking, sex tourism and all other forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence, as a weapon of war; draws attention to the fact that gender-related crimes and crimes of sexual violence are classified in the Rome Statute as war crimes, crimes against humanity or constitutive acts with respect to genocide or torture; stresses the importance of defending women's rights, including their sexual and reproductive rights, through legislation, education and by supporting CSOs; welcomes the adoption of the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 which sets out a comprehensive list of measures to improve the situation of women in terms of equal rights and empowerment; emphasises the importance of ensuring its effective implementation; welcomes, in addition, the adoption of the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019, which promotes gender equality and women's rights worldwide; stresses the importance of the ratification and effective implementation by all Member States of the Istanbul Convention; points out that education is the best tool for combating discrimination and violence against women and children; requests that the Commission, the EEAS and the VP/HR step up their fulfilment of the obligations and commitments in the area of women's rights under CEDAW and encourages third countries to do the same; believes that the EU should continue mainstreaming support for women within common security and defence policy (CSDP) operations, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction; reiterates the importance of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; stresses the importance of women's systematic, equal, full and active participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in the promotion of human rights and democratic reforms, and in peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance, post-conflict reconstruction and democratic transition processes leading to lasting and stable political solutions; recalls that the 2016 Sakharov Prize was awarded to Nadia Murad and Lamiya Aji Bashar, survivors of sexual enslavement perpetrated by ISIS/Daesh;
17. Emphasises that accessible health care and universal respect for and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, family planning, and access to adequate feminine hygiene products, maternal, prenatal and neonatal health care and safe abortion services are important elements to save women's lives and contribute to avoiding high-risk births and reducing infant and child mortality; finds it unacceptable that women's and girls' bodies, specifically with respect to their sexual and reproductive health and rights, still remain an ideological battleground; calls for the EU and its Member States to recognise the inalienable rights of women and girls to bodily integrity and autonomous decision-making, and condemns the frequent violations of women's sexual and reproductive rights, including the denial of access to family planning services, contraceptives and safe and legal abortion services;

18. Strongly condemns the reinstatement and expansion of the Global Gag Rule and its impact on women's and girls' global health care and rights; reiterates its call for the EU and its Member States to fill the financing gap left by the US in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights, using both national and EU development funding;
19. Recalls that equality between women and men is a core principle of the EU and its Member States, and that gender mainstreaming one of the Union's principal objectives as enshrined in the Treaties; calls on the Commission, therefore, to integrate gender mainstreaming into all EU legislation, guidelines, actions and funding as a core EU principle, with a special emphasis on EU external relations policies; stresses the need to reinforce the role of the EU delegations, as well as that of the EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender, by ensuring a specific budget dedicated to her area of competence;
20. Calls on the EEAS to ensure that the outcomes of the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be included in its policies, and will provide renewed impetus in promoting 'women's economic empowerment' and addressing gender inequalities in the changing world of work;
21. Notes the positive contribution of women's empowerment to achieving an inclusive, equitable and peaceful society and sustainable development; stresses that the focus on gender equality and women's empowerment is explicit across all the SDGs and that further efforts should be pursued to ensure that women's rights are fully upheld and that policies promoting economic and social empowerment and women's participation in decision-making processes are implemented effectively; stresses that particular attention should be given to empowering indigenous women;
22. Points out that women should be encouraged to organise themselves in trade unions, and that they should not be discriminated against when seeking business financing;
23. Calls for the EU to support all women's associations that work on an everyday basis to support women in humanitarian crises and conflicts;
24. Reaffirms the urgent need for the universal ratification and effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its Optional Protocols, in order to provide children with legal protection; underlines that children are often exposed to specific abuse, such as child marriages or genital mutilation, and are therefore in need of enhanced protection; underlines that child labour, recruitment of children in armed conflicts and early and forced marriages remain critical issues in some countries; requests that the EU systematically consult relevant local and international child rights organisations, and raise, in its political and human rights dialogues with third countries, States Parties' obligations to implement the Convention; welcomes the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021); requests that the EU continue to promote the EU-UNICEF Child Rights Toolkit for integrating child rights in development cooperation through its external delegations, and to train the EU delegation staff adequately in this field; reiterates its request for the Commission to propose a comprehensive children's rights strategy and action plan for the next five years, in order to prioritise children's rights within EU external policies, welcomes the fact that under the 2016 Development Cooperation Instrument, resources were allocated to support UN agencies in carrying out measures targeted to children's rights, which must be designed to maximise the effective benefit for children in need, especially in the field of health systems and access to education, water and sanitation; calls for an urgent solution to the issue of stateless children, in particular those born

outside their parents' country of origin, and migrant children;

25. Condemns in the strongest terms all forms of discrimination, including on grounds of race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, language, culture, social origin, caste, birth, age, disability or any other status; stresses that the EU should intensify its efforts to eradicate all types of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance through human rights and political dialogues, the work of the EU delegations and public diplomacy; stresses, in addition, that the EU should continue promoting the ratification and full implementation of all UN conventions that support this cause;
26. Reiterates that trafficking in human beings (THB) means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation; calls for the EU and the Member States to take measures to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that lead to trafficking, while maintaining a human rights-based and victim-centred approach; reiterates the need for all Member States to implement the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings and Directive 2011/36/EU<sup>1</sup> on this subject; expresses its profound concern at the extreme vulnerability of migrants and refugees to exploitation, smuggling and THB; stresses the need to maintain a distinction between the concepts of THB and migrant smuggling;
27. Condemns the continuing human rights violations committed against people suffering as a result of caste hierarchies and caste-based discrimination, including the denial of equality and access to the legal system and employment, continued segregation and caste-induced barriers to the achievement of basic human rights and development; reiterates its call for the development of EU policy on caste discrimination, and for the EU to take advantage of every opportunity to express its grave concern over such human rights violations; urges the EU and its Member States to intensify efforts and support related initiatives at UN and delegation level by implementing and monitoring the 2030 SDGs, monitoring the new UN Guidance Tool on descent-based discrimination and supporting states' implementation of recommendations by UN human rights mechanisms on the topic of caste discrimination;
28. Expresses profound concern that minorities are still at a heightened risk of discrimination and are especially vulnerable to political, economic, environmental and labour-related changes and disruptions; notes that many have little or no access to political representation and are acutely affected by poverty; stresses that the EU should intensify its efforts to eradicate the violations of human rights committed against minorities; stresses that minority communities have special needs and that they should be guaranteed full access and equal treatment in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life;
29. Welcomes the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and reiterates the importance of its ratification and efficient implementation by both the Member States and the EU institutions; emphasises that disabilities do not deprive a person of human dignity, which entails a state duty to

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1.

protect them; stresses, in particular, the need to mainstream credibly the principle of universal accessibility and the rights of persons with disabilities in all relevant EU policies, including in the area of development cooperation, and underlines the prescriptive and horizontal nature of this issue; calls for the EU to incorporate the fight against discrimination on grounds of disability in its external action and development aid policies; welcomes, in this connection, the inclusion of the rights of people with disabilities in the new European Consensus on Development;

30. Reiterates its support for the systematic introduction of human rights clauses in international agreements between the EU and third countries, including trade and investment agreements; recalls that all human rights must be considered of equal value, being indivisible, interdependent and interrelated; calls on the Commission to monitor the implementation of such clauses effectively and systematically and to provide Parliament with regular reports on partner countries' respect for human rights; calls on the Commission to adopt a more structured and strategic approach to human rights dialogues within the framework of future agreements; takes a positive view of the GSP+ preference system as a means to stimulate the effective implementation of 27 core international conventions on human rights and labour standards; calls for the genuine enforcement of GSP+ and expects the Commission to report back to Parliament and to the Council on the status of its ratification and the progress made under this scheme; reiterates the importance of the proper implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
31. Reaffirms the fact that the activities of all companies, including European ones, operating in third countries should be in full compliance with international human rights standards and calls for the EU and its Member States to ensure that this is the case; reaffirms, moreover, the importance of promoting corporate social responsibility and of European enterprises playing a leading role in promoting international standards on business and human rights, emphasising that cooperation between human rights and business organisations would empower local actors and promote civil society; acknowledges that global value chains can contribute to enhancing international core labour, environmental and social standards, and represent opportunities and challenges with regard to sustainable progress and the promotion of human rights, especially in developing countries; calls for the EU to play a more active role in achieving the adequate, fair, transparent and sustainable management of global value chains and to mitigate any negative effects on human rights, including the infringement of labour rights; outlines, however, that in the case of business-related human rights abuses, effective access to remedies for victims should be guaranteed; urges the Commission to ensure that the projects supported by the EIB are in line with EU policy and human rights commitments; takes note of the ongoing negotiations on a binding treaty on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights; encourages the EU to constructively take part in such negotiations;
32. Calls for the EU and its Member States to use all their political weight to prevent any act that could be considered genocide, a war crime or a crime against humanity from taking place, to respond in an efficient and coordinated manner in cases where such crimes occur, to mobilise all necessary resources to bring to justice all those responsible, including through the application of the principle of universal jurisdiction, and to assist the victims and support stabilisation and reconciliation processes; calls on the international community to set up instruments to minimise the warning-response gap in order to prevent the emergence, re-emergence and escalation of violent conflict, such as the EU's early warning system;

33. Calls for the EU to provide support to organisations (including NGOs, open source investigation organisations and civil society) that collect, preserve and protect evidence, digital and otherwise, of crimes committed, in order to facilitate their prosecution internationally;
34. Expresses grave concern over the destruction of cultural heritage sites in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya; notes that of the world's 38 endangered cultural heritage sites, 22 are in the Middle East; supports the activities of the Cultural Heritage Initiative and its fact-finding activities in Syria and Iraq related to the destruction of archaeological and cultural heritage;
35. Welcomes the EU's efforts to support the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) set up by the UN to assist in the investigation of serious crimes committed in Syria; emphasises the need to set up a similar independent mechanism in Iraq; calls for the EU and the Member States that have not already done so to contribute financially to the IIIM;
36. Strongly condemns the heinous crimes and human rights violations committed by state and non-state actors; is horrified at the vast range of crimes committed, including murder, torture, rape as a weapon of war, enslavement and sexual slavery, the recruitment of child soldiers, forced religious conversions and the systematic 'cleansing' and killing of religious minorities; recalls that the situation suffered by religious minorities in the territories governed by ISIS/Daesh was qualified by Parliament, in its resolution of 12 February 2015 on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and Syria, in particular in the IS context<sup>1</sup>, as a genocide; emphasises that the EU and its Member States should support the prosecution of members of non-state groups such as ISIS/Daesh by asking the UN Security Council to confer jurisdiction to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or to ensure that justice is rendered by means of an ad-hoc tribunal or universal jurisdiction;
37. Reiterates its full support for the ICC, the Rome Statute, the Office of the Prosecutor, the Prosecutor's *proprio motu* powers, and the progress made in initiating new investigations as an essential means to fight impunity for atrocity crimes; calls on all Member States to ratify the Kampala amendments on the crime of aggression and to add the 'atrocity crimes' to the list of crimes for which the EU has competence; condemns any attempt to undermine its legitimacy or independence and calls for the EU and its Member States to cooperate consistently in order to support the ICC's investigations and decisions with the aim of putting an end to impunity for international crimes, including when referring to the arrest of persons wanted by the ICC; urges the EU and its Member States to consistently support ICC examinations, investigations and decisions and to take steps to prevent and respond effectively to instances of non-cooperation with the ICC and provide for adequate funding; welcomes the meeting of 6 July 2016 between EU and ICC representatives in Brussels in preparation for the 2nd EU-ICC round table meeting, enabling relevant staff at the ICC and the EU institutions to identify common areas of interest, exchange information on relevant activities and ensure better cooperation between both parties; notes, with profound regret, the recent announcements of withdrawals from the Rome Statute, which represent a challenge in terms of victims' access to justice and which should be firmly condemned; considers that the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States should continue to encourage third countries to ratify and apply the Rome Statute; reiterates its call for the VP/HR to

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 310, 25.8.2016, p. 35.

appoint an EUSR for International Humanitarian Law and International Justice with a mandate to promote, mainstream and represent the EU's commitment to the fight against impunity and to the ICC across EU foreign policies; calls for the EU and its Member States to support UN accountability mechanisms and resolutions at UN multilateral fora, including the Human Rights Council;

38. Urges the EU to step up its efforts to promote the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary at multilateral and bilateral level as a fundamental principle for the consolidation of democracy; encourages the EU to support the fair administration of justice worldwide by assisting legislative and institutional reform processes in third countries; encourages, in addition, the EU delegations and Member States' embassies to monitor trials systematically with a view to promoting the independence of the judiciary;
39. Expresses profound concern and solidarity with the growing number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, including an ever larger number of women, as the victims of conflicts, violence, persecution, governance failures, poverty, irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling networks; stresses the urgent need to take genuine steps to tackle the root causes of migration flows and find long-term solutions based on respect for human rights and dignity, and therefore to address the external dimension of the refugee crisis, including by finding sustainable solutions to conflicts in our neighbourhood, for example by developing cooperation and partnerships with the third countries concerned that comply with international law and ensure respect for human rights in these countries; expresses its profound concern over violence against migrant children, including missing, unaccompanied migrant children, and calls for resettlement, family reunification schemes and humanitarian corridors; is deeply concerned at the plight and rising number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and calls for their safe return, resettlement or local integration; calls for the EU and its Member States to provide humanitarian assistance in the field of education, housing, health and other humanitarian areas that help the refugees closest to their homeland, and for return policies to be properly implemented; underlines the need for a comprehensive human rights-based approach to migration and calls for the EU to collaborate further with the UN, regional organisations, governments and NGOs; calls on Member States to fully implement the common European asylum package and common migration legislation, particularly so as to safeguard vulnerable asylum seekers; stresses that the concepts of safe countries and safe countries of origin must not prevent the consideration of individual asylum applications; warns against the instrumentalisation of EU foreign policy as 'migration management'; calls for the EU and the Member States to establish full transparency surrounding the funds allocated to third countries for cooperation on migration and to ensure that such cooperation does not benefit structures involved in human rights violations, but rather goes hand in hand with improving the human rights situation within these countries;
40. Considers that development cooperation and the promotion of human rights and democratic principles, including the rule of law and good governance, should go hand in hand; recalls, in this context, that the UN has stated that without a human rights-based approach, development goals cannot be fully achieved; recalls, in addition, that the EU has committed to supporting partner countries, taking into account their development situation and their progress as regards human rights and democracy;
41. Points out that the rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is higher among women, and asks the Commission to step up its efforts to implement measures to



combat poverty and social exclusion as part of its development policies;

42. Recalls that criterion two of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP obliges Member States to examine each arms export licence against the country of destination's respect for human rights; recalls, in this connection, the commitment made by the Commission in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy in connection to security forces and the implementation of the EU's human rights policy, including the development and implementation of a due diligence policy in this field;
43. Reiterates its call for a common EU position on the use of armed drones that upholds human rights and international humanitarian law and addresses issues such as the legal framework, proportionality, accountability, the protection of civilians and transparency; insists once again that the EU ban the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention;
44. Considers that the EU should continue its efforts to enhance respect for the human rights of LGBTI people, in line with the EU Guidelines on the topic; calls for the full implementation of the Guidelines, including through the training of EU staff in third countries; denounces the fact that 72 countries still criminalise homosexuality, is concerned that 13 of these countries have the death penalty, and believes that violent practices and acts of violence against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation, such as forced outings, hate crimes and hate speech both online and offline, and corrective rape should not go unpunished; takes note of the legalisation of same-sex marriage and same-sex civil unions in some countries and encourages their further recognition; condemns violations of bodily integrity against women and minority groups; calls on states to outlaw these practices, tackle perpetrators and support victims;
45. Emphasises the fundamental importance of combating corruption, in all its forms, so as to safeguard the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights; strongly condemns any conduct accommodating such corrupt practices;
46. Recalls that corruption is a threat to the equal enjoyment of human rights and undermines democratic processes such as the rule of law and the fair administration of justice; takes the view that the EU should emphasise in all platforms for dialogue with third countries the importance of integrity, accountability and the proper management of public affairs, finances and property, as stipulated in the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC); recommends that the EU use its expertise to support third countries more consistently and systematically in their efforts to tackle corruption, by setting up and consolidating independent and effective anti-corruption institutions; calls, in particular, on the Commission to negotiate provisions on combating corruption in all the future trade agreements it negotiates with third countries;
47. Highlights the essential obligations and responsibilities of states and other duty bearers to mitigate climate change, prevent its negative impacts on human rights and foster policy coherence in order to ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts are adequate, sufficiently ambitious, non-discriminatory and otherwise compliant with human rights obligations; underlines that the UN estimates that there will be many environmentally displaced people by 2050; emphasises the link between trade policies, environmental policies and development policies, and the positive and negative impact such policies can have on respect for human rights; welcomes international dedication to promoting the integration of the issues of environmental and natural disasters and

climate change with human rights;

48. Stresses that land grabbing has increased considerably in recent years in developing countries; considers that the fight against the exploitation and appropriation of resources should be a priority; condemns practices such as land grabbing and the indiscriminate use of natural resources; calls on the Commission to take urgent action in response to Parliament's many recent resolutions in this field;
49. Underlines the importance of ensuring that human rights and access to goods and services such as water and sanitation are covered in social, education, health and security policies;
50. Calls on international institutions, national governments, NGOs and individuals to work in synergy to establish an appropriate regulatory framework in order to ensure that everyone in the world has guaranteed access to a minimum amount of water; underlines that water should be considered not merchandise but a question of development and sustainability and that water privatisation does not exempt states from their human rights responsibilities; calls on countries in which water is one of the causes of tension or conflict to cooperate in the sharing of water so as to bring about a win-win situation for the sustainability and peaceful development of the region;

#### ***Addressing democracy support challenges and activities***

51. Stresses that the EU should continue to actively support democratic and effective human rights institutions and civil society in their efforts to promote democratisation; welcomes the invaluable assistance provided to CSOs worldwide under the EIDHR, which continues to constitute the flagship instrument of the EU in implementing its external human rights policy; welcomes, in addition, the European Endowment for Democracy's consistent efforts to promote democracy and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods of the EU;
52. Recalls that the experience gained and lessons learned from transitions to democracy within the framework of enlargement and neighbourhood policy could contribute positively to the identification of best practices that could be used to support and consolidate other democratisation processes worldwide;
53. Reiterates, in this context, its call for the Commission to develop EU guidelines for democracy support;
54. Recommends that the EU step up its efforts to develop a more comprehensive approach to democratisation processes, of which free and fair elections are only one dimension, in order to contribute positively to the strengthening of democratic institutions and public confidence in electoral processes worldwide;
55. Welcomes the eight Election Observation Missions (EOMs) and the eight Electoral Expert Missions (EEMs) deployed around the globe by the EU in 2016; highlights the fact that since 2015, the EU has deployed 17 EOMs and 23 EEMs; reiterates its positive view of the EU's continued support for electoral processes and its provision of electoral assistance and support for domestic observers; welcomes and fully supports the work of the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) in this regard;
56. Recalls the importance of proper follow-up of the reports and recommendations of the EOMs as a way of enhancing their impact and strengthening the EU's support for

democratic standards in the countries concerned;

57. Welcomes the commitment made by the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States under the current Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 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 thus to the strengthening of democratic processes;
58. Stresses that enlargement policy is one of the strongest tools for reinforcing respect for democratic principles and human rights in the light of current political developments in candidate and potential candidate countries; calls on the Commission to strengthen its efforts to support the reinforcement of democratic political cultures, respect for the rule of law, the independence of the media and the judiciary, and the fight against corruption in those countries; expresses its conviction that the revised European neighbourhood policy should continue to have the protection, active promotion and enforcement of human rights and democratic principles at its core; reiterates the fact that the protection, active support for and enforcement of human rights and democracy are in the interest of both partner countries and the EU; stresses, furthermore, the need for the EU to uphold the commitment it has made to its partners, especially in its neighbourhood, to support economic, social and political reform, protect human rights and help to establish the rule of law, as the best means of strengthening the international order and ensuring the stability of its neighbourhood; recalls that the Union for the Mediterranean can and should shape political dialogue in this area and push for a strong human rights and democracy agenda in the region; recalls that any country aiming to join the EU has to fully guarantee human rights and strictly fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria, with which non-compliance might lead to the freezing of the negotiations;
59. Stresses that peacebuilding involves efforts to prevent and reduce conflict and strengthen the resilience of political, socioeconomic, and security institutions, in order to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development in the long term; underlines that the promotion of the rule of law, good governance and human rights is fundamental to sustaining peace;

***Ensuring a comprehensive and coherent human rights and democracy support approach via EU policies***

60. Takes note of the adoption of the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2016; considers that the Annual Report is an indispensable tool for scrutiny, communication and debate on the EU's policy on human rights and democracy in the world, and a valuable instrument which provides a comprehensive overview of the EU's priorities, efforts and challenges in this field and which can be used to identify further ways to address them in an effective manner;
61. Reiterates strongly its invitation to the VP/HR to take part in a debate with MEPs in two plenary sessions per year, once when the Annual Report is presented and once in response to its own report; reiterates the importance of a continuous interinstitutional dialogue, namely regarding the follow-up of Parliament's urgency resolutions on human rights; recalls that written answers also play an important role in interinstitutional relations, as they allow for a systematic and in-depth follow-up to all the points raised by Parliament and thus contribute to the strengthening of effective coordination; calls on the VP/HR and the EEAS to provide thorough responses to written questions and to address the human rights issues raised at the highest level of dialogue with the countries

involved;

62. Commends the EEAS and the Commission on their exhaustive reporting on the activities undertaken by the EU in the area of human rights and democracy in 2016; considers, nevertheless, that the current format of the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy could be improved by offering a better overview of the concrete impact of the EU's actions on human rights and democracy in third countries;
63. Reiterates its view that the adoption of the EU Strategic Framework and the first Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy in 2012 constituted a major milestone for the EU in placing human rights and democracy at the core of its external relations; welcomes the adoption by the Council in July 2015 of a new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2015-2019 and the performance of a mid-term review in 2017; calls on the VP/HR, the EEAS, the Commission, the Council and the Member States to ensure the efficient and coherent implementation of the current Action Plan, including through genuine collaboration with CSOs; stresses that the Member States should report back on how they have implemented the Plan; draws particular attention to the importance of increasing the effectiveness and maximising the local impact of the tools used to promote respect for human rights and democracy worldwide;
64. Reiterates its view that a solid consensus and enhanced coordination between Member States and the EU institutions, as well as genuine collaboration with CSOs at local, national and international level, is required in order to advance the human rights and democracy agenda coherently and consistently; stresses firmly that Member States should take greater ownership of the implementation of the Action Plan and the EU Strategic Framework and use them as a blueprint for promoting human rights and democracy bilaterally and multilaterally;
65. Recognises the key role of the EUSR for Human Rights, Mr Lambrinidis, in enhancing the EU's visibility and effectiveness in protecting and promoting human rights and democratic principles around the world, and highlights his role in promoting the consistent and coherent implementation of the EU's human rights policy; welcomes the extension of the EUSR's mandate until 28 February 2019 and reiterates its request for this mandate to be made permanent; recommends, in this regard, that the EUSR be given own-initiative powers, higher public visibility and adequate staff and financial resources to work at his full potential; recommends, in addition, that the EUSR increase the transparency of his activities, plans, progress reports and reviews;
66. Notes that the work and impact of the EUSR for Human Rights can be accessed only partially by reviewing the Annual Report on Human Rights, his social media account and the speeches available;
67. Supports fully the human rights country strategies (HRCSs), which tailor EU action to each country's specific situation and needs; reiterates its call for MEPs to be given access to strategy content; underlines strongly the importance of taking into account the HRCSs at all levels of policy-making vis-à-vis individual third countries; reiterates that HRCSs 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;
68. Welcomes the designation of human rights and gender focal points by all EU delegations and CSDP missions; recalls its recommendation to the VP/HR and the

EEAS to develop clear operational guidelines on the role of focal points in delegations, so that they may improve, act as true human rights advisors and carry out their work efficiently;

69. Acknowledges that Human Rights Dialogues with third countries can be an efficient tool for bilateral engagement and cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights; welcomes the establishment of Human Rights Dialogues with a growing number of countries; praises and further encourages the involvement of civil society in preparatory dialogues; reiterates its call for the development of a comprehensive mechanism for monitoring and reviewing the functioning of Human Rights Dialogues;
70. Recalls the EU's commitment to placing human rights and democracy at the centre of its relations with third countries; stresses, therefore, that the advancement of human rights and democratic principles, including human rights conditionality clauses in international agreements, needs to be supported through all EU policies with an external dimension, such as enlargement and neighbourhood policy, the CSDP, and environment, development, security, counter-terrorism, trade, migration, justice and home affairs policies;
71. Recalls that sanctions are an essential tool of the CFSP; urges the Council to adopt the sanctions provided for in EU legislation when they are deemed necessary to achieving the objectives of the CFSP, in particular with a view to protecting human rights and consolidating and supporting democracy, while ensuring that they do not have an impact on the civilian population; asks that these sanctions be focused on officials identified as responsible for human rights violations in order to punish them for their crimes and abuse;
72. Notes the Commission's efforts to fulfil its commitment to including human rights provisions in its impact assessments for legislative and non-legislative proposals, implementing measures and trade and investment agreements; urges the Commission to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of the impact assessments and to ensure the systematic incorporation of human rights issues in the text of legislative and non-legislative proposals;
73. Reiterates its full support for the EU's strong engagement in promoting the advancement of human rights and democratic principles through cooperation with UN structures and UN specialised agencies, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), regional organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the African Union, and the Arab League, and other organisations, in line with Articles 21 and 22 TEU;
74. Stresses that in order to fulfil the ambitious objectives set out in the new Action Plan, the EU must set aside sufficient resources and expertise, in terms of both dedicated human resources in delegations and headquarters, and funds available;
75. Reiterates, furthermore, that active and consistent EU engagement in all UN human rights mechanisms, in particular the Third Committee of the UNGA and the UNHRC, is of the utmost importance; acknowledges the efforts of the EEAS, the EU delegations in New York and Geneva and the Member States to increase EU coherence on human rights issues at UN level; encourages the EU to step up its efforts to make its voice

heard, including by intensifying the growing implementation of cross-regional initiatives and by co-sponsoring and taking the lead on resolutions; underlines the need for EU leadership to push for UN reform with the goal of reinforcing the impact and strength of the rules-based multilateral system, and of ensuring more efficient human rights protection and the advancement of international law;

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76. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the 70th UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the EU heads of delegation.