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## TEXTS ADOPTED

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### **P9\_TA(2020)0007**

#### **Annual report 2018 on the human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter**

**European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter – annual report 2018 (2019/2125(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 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 Articles 17 and 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, presented on 28 June 2016,
- having regard to the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019, adopted by the Council on 20 July 2015, and to its Mid-Term Review of June 2017,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, adopted on 24 June 2013,
- 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 on 24 June 2013,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on the death penalty, on freedom of expression online and offline, and on human rights defenders,
- having regard to the revised EU Guidelines to EU policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, adopted on 16 September 2019,
- having regard to the EU Human Rights Guidelines on safe drinking water and

sanitation, adopted on 17 June 2019,

- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (hereinafter ‘the Istanbul Convention’) of 11 May 2011, which not all Member States have ratified,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Conventions on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No 197) and on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No 201),
- having regard to the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,
- having regard to the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- having regard to the EU Gender Action Plan II (GAP II) ‘Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020’ of 21 September 2015,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 30 March 2007,
- having regard to the UN Declarations on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
- having regard to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples to the UN Human Rights Council of 8 August 2017<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights of 16 June 2011,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted on 9 December 1998,
- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and to the outcomes of their review conferences,
- having regard to the Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in New York, of 15 October 2019,
- having regard to the Yogyakarta Principles (on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity), adopted in November 2006, and the 10 complementary principles (‘plus 10’), adopted on

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<sup>1</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/36/46/Add.2>

10 November 2017,

- having regard to the decision of the UN General Assembly of 28 May 2019 designating 22 August as the UN’s International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief,
- having regard to the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO),
- having regard to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 and 11 December 2018,
- having regard to the Global Compact on Refugees, affirmed by the UN General Assembly on 17 December 2018,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Protocol of 10 October 2018 amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 25 June 2018 on EU priorities at the United Nations and at the 73rd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 17 July 2018 on the International Criminal Court on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 26 April 2016 entitled ‘Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance’ (COM(2016)0234) and the subsequent Council conclusions of 12 May 2016 on the EU approach to forced displacement and development,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on democracy, adopted on 14 October 2019,
- having regard to the joint declaration from the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and Ministers of Foreign Affairs or Representatives of 13 UN participating member states of 27 September 2018 on the Good Human Rights Stories initiative,
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2018,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 December 2018 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2017 and the European Union’s policy on the matter<sup>2</sup>, and to its previous resolutions on earlier annual reports,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 November 2016 on EU strategic communication to

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0515.

counteract propaganda against it by third parties<sup>1</sup> and its recommendation of 13 March 2019 to the Council and the VP/HR concerning taking stock of the follow-up taken by the European External Action Service (EEAS) two years after the EP report on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties<sup>2</sup>,

- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2019 on EU Guidelines and the mandate of the EU Special Envoy on the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 3 July 2018 on violation of the rights of indigenous peoples in the world, including land grabbing<sup>4</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 14 February 2019 on the future of the LGBTI List of Actions (2019-2024)<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2019 on experiencing a backlash in women’s rights and gender equality in the EU<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to all its resolutions adopted in 2018 on breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (known as urgency resolutions) in accordance with Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to its Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, which in 2018 was awarded to Oleg Sentsov, a Ukrainian film director and political prisoner held in Russia,
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the letter from the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0051/2019),
- A. whereas throughout the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 2018, the EU stressed the political significance of building up a global order based on respect for human rights and reaffirmed its deep and firm commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide; whereas the European Parliament hosted its first ever Human Rights Week in November 2018, highlighting the milestones achieved since the UDHR was adopted, as well as current human rights challenges;
- B. whereas respect for and the promotion, indivisibility and safeguarding of the universality of human rights, as well as the promotion of democratic principles and values including the rule of law, respect for human dignity and the principles of equality and solidarity, are the cornerstones of the EU’s ethical and legal *acquis* and its common foreign and security policy (CFSP), as well as of all its external action; whereas the EU should continue to strive to be the leading global actor in the universal promotion and

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 224, 27.6.2018, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0187.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0013.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0279.

<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0129.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0111.

protection of human rights, including at the level of multilateral cooperation, in particular through an active and constructive role in diverse UN bodies and in compliance with the UN Charter, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international law, as well as the obligations in the area of human rights and the commitments entered into under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs;

- C. whereas the UDHR, as a set of universal values, principles and norms guiding UN member states, places the protection of human rights at the heart of good governance; whereas in the spirit of the UDHR and Article 21 of the TEU, the EU is at the forefront of pursuing human rights-based policies and engages continuously in addressing human rights abuses;
- D. whereas the EU, through actions at bilateral and multilateral level, has continued to support the advancement of human rights in 2018, in particular by strengthening political dialogue with non-EU countries, including those which seek European integration, and other regional institutions such as the African Union, and by establishing new international agreements including trade and economic partnerships; whereas ambitious commitment requires the EU to be consistent and lead by example;
- E. whereas EU policies must ensure the protection of the human rights of the most vulnerable groups such as ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities, the LGBTI community, women, children, asylum seekers and migrants; whereas throughout the celebration of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), the EU acknowledged the crucial role HRDs play in enhancing democracy and the rule of law; whereas the HRDs 2018 World Summit yielded an Action Plan with priorities for the defence of human rights; whereas in 2018, a large number of HRDs were targeted and killed and subjected to attacks, threats and persecution; whereas some private military and security companies have been implicated in a number of human rights violations, which must be properly investigated with those responsible brought to justice;
- F. whereas even in the present decade, we are witnessing visible limitations on and offensives against gender equality and women's rights at an international level; whereas sexual and reproductive health and rights are grounded in basic human rights and are essential aspects of human dignity; whereas violence against women and girls is one of the world's most widespread human rights violations which affects all levels of society and constitutes a major barrier to attaining gender equality; whereas a comprehensive and binding EU strategy for gender equality, exactly as Parliament has demanded, must provide for the gender mainstreaming of all EU policies and reinforce the impact of the upcoming EU Gender Action Plan III;
- G. whereas promoting international peace and security is part of the EU's *raison d'être*; whereas the EU is committed to acting on the international scene in the name of the principles that inspired its creation, and in compliance with and support of the principles of the UN Charter and international law;
- H. whereas environmental emergencies, including global warming and deforestation, are the result of human actions and give rise to human rights violations against the people directly affected, through the loss of their homes and habitats, but also humanity as a whole; whereas it is important to recognise the link between human rights, health and environmental protection; whereas ensuring access to water is vital when it comes to

preventing tensions in certain regions;

- I. whereas increased coherence between the EU's internal and external policies, as well as between the EU's external policies, represents an indispensable requirement for a successful and effective EU human rights policy; whereas policies in support of human rights and democracy should be mainstreamed across all other EU policies with an external dimension, such as development, migration, security, counter-terrorism, women's rights and gender equality, enlargement and trade, in particular through the implementation of human rights clauses in agreements between the EU and non-EU countries; whereas greater consistency should enable the EU to respond quicker during the early stages of human rights violations and to be a more active and credible human rights actor at a global level;
- J. whereas democratic transition and the establishment or consolidation of the rule of law in many countries are long and arduous processes, for which external support over a prolonged period, including from the EU, is essential to their success;

### ***Human rights and democracy: general trends and key challenges***

1. Expresses its deep concern at the attacks on democracy and the rule of law worldwide in 2018, which reflect the rise of authoritarianism as a political project, embodying disregard for human rights, repression of dissent, politicised justice, predetermined election results, shrinking space for civil society to operate in, and limitations on freedom of assembly and freedom of expression; underlines the importance of civil society allowing for flexible, timely and effective responses to regimes that violate international law, human rights and democratic principles;
2. Is of the opinion that countries falling into authoritarian regimes become more prone to instability, conflict, corruption, violent extremism and involvement in foreign military conflicts; expresses its concerns that there are still regimes that deny the very existence of universal human rights enshrined in international law; welcomes the fact, nonetheless, that a number of countries have launched peace and democratisation processes, implemented constitutional and judicial reforms, and engaged with civil society in open and public debates with the objective of promoting fundamental freedoms and human rights, including the abolition of the death penalty; regrets the fact that in spite of the growing trend towards the abolition of the death penalty worldwide, a number of countries are yet to put in place a moratorium;
3. Maintains that all states that adhere to internationally recognised fundamental freedoms as the cornerstones of democracy must be at the forefront of spreading democratic governance practices based on human rights and the rule of law around the world, and of strengthening international legislative instruments for protecting human rights; underlines the challenges posed by the use of harmful influences that undermine democratic governance and the values intrinsic to human rights, thereby thwarting the positive endeavours of democratic states; is deeply concerned about the links between authoritarian regimes and populist nationalist parties and governments; believes that such links undermine the credibility of the EU's efforts to promote the fundamental values;
4. Recalls that there can be no hierarchy of human rights; stresses the need to ensure full respect for, and adherence to, the principle that human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated; stresses that attempts to use the

rights of certain groups to justify the marginalisation of others are wholly unacceptable;

5. Highlights the scourge of armed conflicts and military attacks aiming, inter alia, at ethnic cleansing, which continues to claim civilian lives and causes mass displacement, with states and non-state actors abdicating their responsibility to abide by international humanitarian law and international human rights law; stresses that regions at war or in conflict situations face grave human rights violations that are exceptional in nature and aimed at denying human dignity, which are both devastating for victims and degrading for perpetrators; highlights, by way of example, the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, enforced disappearance, extra-judicial killings, violence and deliberate starvation as weapons of war designed to destroy, destabilise and demoralise individuals, families, communities and societies, especially children; highlights the particular vulnerability of women from ethnic and religious minorities to sexual violence, especially converts; strongly condemns the deadly attacks on hospitals, schools and other civilian targets that took place around the world in armed conflicts in 2018; recalls that the right to life is an important human right, and that illegal acts of war must thus always be condemned unanimously and addressed effectively;
6. Denounces the pushback against multilateralism and the rules-based international order, which is posing a serious challenge to human rights worldwide; strongly believes in approaches and decisions taken in cooperation within a multilateral framework, particularly within UN bodies and existing agreed negotiating formats within regional organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as the most effective means of serving the interests of humanity, finding sustainable solutions to conflicts based on the norms and principles of international law, the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, and fostering progress in the field of human rights; is extremely concerned by the fact that seats on various UN human rights-related bodies, including the UN Human Rights Council, are occupied by countries with a proven track record of grave human rights violations;
7. Is seriously concerned at the increase in the number of murders of, and both physical and defamatory attacks and the use of death penalty, persecution, imprisonment, harassment and intimidation against people standing up for human rights throughout the world, in particular journalists, scholars, lawyers, politicians and civil society activists, including women's rights activists, environmental and land defenders and defenders of religious minorities, mainly in countries with high levels of corruption and a poor record of upholding the rule of law and judicial oversight; is particularly concerned at increasingly brazen attacks committed on foreign soil, in some cases in violation of the laws and customs relating to diplomatic privileges and immunities; demands justice and accountability at the highest level of decision-making for those attacks; notes that all human rights defenders, notably women, face specific risks and need adequate protection; denounces the fact that some governments have adopted legislation that restricts the activities of civil society or social movement, including the closure of NGOs or the freezing of their assets; is deeply concerned about the use of repressive cybersecurity and counter-terrorism legislation to crack down on human rights defenders;
8. Stresses the importance of advancing gender equality and women's and girls' rights worldwide; emphasises that in spite of progress, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence; stresses that most societies still struggle to provide women and girls with equal rights under the law and equal access to education, healthcare, decent work, equal pay, and political and economic representation; expresses concern

over the widespread ongoing attacks on women's rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the legislation that in many parts of the world restricts these rights; highlights that female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage are among the most widespread of human rights violations; expresses concerns that women expressing a faith or belief are doubly vulnerable to persecution; welcomes the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative on ending violence against women and girls and calls for it to be reinforced;

9. Stresses that respecting and promoting the rights of the child, fighting all kinds of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, trafficking and exploitation of children, including forced marriages and the recruitment or use of child soldiers in armed conflict, and providing children with care and education are crucial issues for the future of humanity; supports, in this respect, the monitoring and reporting mechanism established with UN Security Council Resolution 1612 on children and armed conflict;
10. Stresses the importance of fully considering the specific needs of persons with disabilities; calls for the EU to incorporate the fight against disability discrimination into its external action and development aid policies, along with the fight for equal access to the labour market and access to education and training, as well as to promote solutions that make it easier for persons with disabilities to operate within society;
11. Draws attention to instances of persecution and discrimination related to ethnicity, nationality, social class, caste, religion, belief, language, age, sex, sexuality and gender identity, which remain rife in many countries and societies; is seriously concerned at the increasingly intolerant and hate-filled responses targeting people who are the victims of these human rights violations; calls for the persons responsible for those violations to be held to account;
12. Notes that the number of people forcibly displaced in 2018 exceeded 70 million, including 26 million refugees, 41 million internally displaced persons and 3.5 million asylum seekers<sup>1</sup>; notes, in addition, that there are some 12 million stateless people worldwide; takes the view that wars, conflicts, terrorism, violence, political oppression, persecution on account of religion or belief, poverty, and water and food insecurity fuel the risks of new conflicts and the further displacement of populations; recognises that the environmental consequences of climate change, such as more limited access to safe drinking water, may exacerbate the displacement of populations;
13. Stresses that the climate emergency and mass biodiversity loss constitute major threats to population; recalls that the fundamental human rights to life, health, food and safe water are at risk without a healthy environment; draws attention to the impact on human rights of environmental devastation, both for the populations concerned, and in respect of the right to the environment, for all of humanity; underlines the essential obligations and responsibilities of states and other decision-makers to comply with the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement to combat climate change, counter its effects, forestall its negative impact on human rights and promote appropriate policies in compliance with human rights obligations; recalls the obligations incumbent on states to protect biodiversity and provide access to effective remedies in cases of biodiversity loss and degradation; expresses its support for nascent legislative efforts at international level in relation to environmental crimes;

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR – Global Trends 2018 report (19 June 2019).

14. Stresses that freedom of speech and expression and media pluralism both online and offline are at the heart of resilient, democratic societies; condemns the misuse of legitimate aims such as counter-terrorism, state security and law enforcement for the purposes of limiting freedom of expression; condemns media propaganda and misinformation against minorities; calls for the establishment of the best possible safeguards against hate speech and radicalisation, disinformation campaigns and hostile propaganda, particularly those originating from authoritarian states and non-state actors such as terrorist groups, by developing a legal framework at both EU and international level for tackling hybrid threats, including cyber and information warfare, while not compromising on fundamental rights; recalls that the media should reflect a plurality of diverse opinions and support and obey the principle of non-discrimination; stresses, in this regard, that persons belonging to minorities should have indiscriminate access to broadcast media, including in their own language;

### ***Making the EU's human rights foreign policy more effective***

15. Recalls the EU's commitment to placing human rights and democracy at the centre of its relations with non-EU countries; stresses, therefore, that the objective of advancing human rights and democracy around the world requires it to be mainstreamed in all EU policies which have an external dimension; calls for the EU to fulfil these commitments and to ensure that its engagement does not inadvertently reinforce authoritarian regimes;
16. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt a new, ambitious, comprehensive and binding Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the next five years; insists that all human rights challenges, including digital rights, environmental rights, the rights of the elderly, sports and human rights, and the rights of migrants be adequately addressed in the future Action Plan; calls for the creation of a strong monitoring mechanism to assess the implementation and impact of the Action Plan; calls on the Member States to take greater ownership of the Action Plan and to report back on its implementation;
17. Notes the importance of its resolutions on breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and of the work of its Subcommittee on Human Rights; strongly recommends that the Commission and the EEAS enhance their engagement with Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights so as to enable it to participate in the future Action Plan and to monitor its implementation; calls on the EEAS to provide Parliament with regular reports on the follow-up actions it has taken on all urgency resolutions and/or the recommendations thereon;
18. Highlights the fact that trade, the EU's policies in this area and human rights can and should reinforce one another, and that the business community has an important role to play in offering positive incentives for promoting human rights, democracy and corporate responsibility; urges the Commission and the EEAS to make effective use of human rights clauses in international agreements, not only via political dialogue, regular progress assessments and recourse to consultation procedures upon request, but also by creating an effective mechanism for monitoring serious human rights violations which might occur through business activities; calls for human rights clauses to be duly enforced and monitored accordingly, including through measurable benchmarks, with the involvement of Parliament, civil society and the relevant international organisations; calls for the establishment of an effective and independent complaints mechanism for groups of citizens and stakeholders who are affected by human rights violations; stresses that the EU and its Member States must prevent any kind of corporate human

rights abuses and the negative impact of business activities;

19. Supports human rights dialogues with non-EU countries as an essential tool for bilateral engagement in the promotion and protection of human rights; recalls that the EU Guidelines on human rights dialogues with third countries outline a number of criteria for opening a dialogue, including ‘the extent to which the government is willing to improve the situation, the degree of commitment shown by the government in respect of international human rights conventions, the government’s readiness to cooperate with United Nations human rights procedures and mechanisms as well as the government’s attitude towards civil society’; calls for the EEAS to carry out a regular assessment of each dialogue, as envisaged by the aforementioned guidelines, and to ensure that if tangible progress has not been made, the EU should adjust its aims and reconsider its approach; calls on the Commission and the EEAS, with stronger involvement of civil society groups and relevant international organisations, to join forces to address human rights and related obligations in dialogues or negotiations in any political and economic areas, with the governments of non-EU countries, in order to reinforce the impact of human rights dialogues; recommends that the concerns being voiced about the human rights situation in those countries be heeded and that appropriate action be taken, including by raising individual cases in the context of human rights dialogues; calls for a more active involvement of Parliament, when drawing up the agendas of the human rights dialogues; stresses that country strategies on human rights (HRCs) and their annual implementation reports constitute an essential tool for ensuring policy consistency, identify key strategic priorities, define long- and short-term objectives, and set out concrete actions to advance human rights; reiterates its call for MEPs to be given access to the content of HRCs; welcomes civil society seminars preceding human rights dialogues and urges that their conclusions be followed up on, with the dedicated involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs);
20. Issues a strong call for the EU to consistently address discrimination by making best use of the EU human rights toolbox, including through dialogue, by issuing condemnations and by supporting civil society and joint initiatives at UN level, in line with the EU’s newly adopted guidelines on non-discrimination in external action and the UN Guidance Tool on descent-based discrimination, published in 2017;
21. Strongly supports the work and efforts of the EU Special Representative for Human Rights (EUSR) in protecting and promoting human rights around the world; underlines the important objective in the EUSR’s mandate to enhance the EU’s effectiveness in this area; calls on the EUSR to act upon his mandate to serve to enhance the EU’s endeavours to strengthen democracy; insists on its request for the EUSR’s mandate to be reviewed so as to make the EUSR permanent and more accountable, and for it to be endowed with own-initiative powers, adequate resources and the ability to speak publicly in order to report on the achievements of visits to third countries and communicate the EU’s positions on human rights topics; reiterates its call for greater transparency on the activities and missions of the EUSR and insists that his regular reports to the Council are also shared with Parliament; welcomes the expansion of the EUSR’s mandate to include promoting support for international criminal justice and expects the EUSR to be particularly active in this field;
22. Welcomes the efforts by the EEAS and the Commission to continuously strengthen EU officials’ awareness on human rights; welcomes the fact that human rights focal points and liaison officers on HRDs are now present in all EU Delegations; calls on the EEAS to issue Parliament with a detailed report on the completion of this network of focal

points in order to evaluate it and ensure it is implemented consistently across all EU Delegations; calls on all EU Delegations and their respective focal points on human rights to consistently abide by their obligation to meet with HRDs, visit detained activists, monitor their trials and advocate for their protection on the ground;

23. Recognises the progress made in terms of the procedure and format of the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2018, but expects the Council and the VP/HR to take even greater account of the positions expressed by Parliament in its relevant resolutions and/or recommendations in order to ensure deeper and more effective interaction between the EU institutions on human rights issues; asks the Council to continue its efforts to finalise these annual reports earlier in the year; encourages the Council to ensure that the adoption of the next annual report is based on an adequate consultation process;

### ***Developing solutions to promote and protect human rights and democracy***

#### *Democratic governance and enabling space for civil society*

24. Calls for the EU and the Member States to continue to closely monitor developments that negatively affect governance and civil society space worldwide, without exception, and to systematically respond, using all appropriate means, to policies and legislative changes led by authoritarian governments that are aimed at undermining governance based on fundamental democratic principles and at shrinking civil society space; is of the opinion that there should be greater synergies between the Commission, the EEAS and Parliament on this matter; welcomes the invaluable assistance provided to civil society organisations worldwide under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which remains the EU's flagship tool for implementing its external human rights policy; calls for funding to civil society and human rights under the successor to the EIDHR to be further enhanced; stresses that in 2018, hundreds of peaceful civil society demonstrators were arrested, subjected to ill treatment and arbitrary detention, and forced to pay fines as a result of their trials;

#### *EU approach to conflicts and accountability for human rights violations*

25. Stresses the link between the rise in human rights violations and widespread impunity and the lack of accountability in those regions and countries devastated by conflicts or characterised by politically motivated intimidation, discrimination, harassment and assault, abduction, violent policing, arbitrary arrests, cases of torture, and killings; calls on the international community to support actions aimed at combating impunity and promoting accountability, especially in those regions and countries where the dynamics of impunity reward those who bear the greatest responsibility and disempower victims; stresses, moreover, that minorities and marginalised groups are often particularly impacted by conflicts;
26. Recalls its resolutions denouncing specific responsibilities for conflicts that in 2018 caused hundreds of child casualties in the course of deliberate attacks against civilian populations and humanitarian infrastructures; calls on all EU Member States to strictly comply with the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and, in particular, to stop all transfers of arms or surveillance and intelligence equipment that can be used by governments to suppress human rights, especially in the context of armed conflicts; insists on the need for full transparency and regular reporting by EU Member States on their arms transfers; recalls its resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed

drones<sup>1</sup>; expresses its grave concern over the use of armed drones outside the international legal framework; calls further 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; urges the VP/HR to ban the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons, which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention;

27. Strongly condemns all heinous crimes and human rights violations committed by state and non-state actors, including against citizens peacefully exercising their human rights; calls for the EU and its Member States to use all their political weight to prevent any act that could be considered a 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, to assist the victims and to support stabilisation and reconciliation processes; calls on the international community to develop instruments to minimise the warning-response gap in order to prevent the emergence, re-emergence or escalation of violent conflicts, such as the EU's early warning system; calls on the EEAS and the Commission to include an ambitious strategy on the fight against impunity in the third EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy; highly recommends the establishment of a European observatory on prevention, accountability, and combating impunity; reiterates its call for the VP/HR to appoint an EU Special Representative on International Humanitarian Law and International Justice with a mandate to promote, mainstream and represent the EU's commitment to the fight against impunity;
28. Welcomes the EU's efforts to promote the universality of the Rome Statute in 2018, when the 20th anniversary of its adoption was celebrated, and reaffirms its unwavering support for the International Criminal Court (ICC); notes that international law is currently under serious pressure; is concerned that, because of the ICC's broad jurisdiction, of the 193 UN member states, only 122 are members of the ICC and only 38 have ratified the Kampala Amendment, which gives the ICC powers to prosecute the crime of aggression; calls for the EU and its Member States to encourage all UN member states to ratify and implement the Rome Statute, and is dismayed at the withdrawals from the Statute and the threats to do so; calls also on all the signatories of the Rome Statute to coordinate and cooperate with the ICC; calls for the EU and its Member States to systematically support the ICC's examinations, investigations and decisions, and to take the necessary measures to prevent cases of non-cooperation with the ICC; calls for financial support for organisations that collect, keep and protect evidence – digital or in other formats – of the crimes committed by any parties to conflicts, in order to facilitate their prosecution at an international level; calls on the EU Member States and the EU Genocide Network to support the UN investigative team in collecting, preserving and storing evidence of crimes currently being committed or very recently perpetrated so that they are not lost; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to explore ways and present new tools to help the victims of violations of international human rights law and of international humanitarian law to access international justice and obtain remedy and reparation, including through building the capacity of non-EU countries to apply the principle of universal jurisdiction in their domestic legal systems;
29. Welcomes the initial exploratory discussions, and calls for their continuation, within the Council regarding the establishment of a global EU human rights sanctions mechanism, the so-called 'Magnitsky List', allowing for targeted sanctions against individuals

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 285, 29.8.2017, p. 110.

complicit in serious human rights violations, as called for by Parliament on many occasions, in particular in March 2019; calls on the Council to speed up its discussions in order to adopt the necessary legislation, set up this mechanism, and adequately fund it as soon as possible; stresses the importance for this system to comply with the EU judicial review mechanism; also stresses, as an example to follow, the enactment by some EU Member States of laws that provide for sanctions to be imposed on individuals deemed responsible for human rights abuses;

30. Calls on the VP/HR and the Council to pay special attention to the human rights situation in illegally occupied territories; reiterates that illegal occupation of a territory or part of it is an ongoing violation of international law; underlines the responsibility of the occupying power towards the civilian population under international humanitarian law; regrets the reinstatement of representatives from a country occupying the territory of another state to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;

#### *Human rights defenders (HRDs)*

31. Stresses the invaluable and essential role that HRDs play at the risk of their own lives, in particular women's human rights defenders; underlines the need for strong EU coordination on engagement with third-country authorities regarding HRDs; highlights that 2018 marked the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders; recommends strengthening cooperation between the EU institutions and the Member States, enabling them to provide continuous support and protection to HRDs; values the 'protectdefenders.eu' mechanism, which was established to protect HRDs at grave risk, and calls for it to be strengthened;
32. Underlines the need for a strategic, visible, and impact-oriented EU approach to protecting HRDs; calls on the Council to issue annual Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on EU action to promote and protect HRDs in the EU's foreign policy; calls on the Council and the Commission to establish a coordinated procedure for granting visas to HRDs, and where appropriate, facilitating temporary shelter; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure sufficient funding for the protection of HRDs in the relevant thematic programmes of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), and to ensure it is accessible and reaches those most in need, who are most marginalised; calls on the Commission to make full use of this instrument in the future and insists that EU Delegations and Member States should increase their funding and capacity for emergency protection and support for HRDs at risk; condemns the continued imposition of travel bans on human rights activists who wish to attend sessions of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and other international institutions; calls on the governments concerned to lift them;

#### *Women's rights and gender equality*

33. Strongly supports the EU's strategic engagement for gender equality and its ongoing efforts to improve the human rights situation of women and girls, in line with the 2030 SDGs; emphasises that gender equality should be a key priority in all working relations, policies and external actions of the EU, as it is a principle for the EU and its Member States itself according to the Treaties; calls for the EU to adopt a comprehensive Gender Equality Strategy once the strategic engagement expires; calls on the Commission to prepare and adopt a communication to renew the Gender Action Plan after 2020, as an important EU tool to contribute to women's and girls' rights worldwide; calls on Member States to endorse the Gender Action Plan III in Council conclusions; calls on

the Commission and the EEAS to further contribute to gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment by working closely with international organisations, non-EU countries and civil society, in order to develop and implement new legal frameworks regarding gender equality;

34. Stresses the alarming increase of violence against women and girls; condemns all forms of gender-based, physical, sexual and psychological violence; expresses grave concerns over the escalated use of torture in the form of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war; stresses that sexual crimes and gender-based violence are considered by the Rome Statute as war crimes, crimes against humanity or constitutive elements of genocide or torture; urges countries to step up their legislation in order to tackle these issues; reiterates its call on the EU Member States and members of the Council of Europe that have not done so, to ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention as soon as possible; calls for further action to eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices targeting women and girls, such as forced or early marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual violence as well as forced religious conversion; supports the continuation of the joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative; calls on the EU Delegations to ensure data collection on violence against women, to draw up country-specific recommendations, and to promote protective mechanisms and support structures for victims;
35. Affirms that access to health is a human right, that sexual and reproductive health and rights are grounded in basic human rights, and are essential elements of human dignity; points out that inadequate access to vital goods and social services (for example water, nutrition, health, education and sanitation), as well as difficulties in gaining access to sexual and reproductive health represent an unacceptable violation of human rights; condemns the violations of women's sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR), including the denial of access to relevant services; emphasises that proper and affordable healthcare, including mental healthcare such as psychological support, and universal respect for and access to SRHR and education should be guaranteed for all women, and that they should be able to make free and responsible decisions about their health, including sexual and reproductive health; notes that these services are important in saving women's lives and reducing infant and child mortality; finds it unacceptable that women's and girls' SRHR remain a battleground, including in multilateral settings; stresses that women and girl victims of armed conflicts have the right to receive the necessary medical care; emphasises the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, in peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and post-conflict reconstruction operations and in the promotion of human rights and democratic reforms;
36. Calls for the EU to work with other countries to step up their actions in the fields of education, healthcare and social services, data collection, funding and programming, to better prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence worldwide; points out that education is an essential tool for combating discrimination and violence against women and children; calls for measures to facilitate the access of women and girls to education and the labour market, and for particular attention to be paid to the gender balance in filling managerial positions by companies; also calls for the inclusion of girls' education in EU agreements with developing countries;

#### *Rights of the child*

37. Underlines the fact that minors are often exposed to specific forms of abuse, such as child forced marriage, child prostitution, use of child soldiers, genital mutilation, child

labour and child trafficking, especially in humanitarian crises and armed conflicts, and therefore require enhanced protection; draws particular attention to stateless children, migrant and refugee children; calls for the EU to cooperate with non-EU countries to end early, child and forced marriages by making 18 the legal minimum age for marriage, requiring the verification of the age of both spouses and of their full and free consent, introducing compulsory marriage records, and ensuring compliance with those rules; calls for new EU initiatives to promote and protect the rights of the child, including to prevent and combat child abuse in the world, to rehabilitate and reintegrate children affected by conflict, especially those who are victims of extremist groups, and children that suffer from multiple and intersectional discrimination, and to provide them with a sheltered, family- and community-based environment as the natural context for their lives, in which care and education are fundamental; calls for the EU to initiate an international movement to advocate the rights of the child, inter alia by organising an international conference on the protection of children in fragile environments; reaffirms the urgent need for universal ratification and effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Child and its Optional Protocols;

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

38. Condemns the arbitrary detention, torture, persecution and killings of LGBTI persons; notes that in a number of countries around the world, LGBTI persons continue to face persecution and violence based on their sexual orientation; regrets the fact that many countries still criminalise homosexuality, including some which provide for the death penalty for homosexuality; believes that practices and acts of violence against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation should not go unpunished, and must be eradicated; calls for the implementation of EU Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons;

#### *Rights of persons with disabilities*

39. Welcomes the ratifications of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; reiterates the importance of effective implementation by both the EU Member States and the EU institutions; stresses the importance of non-discrimination and the need to credibly mainstream the principle of universal accessibility, and to ensure all the rights of persons with disabilities throughout all the relevant EU policies, including development policy; calls for the creation of a global centre of excellence for future-proof and entrepreneurial skills for people with disabilities;

#### *The fight against caste discrimination*

40. Notes with great concern the scale and consequences of caste hierarchies, caste-based discrimination and the perpetuation of caste-based human rights violations, including the denial of access to the legal system or employment, continued segregation, poverty and stigmatisation, and caste-related barriers to the exercise of basic human rights and facilitation of human development; reiterates its call for the development of an EU policy on caste discrimination, and calls for the EU to act on its own grave concerns over caste discrimination; calls for the adoption of an EU instrument for the prevention and elimination of caste-based discrimination; reiterates its call for the EU and its Member States to intensify efforts and support initiatives at the UN and delegation levels to eliminate caste discrimination; notes that such initiatives should include promotion of specific indicators, disaggregated data and special measures to tackle caste

discrimination in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and observance of the new UN Guidance Tool on descent-based discrimination and support to states;

### *Indigenous Peoples*

41. Is deeply concerned that Indigenous Peoples face widespread and systematic discrimination and persecution worldwide, including arbitrary arrests and killings of human rights defenders, forced displacement, land grabbing and the violation of their rights by corporations; notes that most Indigenous Peoples live below the poverty threshold; calls on all states to include Indigenous Peoples in the decision-making process on strategies for tackling climate change; calls on countries to ratify the provisions of ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples;

### *Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief (FoRB)*

42. Stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief (more commonly known as freedom of religion or belief – FoRB), which includes the rights not to believe, to espouse theistic, non-theistic, agnostic or atheistic views and the right to apostasy and not to profess any religion must be guaranteed all over the world and preserved unconditionally; urges the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to step up advocacy in relation to FoRB, and to initiate dialogue with states and representatives of civil society and faith, non-confessional, humanistic and philosophical groups and churches, religious associations and communities in order to prevent acts of violence, persecution, intolerance and discrimination against persons on the grounds of thought, conscience, philosophical opinions, and religion or belief; deplores anti-conversion and blasphemy laws, which effectively limit and even deprive religious minorities and atheists of their freedom of religion or belief; also urges the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to fully implement the EU Guidelines on FoRB;
43. Calls for the EU and its Member States to continue to forge alliances and enhance cooperation with a broad range of countries and regional organisations, in order to deliver positive change on freedom of religion or belief, especially in conflict areas where faith groups, such as the Christians in the Middle East, are most vulnerable; fully supports the EU practice of taking the lead on thematic resolutions in the UN Human Rights Council, and on FoRB in the UN General Assembly;
44. Supports the work and efforts of the Special Envoy for the promotion of FoRB outside the EU; reiterates its calls on the Council and Commission to carry out a transparent and comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness and added value of the position of the Special Envoy in the process of the renewal and reinforcement of their mandate and position by the Commission; insists that their work be adequately resourced to enhance the EU's effectiveness in this area; reminds the Council and Commission of the need to adequately support, in permanent consultation with religious and philosophical organisations, the institutional mandate, capacity and duties of the Special Envoy for the promotion of FoRB outside the EU, by exploring the possibility of a multi-year term subject to annual review, and by developing working networks within all relevant EU institutions, in line with its resolution of 15 January 2019 on the EU Guidelines and the mandate of the EU Special Envoy on the promotion of FoRB outside the EU;

### *Freedom of expression, media freedom and the right to information*

45. Strongly denounces and condemns the killing, kidnapping, imprisonment and intimidation of and attacks against, including by physical and judicial means, many journalists, bloggers and whistle-blowers, and the threats that they faced in 2018; calls for the EU to make every effort to protect them in the future; recalls that freedom of expression and freedom of the media foster a culture of pluralism, and are essential components of the foundations of a democratic society; recalls that journalists should be free to exercise their profession without fear of prosecution or imprisonment; emphasises that any restriction on the exercise of freedom of expression and media freedom, such as the removal of online content, must be exceptional, with special attention to the principles of necessity and proportionality, and must be prescribed by law and judged in a court of law;
46. Calls for the EU, its Member States, and its EUSR in particular, to pay particular attention to the protection of freedom of expression and the freedom, independence and pluralism of the media worldwide, to better monitor all forms of restrictions – online or offline – on freedom of expression and the media, to systematically condemn such restrictions, and to use all diplomatic means and tools available to put an end to them; stresses the importance of condemning and combating hate speech and incitement to violence online and offline as a direct threat to the rule of law and the values embodied in human rights; supports initiatives that help draw a distinction between fake news or propagandistic misinformation and information gathered as a part of genuine and independent journalism work; emphasises the importance of ensuring effective and systematic implementation of the EU Guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline, and of regularly monitoring their impact;

*Death penalty, torture and other forms of ill-treatment*

47. Condemns the use of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and the death penalty, which continue to be applied in many countries all over the world; is concerned about the number of convictions and executions for reasons that do not fit the definition of serious crimes, which is contrary to international law; calls on countries that have not already done so to establish an immediate moratorium on the death penalty as a step towards its abolition; calls for the EU to intensify its efforts to eradicate torture and the death penalty; calls for the EU and its Member States to be particularly vigilant with regard to the states threatening to restore the death penalty in law or in fact; calls for a stop to the global trade in goods used for torture and capital punishment;
48. Considers it essential to combat all forms of torture and ill-treatment, including psychological abuse, of persons in prison or other places of detention, to step up efforts to ensure compliance with relevant international law in this area, and to ensure compensations for victims; expresses its grave concern at the state of prisons and detention conditions in a number of countries, including access to care and medicines, particularly for diseases such as hepatitis or HIV; recalls that the refusal to allow prisoners access to healthcare constitutes ill-treatment or even torture, and may be failure to assist a person in danger; welcomes the EU's revised policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment; calls on the Member States to mainstream safeguards against torture and other ill-treatment in all their actions and policies;
49. Welcomes the establishment of the EU Anti-Torture Coordination Group in 2017; welcomes, in this regard, the updates to EU legislation called for in its legislative resolution of 29 November 2018 on trade in certain goods which could be used for

capital punishment, torture or other cruel treatment or punishment<sup>1</sup>; highlights the importance of further strengthening cooperation with UN mechanisms, regional bodies and relevant actors, such as the ICC, CSOs and HRDs, in the fight against torture and other ill-treatment;

### *Business and human rights*

50. Reaffirms that the activities of all companies, whether operating domestically or across borders, must be in full compliance with international human rights standards; reaffirms moreover, the importance of promoting corporate social responsibility; underlines the importance of European enterprises playing a leading role in promoting international standards on business and human rights; recalls the responsibility of businesses in ensuring that their operations and supply chains are not implicated in human rights abuses, such as forced and child labour, violation of indigenous peoples' rights, land grabbing, threats and attacks on human rights defenders, and environmental degradation;
51. Stresses the need to establish an international binding instrument to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other companies; calls for a legislative proposal on corporate human rights and due diligence to prevent abuses in the global operations of companies, and to enhance access to judicial remedy for victims of corporate misconduct; stresses the importance for all countries to fully implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and calls on those EU Member States that have not yet adopted national action plans on business rights to do so as soon as possible; encourages the EU and its Member States to participate constructively in the work of the UN Intergovernmental Working Group on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights; considers this to be a necessary step forward in the promotion and protection of human rights;
52. Urges the Commission to ensure that the projects supported by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) are in line with EU policy and commitments on human rights and that there are accountability mechanisms for individuals to make public violations related to the activities of the EIB and EBRD; considers that an EU interinstitutional task force on business and human rights would be a useful additional tool; calls on the private sector, in particular financial, insurance and transport companies, to provide their services to humanitarian actors carrying out relief activities, in full compliance with humanitarian exemptions and exemptions provided for in EU legislation; welcomes the establishment of the Independent Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise;
53. Takes positive note of the GSP+ preference system as a means of stimulating the effective implementation of the 27 core international conventions on human rights and labour standards; acknowledges that global value chains contribute to enhancing core international labour, environmental and social standards, and represent an opportunity in terms of sustainable progress, particularly in developing countries, and in countries at greater risk due to climate change; stresses that non-EU countries benefiting from the GSP+ preference system should show progress on all aspects of human rights; notes that enhanced and effective monitoring mechanisms could reinforce the leverage potential of trade preference schemes in response to human rights violations; supports the

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0467.

introduction and the implementation of human rights conditionality clauses in international agreements between the EU and non-EU countries, including in trade and investment; calls on the Commission to systematically monitor the implementation of these clauses to ensure that they are respected by the beneficiary countries, and to report regularly to Parliament on the respect of human rights by the partner countries;

#### *New technologies and human rights*

54. Stresses the importance of elaborating an EU strategy to put new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, at the service of people, and to address the potential threat of new technologies to human rights, including disinformation, mass surveillance, fake news, hate speech, state-sponsored restrictions and the abuse of artificial intelligence; further stresses the specific threat that these technologies might pose in controlling, restricting and undermining legitimate activities; underlines the importance of striking the right balance between human rights, in particular the right to privacy and other legitimate considerations such as security or the fight against crime, terrorism and extremism; expresses its concern at the increasing employment of certain dual-use cyber-surveillance technologies against human rights activists, journalists, political opponents and lawyers;
55. Calls for the EU and the Member States to engage with third country governments to end repressive cybersecurity and counter-terrorism legislation practices and legislation; recalls the obligation to annually update Annex I to Council Regulation (EC) No 428/2009<sup>1</sup>, which lists dual-use items for which authorisation is required; stresses the need for effective digital cooperation between governments, the private sector, civil society, academic and technical communities, the social partners and other stakeholders to ensure a secure and inclusive digital future for all, in line with international human rights legislation;

#### *Migrants and refugees*

56. Stresses the urgent need to tackle the root causes of migration flows such as wars, conflicts, authoritarian regimes, persecution, irregular migration networks, human trafficking, smuggling, poverty, economic inequality and climate change, and to find long-term solutions based on respect for human rights and dignity; underlines the necessity of creating legal channels and paths for migration, and of facilitating voluntary returns, where possible, including in line with the principle of non-refoulement;
57. Calls for the external dimension of the refugee crisis to be addressed, including by finding sustainable solutions to conflicts through building cooperation and partnerships with the third countries concerned; believes that compliance with international refugee and human rights law is an important building block for cooperation with third countries; stresses the need to take genuine steps, in line with the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees, to enhance refugee self-sufficiency, to expand access to third country solutions, to improve human rights conditions in migration management, especially of countries of origin or transit, and for safe return in dignity; calls for the EU and its Member States to be fully transparent about cooperation policies with and the allocation of funds to third countries for cooperation on migration; considers it important that resources for development and cooperation are not diverted from their

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

objectives, and must not benefit those responsible for human rights violations; calls for the EU to support the UNHCR initiative to end statelessness by 2024 within and outside the EU;

58. Denounces the deaths of refugees and migrants and the human rights abuses they endure in the Mediterranean Sea; also denounces the attacks against NGOs that help these people; calls for the EU and its Member States to increase humanitarian assistance for forcibly displaced persons; calls for the EU and its Member States to provide support for refugee-hosting communities; insists that the implementation of the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees must therefore go hand in hand with the implementation of the UN's 2030 Agenda as set out in the SDGs, as well as with increased investment in developing countries;
59. Stresses that the climate emergency and mass biodiversity loss constitute a major threat to human rights; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to work towards a EU strategy to protect a healthy environment by working closely with third countries and international organisations such as the UNHCR, which has recently launched a joint strategy with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); underlines that the UN estimates that there will be many environmentally-displaced people by 2050; recalls the obligations and responsibilities of states and other bodies responsible to mitigate the effects of climate change and to prevent it from having a negative impact on human rights; welcomes international efforts to promote the integration of environmental issues, natural disasters and climate change with human rights; calls for the EU to participate actively in the international debate on a possible normative framework for protecting 'environmentally and climate-displaced persons';

#### *Democracy support*

60. Stresses that the EU should continue to actively support democratic and effective political pluralism in human rights institutions, independent media, parliaments and civil society in their efforts to promote democratisation, in a context-sensitive manner, while taking into account the cultural and national background of the third countries concerned in order to strengthen dialogue and partnership; recalls that human rights are a fundamental cornerstone of democratisation processes; takes positive note of the European Endowment for Democracy's (EED) consistent engagement in the Western Balkans and in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods of the EU to promote democracy and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms; recalls that the experience gained and the lessons learned from transitions to democracy in the framework of the enlargement and neighbourhood policies could make a positive contribution to identifying the best practices that could be used to support and consolidate other democratisation processes worldwide; recalls that EU enlargement proved to be the most effective tool for supporting democracy, the rule of law and human rights on the European continent, and that the option of EU accession should therefore remain open to the countries that are willing to join and have implemented reforms as stipulated in Article 49 of the TEU; urges the EU to closely follow the implementation of provisions protecting human rights and the rights of persons belonging to minorities throughout all enlargement processes;
61. Welcomes the Council conclusions on democracy of 14 October 2019 as the start of the process of updating and strengthening the EU's approach to strengthening democracy; in this respect, emphasises the role of education on human rights and democratisation as essential tools to consolidate these values both within and outside the EU; stresses the

importance of adopting specific funding rules for EU democracy support programmes taking into consideration the nature of democratic changes; underlines the need to invest in adequate resources to better coordinate democracy support programmes and policy priorities; supports the effort to ensure transparency over the EU aid in this area; commits itself to promoting greater transparency of democratic processes, particularly financing of political- and issue-based campaigning by different non-state actors;

62. Reiterates its positive view of the EU's continued support for electoral processes, and its provision of electoral assistance and support to domestic observers; welcomes and fully supports, in this context, the work of Parliament's Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group; recalls the importance of proper follow-up to the reports and recommendations of election observation missions as a way of enhancing their impact and strengthening the EU's support for democratic standards in the countries concerned; stresses the need to support democracy throughout the electoral cycle by means of long-term, flexible programmes that reflect the nature of democratic change; urges rigorous follow-up of cases of human rights violations against candidates during electoral processes, in particular against those belonging to vulnerable groups or minorities;

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63. 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 74th session of the UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the EU Heads of Delegation.