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TEXTS ADOPTED

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**P9\_TA(2022)0408**

**Promoting regional stability and security in the broader Middle East region**

**European Parliament resolution of 23 November 2022 on promoting regional stability and security in the broader Middle East region (2020/2113(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union, in particular Articles 8 and 21 thereof,
- having regard to Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 February 2022 entitled ‘Implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy – annual report 2021’<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 16 June 2021 entitled ‘CFSP Report – Our priorities in 2021’,
- having regard to the Joint Declaration between the European Union and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) of 17 November 2021 on European Union support to UNRWA (2021-2024),
- having regard to the joint communication by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission of 18 May 2022 on a strategic partnership with the Gulf (JOIN(2022)0013), and to the Council conclusions of 20 June 2022 thereon,
- having regard to UN General Assembly Resolution 66/290 of 10 September 2012 entitled ‘Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome’,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 on women and peace and security,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 335, 13.12.2008, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 342, 6.9.2022, p. 167.

- having regard to the UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 entitled ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’,
  - having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals,
  - having regard to its resolution of 23 October 2020 on gender equality in EU’s foreign and security policy<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0256/2022),
- A. whereas the countries in the broader Middle East region referred to in this report, which encompasses the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, are very diverse; whereas this region is strategic for the EU given its geographical position and common ties and requires a long-term approach and coordinated policy, considering the objectives of the Union to promote the values of peace, security and the protection of human rights in strict compliance with international law; whereas the stability and security of Europe and the broader Middle East region are interdependent, and whereas the security situation in the region is currently characterised by ongoing conflicts with strong regional and extra-regional dimensions, and is both fragile and very concerning;
- B. whereas the Middle East region has been plagued by outbreaks of instability, resulting from both structural geopolitical tensions and persistent internal factors, such as socioeconomic development challenges, weak governance and religious radicalism; whereas numerous countries in the broader Middle East have faced war, instability and social and financial crises; whereas terrorist organisations have exploited the instability and security situation and have caused many civilian deaths; whereas in this troubled context, and in view of historical and neighbourly relations, the EU has a key role to play in helping the region to achieve stability; whereas the EU, as a global player, must be able to assert itself as a constructive partner, drawing on its mediation capabilities to help Middle Eastern countries achieve stability and prosperity;
- C. whereas the influence and role of different EU Member States in the region is very unequal, owing to their specific historic, cultural and socioeconomic ties; whereas all EU Member States share the common objectives of security and stability, as well as promoting human rights and democracy; whereas these differences can sometimes give rise to contradictory or conflicting views in the region’s countries and rival strategies that are deeply detrimental to the EU achieving a more coherent and effective approach; whereas EU policy has been increasingly focused on the issues of migration and asylum, as well as counterterrorism; whereas it is also necessary to focus on the underlying causes of instability in order to provide long-term strategies and solutions for shared challenges;
- D. whereas there are many heated state, ethnic and religious rivalries in the Persian Gulf that will likely not only perpetuate current crises, such as the one in Yemen, but also spread instability across the entire region;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 404, 6.10.2021, p. 202.

- E. whereas the unresolved conflicts in Libya and Syria are a reason for major concern, and hamper the stability of the whole region; whereas third actors , such as Iran, Russia, and Türkiye in Syria, are present in these countries and military and paramilitary groups are involved in these conflicts, such as Russia’s Wagner Group; whereas Yemen is in the midst of a protracted political and humanitarian crisis, which has been exacerbated by the war, and there has been a constant flow of arms into the country; whereas 80 % of the population, 24,1 million people, are in need of humanitarian aid and protection; whereas the war in Yemen is now the largest humanitarian crisis in the world; whereas there are ongoing social and political conflicts in Iraq and Lebanon in which different regional powers are attempting to influence the local population in order to expand their control; whereas these conflicts have the potential to further develop; whereas the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories continues to be a source of instability; whereas conflicts in the region has affected the lives of millions of refugees forced to leave their countries, including around 14 million Palestinians<sup>1</sup>, 7 million Syrians<sup>2</sup>, 2 million Iraqis<sup>3</sup> and 1,7 million Yemenis<sup>4</sup>;
- F. whereas the UNRWA continues to contribute to regional stability and peace; whereas its funding is not adequate for it to fulfil its mandate, which is key for the human development of and humanitarian support for some of the world’s most vulnerable refugees, and therefore the EU’s continued support for the UNRWA is a key element in the EU strategy of contributing to the promotion of security, stability and development in the region;
- G. whereas the US, despite giving lower priority to the region, continues to play a relevant role, including through a direct military and security presence, which has been shrinking, but still plays a decisive role in many countries; whereas Russia has emerged as a military actor in the region following its 2015 intervention to support Syria’s regime;
- H. whereas on 15 September 2020, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain agreed to normalise their diplomatic relations with Israel by signing the so-called Abraham Accords;
- I. whereas the summit of 27 and 28 March 2022 between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and Morocco aiming to create a new regional approach on security and increase their cooperation, which was also attended by the US Secretary of State, paved the way for a new regional approach to security; whereas since 2011, Iran has significantly expanded its influence in the region; whereas at the annual summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Al-Ula in 2021, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain ended their boycott of Qatar after nearly four years;

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<sup>1</sup> Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Achim Steiner, ‘Message from the United Nations humanitarian, refugee, and development chiefs on the situation in Syria and the region’, 10 May 2022.

<sup>2</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘Syria emergency’, updated 15 March 2021.

<sup>3</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘Iraq Refugee Crisis Explained’, 7 November 2019.

<sup>4</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘Yemen Crisis Explained’, 14 July 2022.

whereas in 2021, talks between Saudi Arabia and Iran and high-level dialogues between Iran and the United Arab Emirates contributed to de-escalation in the region;

- J. whereas both Ukraine and Russia are leading exporters of grain and fertilisers for agricultural products for numerous countries in the region that are highly dependent and vulnerable; whereas Russia's war in Ukraine and its blockade of Ukraine's grain is causing shortages of wheat and cereal, and could push up to 49 million people into famine-like conditions; whereas disruptions related to the war are exacerbating already-rising food prices and deepening poverty;
- K. whereas EU Member States continue to export arms to countries in the region; whereas the EU has established a common position that sets out common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment<sup>1</sup>;
- L. whereas countries in the region are key trading partners for the EU and there are important economic ties between the two sides; whereas the ongoing global energy crisis, which has been exacerbated by Russia's war in Ukraine, has led to increased contacts with the GCC and other countries in the region on the import of energy resources into the EU; whereas there is potential for stronger cooperation in other areas, such as the green transition, climate change mitigation and adaption, tourism, better governance, education, culture and human rights; whereas the joint communication on a strategic partnership with the Gulf outlined multiple areas of common interest between the EU, the GCC and other Gulf countries; whereas the Arab Gulf countries have increased their international humanitarian and development aid;
- M. whereas the broader Middle East is among the most affected by climate change worldwide, with temperatures rising twice as fast as the global average; whereas the region's countries face a multitude of environmental challenges, such as desertification, biodiversity loss, pollution in marine and coastal areas, air pollution and water scarcity and quality issues, which will be exacerbated by climate change; whereas the frequency and intensity of sand storms is steadily increasing in the region; whereas climate-induced water shortages, desertification and food insecurity threaten human security and may aggravate existing or trigger new conflicts in the region; whereas increased contact with partners in the region is needed against the backdrop of the ongoing global energy crisis and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine; whereas there is potential for stronger cooperation in other areas such as the green transition, better governance and human rights; whereas the European Green Deal can create channels for constructive cooperation between the EU and countries in the region; whereas the EU will have to import renewable energy to meet its climate targets; whereas in the context of global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and divest from fossil fuels, the countries of the broader Middle East need to diversify their economies, which strongly rely on the extraction and trade of hydrocarbons; whereas in October 2021, the United Arab Emirates pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, Saudi Arabia pledged to achieve net-zero emissions domestically by 2060 and Qatar pledged to achieve a 25 % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030;
- N. whereas problems associated with non-inclusive governance and breaches of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as terrorism, corruption and foreign interference in the region, are worrying and are significant sources of instability

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<sup>1</sup> Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP.

and insecurity; whereas the imprisonment or torture of peaceful political opposition figures, human rights defenders and social activists in several countries across the region has increased in response to legitimate democratic aspirations and is paving the way for further conflict; whereas according to reports, 520 executions were recorded in seven countries in 2021 – Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen – constituting a 19 % increase in comparison to 2020; whereas deeply rooted corruption adversely impacts employment, growth and development and compromise states' abilities to fulfil their obligation to promote, respect and protect the human rights of individuals within their jurisdictions; whereas the world's highest levels of youth unemployment and the imprisonment or torture of political opposition figures and social activists across the region fuel tension and conflict;

- O. whereas the definitions of stability and security are positively related to democratic development and to respect for the rule of law; whereas recent research<sup>1</sup> on political economy confirms that 'there is an economically and statistically significant positive effect of democracy on future GDP per capita', and implies that 'long-run GDP increases by about 20-25 % in the 25 years following a democratization' process; whereas the clampdown on media pluralism and freedom of the press has further destabilised the region, by increasing the promotion of violence and demonising all opposition voices;
- P. whereas according to UNICEF, children and young people (aged 0-24 years) in the Middle East and North Africa currently account for nearly half of the region's population; whereas according to the 2021 Arab Youth Survey, the rising cost of living and other 'kitchen table' issues are seen as top obstacles facing the region, as over one third of young Arabs struggle to make ends meet; whereas hundreds of European children have been held for more than four years in the Al-Hol and Al-Roj detention camps;
- Q. whereas the EU Human Rights guidelines, including EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and the promotion of women's rights and gender equality, should be strengthened and centred at the core of the EU's strategy for the region; whereas women's human rights are being systematically violated and women's rights activists continue to be harassed, intimidated, detained and imprisoned in the region or barred from travelling; whereas honour killings remain prevalent in many countries in the broader Middle East, and many women continue to live in marital captivity; whereas fully including women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts has proven to be beneficial in promoting security and stability globally; whereas across the GCC, in recent years there has been a significant focus on increasing women's representation in the workforce, as well as in municipalities and parliaments;
- R. whereas LGBTI people continue to be victims of repression and violence throughout the region and the death penalty still exists in many countries in the region;
- S. whereas religious and ethnic minorities, including Christians, continue to be persecuted in many Middle Eastern countries, and whereas the full enjoyment of their rights and freedoms should be guaranteed;

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<sup>1</sup> Acemoglu, D. et al., 'Democracy Does Cause Growth', *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 127, No 1, 2019, pp. 47-100.

- T. whereas the recent events in Iran have caused the pre-existing human rights crisis to deteriorate further; whereas following the death of Mahsa Amini, mass protests have erupted throughout the country and the Iranian authorities have reacted with unacceptable repressive measures, in particular aimed at women protesting against abuses and systemic discrimination;

### *Current state of play*

1. Highlights that the current situation in the broader Middle East region is characterised by the persistence of ongoing conflicts, including crippling proxy ones with a regional dimension and crises with multiple sources, which makes the development of a global European strategy particularly complex, as any contribution has to be multidimensional and adapted to the specificities of each situation, while maintaining a coherent regional and international dimension; stresses that any involvement of the EU Member States or other external parties, in particular Russia, must be aimed at resolving the conflicts and increasing security and stability; notes that besides ongoing conflicts, there are latent ones that the EU must take into consideration when establishing its long-term strategy to tackle the underlying causes of instability in the region;
2. Welcomes the EU's efforts to promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights, economic development and fundamental freedoms in the Middle East region and calls for the EU to further encourage each country to carry out political and economic reforms;
3. Stresses that the EU promotes a peace and stability agenda and is ready to cooperate closely and share conflict prevention, mediation and counterterrorism methods, experiences and best practices, both at a bilateral and regional level;
4. Underlines that the EU has its own interests in the Middle East as an area of major attention that affects the security of the EU and its citizens, namely promoting peace, stability and the de-escalation of tensions in the broader region, fighting climate change, cooperating on the production of clean energy, promoting and implementing multilateralism, promoting respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance, increasing prosperity, meeting growing global development and humanitarian needs and promoting global health, stresses that EU security is interdependent with security in the Middle East and that EU funding instruments, such as the European Peace Facility and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, and humanitarian aid and operations directed at the region should make an important contribution to the stability and prosperity of the region; stresses the responsibility of the relevant EU authorities in continuing to ensure financial accountability and transparency based on existing methodology for performance management and reporting system and that no EU funding can be diverted to terrorist organisation or activities;
5. Stresses that global and regional actors, who do not all make their aid conditional on the principles of good governance promoted by the EU, are increasingly stepping up their efforts, especially in the area of military affairs with African countries, and are undermining the multilateral mechanisms that are essential for peacekeeping;
6. Notes that the region has undergone historical changes since the Arab Spring in 2011; stresses however that the instability that has followed has been caused, inter alia, by the

decision of certain authoritarian regimes to use violence against peaceful protests and criticism; considers the increased polarisation counterproductive for the EU's goals in the area of stability and security; calls for the EU to foster multilateralism and regional integration in the broader Middle East through the EU-GCC institutional partnership and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, including strong inter-parliamentary relations; encourages the EU in parallel to enhance its bilateral discussions and partnerships with all stakeholders seriously committed to bringing peace and stability to the region;

7. Highlights the important role the EU could play in cooperating closely with partners in the region, including civil society, peaceful opposition voices, unions and the business community, at bilateral, regional and international level to help form a collective response to achieve stabilisation and development, which is key to fostering stability; commends, in this sense, the efforts of regional actors, such as Iraq, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar, to promote constructive intra-regional diplomatic engagement, including through such initiatives as the 2021 Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership and normalisation talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia facilitated by Iraq; calls for the EU to support these diplomatic efforts wherever possible and to encourage regional ownership and responsibility for de-escalating tensions; calls, therefore, for cooperation with regional organisations, such as the GCC and the Arab League, to be enhanced;
8. Welcomes the joint communication on a strategic partnership with the Gulf to promote wide-ranging cooperation with the GCC countries in different areas; considers the communication an important step in acknowledging the Arab Gulf countries' role in the region and putting inter-regional relations between the EU and the Gulf on a new footing; believes the communication would have benefited from developing policies aimed at overcoming the existing lack of trust between different stakeholders in the Gulf, including the GCC, Iraq and Iran; considers that the EU should support issue-oriented cooperation between regional actors on common challenges, such as climate change, natural disasters, trade and the Sustainable Development Goals, as a means of confidence-building in the region; commends the central role of cooperation in the green transition, however, regrets a lack of more critical engagement vis-à-vis the poor human rights record and problematic foreign and security policy of the countries concerned; invites the EU and its Member States to stress that a closer partnership with Gulf countries should be linked to clear human rights benchmarks for progress, including on accountability for war crimes in Yemen, women's rights, freedom of expression and association, the release of human rights defenders, a moratorium on the death penalty, the rights of migrant workers and alignment in international forums; welcomes the proposal in the joint communication to step up the EU's engagement with the Gulf countries on funding international humanitarian and development aid; calls on the Commission to encourage Gulf donors to channel more of their humanitarian and development aid through multilateral institutions<sup>1</sup>, as their aid is mainly bilateral and only 1-6 % of aid goes to multilateral institutions; recommends that the Commission offer the respective countries assistance in reconsidering their aid objectives, as well as enhancing cooperation and coordination both among them and between them and the EU;
9. Condemns the ongoing violent attacks on the people of Yemen since 2015, which are responsible for thousands of deaths, the destruction of key civilian infrastructure and

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<sup>1</sup> AlMezaini, K., 'Humanitarian Foreign Aid of Gulf States – Background and Orientations', Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Policy Report No 20, January 2021.

widespread famine; recalls that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen and that the crisis can only be resolved sustainably through an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned negotiation process involving all parts of Yemeni society and all parties to the conflict; calls on the EU Member States to suspend the export of arms that are used in the war in Yemen, given the serious risk of violations of international humanitarian law or humanitarian law; condemns the supply of significant volumes of weapons and components by Iranian individuals and entities to the Houthi movement; welcomes the UN-brokered truce announcement of April 2022 in Yemen between the Saudi Arabia-led coalition and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels, and its renewal of June 2022; insists that the truce should be the first step to prepare the ground for credible peace talks between the Yemeni parties, which should lead to an end to the war and one of the world's greatest humanitarian disasters; stresses that the conflict cannot be truly solved without accountability for alleged war crimes; calls on all parties to respect the truce and to engage in good faith negotiations to achieve viable political and security arrangements, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015), the joint implementation mechanisms of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement and the global ceasefire, as called for by UN Security Council Resolution 2532 (2020); calls attention to the humanitarian disaster caused by the war in Yemen, which has been ongoing since 2016; calls on all parties to abide by international humanitarian law and fully engage in the UN-led peace talks;

10. Expresses deep concern about the escalation of tensions in Iraq, including foreign interference, which are posing a threat to the work of crucial state institutions in the country; calls on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and to remain calm, as it is critical for all actors to avoid any actions that could lead to further violence; reiterates the EU's unwavering support for Iraq's security, stability and sovereignty; expresses concern about the situation in Iraq and underlines the deep popular frustration with persistent corruption in the country; encourages the EU and its Member States to contribute to stability in Iraq by supporting post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, as well as accountable institution-building, in order to shield the country from geopolitical rivalries and to bridge widening social divisions; underlines that the destruction of cultural heritage and the looting of works of art and other cultural goods during armed conflicts needs to be addressed in terms of both reconstruction and restitution in order to protect and ensure the integrity of the cultural heritage and identity of societies, communities, groups and individuals; notes the relevance of the EU Advisory Mission in Iraq; underlines, however, that it must reform itself in order to increase its impact on the ground, in cooperation with Iraqi authorities;
11. Recalls that the conflict in Lebanon is a consequence of the political actors' clientelism, coupled with endemic corruption, and that any financial help from the EU must be conditional on a democratic and inclusive government that adopts a clear stance against corruption; is highly concerned about the protraction of the political, economic, financial and social crisis in Lebanon, which continues to cause population-wide suffering; welcomes the parliamentary elections in Lebanon that were held on 15 May 2022 and calls for a swift and inclusive formation of a new government that is mission-driven, credible and accountable and that is free from foreign influence; calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Member States to continue to firmly pressure Lebanon's political representatives towards reform, including by conditioning large-scale structural support on the implementation of real change; calls, in parallel, for the EU and its Member States to



increase humanitarian assistance to the Lebanese people, coupled with support for core public services, grassroots organisations and civil society;

12. Stresses the particular responsibility of the Syrian regime; underlines the particular responsibility of Russia, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, in vetoing UN Security Council resolutions aiming to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis 18 times since 2011; welcomes the April 2021 decision by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to suspend Syria's members from the organisation; recalls that the Syrian civil war is one of the region's most deadly conflict in decades, having caused the deaths of half a million people and having forcibly displaced 14 million Syrians; recalls the human tragedy caused by the displacement of over half of Syria's population internally and as refugees across the region and Europe; stresses the need to end the ongoing occupation of different parts of Syria by regional actors; highlights the need for a resolution to the ongoing conflict in Syria based on democracy and the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity; underlines that this resolution must be reached through dialogue; welcomes all efforts by the EU, its Member States and civil society to document and prosecute crimes against humanity and calls for the EU to intensify efforts to end impunity; notes that since the start of the conflict, none of its main drivers have been resolved, while regional tensions have increased and Syria's economic crisis has further deteriorated, causing terrible civilian suffering; welcomes the EU's financial support to Türkiye, Lebanon and Jordan for hosting Syrian refugees; recalls that Syria is not a safe country of return for the 7 million refugees who have fled repression and conflict since 2011; stresses that ensuring the defeat of Daesh/ISIS remains a top priority for the Global Coalition to defeat Daesh/ISIS, as despite significant setbacks suffered by its leadership in the recent past, Daesh/ISIS continues to conduct attacks and represents an ongoing regional and global threat;
13. Calls on the EU Member States to fulfil their obligation to immediately repatriate their nationals, both the minors and their mothers, who have been detained for more than four years in the Al-Hol and Al-Roj detention camps in the Autonomous Administration for North and East Syria; considers that, in the event that the mothers or fathers bear any criminal responsibility, they should be held accountable upon their return to the Member State;
14. Underlines that a stable, secure, united, and prosperous Libya is a priority for the EU; recommends, in this regard, that the EU remain neutral in the ongoing power struggles in the country, especially after the recent fighting; stresses that the EU should support projects to increase job creation, especially in the Fezzan region, which would play an important role in stabilising the country;
15. Stresses that the EU's long-standing commitment to the relevant UN resolutions and Parliament's previous resolution of 17 February 2022 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy as the EU's position on the Israel-Palestinian conflict and its long-standing commitment for a just and comprehensive solution based on two states; highlights furthermore that, in accordance with international law, illegal settlements impede the establishment of the two-state solution as established policy of the European Union; recalls that peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on a definitive settlement of the conflict based on a solution enabling both countries to live side-by-side in peace and security, based on the 1967 lines, is a prerequisite for stability, among others; expresses again its deep concern over the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and calls for the lifting of all

restrictive measures on the movement of people and goods imposed by Israel on the territory, but which are having a devastating impact on the population; calls on the Commission and the Council to discourage all activities from both sides undermining the two-state solution, such as the expansion of settlements; strongly deplores the continuing violence, acts of terrorism and incitements to violence, which are fundamentally incompatible with advancing a peaceful two-state solution; emphasises the importance of holding Palestinian elections; calls for the EU to pay special attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to its exceptional length and to current perspectives that do not allow for a realistic path towards stability across the Middle East;

16. Acknowledges the normalisation of relations between the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan on the one hand and Israel on the other hand; encourages regional cooperation and supports the normalisation of relations between Israel and the Arab states, promoting the full inclusion of the Palestinian National Authority, in line with EU and US efforts to achieve peace, security and stability in the region and in accordance with the UN framework, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Oslo Accords; calls for this momentum to be used to advance dialogue and cooperation in the region to support the Middle East peace process and the two-state solution, as well as respect for international law; notes that the Abraham Accords are a factor in the reorganisation of inter-state relations in the region and must be taken into account in a European strategy aimed at helping the region to achieve stability; calls on the Commission and the Council to explore, with the respective Arab countries, how their normalisation agreements with Israel can be conducive to the two-state solution;
17. Reaffirms the UNRWA's essential contribution to stability and security in a difficult context of growing humanitarian and development needs, and appeals to the EU and the wider international community to ensure adequate support for the agency, both politically and financially, to ensure the fulfilment of its mandate and in view of the renewal of its mandate by the UN General Assembly in 2022; underlines that EU funding must not be suspended without evidence of misuse;
18. Calls for the EU and its Member States to tackle the consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on global food supply and prices for the stability of the region; calls on the Commission to address, as a matter of priority, the impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on certain countries in the broader Middle East in terms of food security, prioritising those countries most vulnerable because of high import dependency and lack of social security and ensuring that financial support directly benefits the most vulnerable groups; stresses that the conflict in Ukraine could build up inflationary pressures already triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and thus aggravate the food and humanitarian crisis in the most dependent countries of the Middle East;

### ***Stability and security options***

19. Highlights that any form of cooperation must be based on a human security approach and respect for international law, a rules-based world order and the shared objectives of promoting human rights and democracy;
20. Calls on all EU Member States to avoid being dragged into regional rivalries; stresses that, in view of ongoing conflicts and reports of internal repression, arms exports to

certain countries in the Middle East region may be in contravention of the EU's position as set out in Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP; calls for monitoring of arms exports to the region to be ensured through a consultation mechanism among Member States;

21. Deplores the fact that neighbouring countries interfere too often in each other's internal crises and that such interference – whether political or even military in nature – is harmful, causes long-term damage to inter-state relations in the region and prevents conflicts from being resolved; calls on the third countries in the region to refrain from exporting arms to countries affected by internal conflicts or combatants and from intervening militarily in other countries in conflict through regular or paramilitary groups, as such interventions contribute to regional destabilisation, undermine state structures and sponsor a pool of fighters with different ideological orientations; condemns, in this regard, Türkiye's ongoing violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq; also condemns Iran's recent use of ballistic missiles and drone attacks against the Iraqi Kurdistan Region as an unjustified violation of Iraqi sovereignty and territorial integrity; firmly opposes the use of drones in extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings and calls for a commitment to work in the relevant international forums on a global ban; highlights, in particular, the dangers associated with the use of autonomous and remotely operated systems for such operations;
22. Calls for the EU to make full use of its new forms of cooperation and financial support, such as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe and the European Peace Facility, acting in line with the guiding principles already set out and in a way that promotes stability and human development;
23. Welcomes the EU's commitment to establishing a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East, in accordance with the resolution on the Middle East of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and welcomes the EU's promotion of confidence-building measures in support of this process in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner; expresses deep concern about potential nuclear proliferation in the region and calls for the EU and its Member States to activate and step up all diplomatic efforts to avoid it and to put an end to this phenomenon; notes that Israel, as a non-party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has long maintained ambiguity regarding its nuclear status; calls on Israel to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;
24. Condemns, in the strongest terms, Iran's all-out repression against peaceful protesters following the murder, by Iranian authorities, of 21-year-old Mahsa Amini for not abiding by the regime's compulsory dress code; expresses its utmost admiration, respect and support for the women and men who have been peacefully protesting for basic rights and freedoms, such as the right for a woman to not wear a headscarf; welcomes the Council's additional targeted sanctions against top officials in the Iranian regime involved in the crackdown, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the morality police and, in the light of increased online censorship, the Minister of Information; asserts that Parliament should cease holding official meetings with Iranian officials as long as six of its Members are under Iran's targeted sanctions; reiterates its support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, while calling for a more comprehensive agreement on Iran's missile programme; deeply deplores Iran's ongoing

support for the repressive regime in Syria and for Hezbollah in Lebanon, and its export of military drones and missiles to Russia, despite its war of aggression against Ukraine;

25. Notes the strategic dimension of energy cooperation with the Middle East region; underlines the need to diversify the EU's sources of energy and calls on the EEAS and the Commission to conduct an assessment of the implications in the field of security of any agreement to import oil, gas or hydrogen into the EU; underlines that regional stability and prosperity is a key objective of the EU given the region's importance in diversifying EU energy sources; calls for the EU not to merely substitute its gas and oil imports from Russia with hydrocarbon supply from the broader Middle East, but to seize the opportunity of cutting reliance on Russian gas by two thirds before 2022 in order to decrease the EU's overall reliance on fossil fuels and boost investment in energy generation from renewable sources, as well as electricity interconnection; calls for the EU to increase its engagement with the countries of the broader Middle East on the European Green Deal; calls for the EU to encourage and support the region's countries in achieving their climate targets, especially by capitalising on their large renewable energy capacity; considers the region's reliance on the extraction and trade of hydrocarbon a threat to its future stability; calls for the EU to stress the mutual benefits of cooperation in the green transition, notably the advantages of sustainable growth, vis-à-vis their interlocutors in the region; invites the EU to consider setting up a renewable energy partnership with the countries of the broader Middle East;
26. Highlights the need to combat the funding of terrorist organisations and activities; stresses that the EU must help to stop money laundering and stem illicit financial flows by adopting a clear strategy to address the shortcomings in controlling these kind of funds by several states in the region; deplores that the United Arab Emirates has provided a safe haven for Russian oligarchs avoiding EU sanctions on Russia; underlines that the advanced and historical security partnership with the region requires a joint approach towards Russia's aggression against Ukraine and fundamental European interests; equally deplores that EU sanctions on the Syrian regime have been circumvented via Lebanon, Iran and Russia since 2011;
27. Strongly condemns the terrorist attacks by terror groups in the region; calls therefore for the EU and its Member States to make a firm commitment to legitimate governments fighting against jihadist networks; applauds the efforts being made by the Commission and the EEAS to set up a network of experts in the field of counterterrorism among the EU delegations in several countries in the region and to provide tailored support as requested by several governments; calls for more systematic cooperation in preventing and combating radicalisation and terrorism through targeted, tailor-made and regularly assessed civilian programmes; applauds the efforts being made by the Commission, and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments in particular, to set up programmes to develop partnerships with several countries in the region to combat radicalisation and terrorism; considers that such tailor-made programmes, supported by material and financial resources suited to the specific needs of the recipient countries, can be an effective instrument for security cooperation; calls, however, for an in-depth assessment to be made of the effectiveness of these projects and for it to be ensured that service providers, often from Member State agencies, provide training that is appropriate and adapted to the needs indicated by the host countries and based on genuine professional expertise;

28. Welcomes the Council's adoption of the Magnitsky Act as an important EU instrument to sanction violators of human rights; calls for the preparation of restrictive measures against Iranian officials involved in the grave human rights violations against Iranian human rights defenders, prisoners of conscience and those peacefully protesting in the country;

### *Citizens and human rights*

29. Highlights that people-to-people contacts and cooperation in fields such as trade education, science and culture play an important role in the region and can make a key contribution to regional stability and the bridging of divides both with the EU and among the different states; welcomes, in this context, the proposal presented by the Commission for visa exemptions for citizens of Kuwait and Qatar; calls on the Commission to swiftly engage in technical discussions to ensure the fulfilment of relevant criteria in view of ultimately achieving visa exemptions for citizens of Kuwait and Qatar; calls on the Commission to facilitate access to the Erasmus+ programme for students from the region;
30. Underlines the importance of a constant and growing EU political and diplomatic presence in the region in promoting strategic political dialogue and fostering exchanges between countries in the region in order to promote stability; calls for the EU and its Member States to increase diplomatic and political relations for democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as demanded by peaceful popular movements across the Middle East and North Africa region;
31. Notes that the EU and its Member States are currently involved in various military operations and cooperation in the region: EU Naval Force Somalia Operation ATALANTA to protect World Food Programme vessels and other vulnerable shipping and deter, prevent and repress piracy and armed robbery at sea, EU Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, US Operation Inherent Resolve to support partnered forces until they can independently defeat Daesh/ISIS in designated areas of Iraq and Syria, NATO Operation Sea Guardian for maritime security capacity building, support of maritime situational awareness and maritime anti-terrorism, and the European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz surveillance mission; believes that with these commitments, which respond to collective threats recognised by international law, the EU is making a significant contribution to security in the region; notes, however, that certain Member States' individual involvement in local crises or conflicts is not part of efforts more closely coordinated at European level, for example in Syria or Libya; highlights the need to monitor and evaluate EU presence from a human rights perspective and take into consideration human security criteria;
32. Deplores that leaders in the region have responded with authoritarian restoration to wide spread street protests calling for democratic reforms in numerous Arab countries in 2010, 2011 and later, by further restricting freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of press for citizens and residents; stresses that rule of law and human rights, good governance and anti-corruption bring benefits to people and foster stability in the region; stresses that the prospect of being arbitrarily detained and tortured constitutes an unacceptable form of insecurity for all the citizens of the region and causes more social unrest, mistrust and resentment towards national institutions;

33. Condemns that, throughout the region, human rights defenders, activists, journalists and perceived critics continue to suffer severe and pervasive state repression; calls for EU and Member State delegations on the ground to prioritise human rights issues in their interactions with local authorities and ensure full and scrupulous implementation of all EU guidelines, including the Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, and the action plan on human rights and democracy; calls for the EU to promote tolerance and freedom of religion in the region; calls on the Commission to ensure that the democratic clause in our Association Agreements with third countries is effectively applied whenever there are clear human rights violations; calls for the EU and its Member States to use all multilateral forums at their disposal, including the UN, to renew or establish independent international investigative and reporting mechanisms to address the most serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Middle East, notably torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings; calls, to this end, for the re-establishment of the UN Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen, the establishment of a UN monitoring and reporting mechanism on human rights violations in Egypt and the renewal of the mandate of the UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission in Libya;
34. Expresses deep concern regarding the human rights impact of selling, exporting, updating and maintaining mass surveillance technology in the region, given their dismal track record of misusing technology for domestic repression; condemns the region's abusive use of spyware technology, such as the Pegasus spyware from Israel's NSO Group; underlines that any misuse of surveillance software targeting political leaders, journalists, activists or civil society constitutes a serious violation of fundamental rights and freedoms; stresses the specific threat that new digital technologies pose for human rights defenders, opposition figures, journalists and others in controlling, restricting and undermining their activities; calls for the EU to take initiative to promote an immediate, global moratorium on the sale, transfer and use of spyware technology until the adoption of a robust regulatory framework in this field; calls for the EU and its Member States to ensure full due human rights diligence and proper vetting of any future exports of European surveillance technology and related technical assistance; calls for the EU and its Member States to engage with third country governments to end repressive cybersecurity and counterterrorism legislation practices and legislation; calls on the relevant authorities to release all prisoners of conscience, including journalists and citizen journalists, and to allow a free, independent and diverse media landscape to develop, which will be in the long-term interest of their own stability and security; underlines the importance of tackling disinformation and the spread of fake news in the region and calls for the EU to take appropriate action, in particular by supporting independent media and educational civic initiatives;
35. Calls for the EU to further promote the development of a strong and independent civil society in the region, particularly through engagement with trade unions, women's organisations and environmental organisations; notes that the EU has an interest in engaging with local civil society organisations to better inform, evaluate and diversify its policies towards the countries in the region; highlights that the shrinking space for civil society in several countries poses a threat to regional stability; deeply deplores the sharp deterioration of freedom of association and attacks against civil society organisations, whether through legal or de facto repression and intimidation, in a number of countries in the past decade; strongly reaffirms that defending basic civil and political rights and freedoms is a legitimate field of work for civil society organisations, including in the Middle East;

36. Highlights the gravity of violence against women in the region, particularly in situations of conflict; asks the EU and its Member States to call on their interlocutors in the region to increase the participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction; asks the EU in this regard to lead by example and ensure fair representation of women in its own EU delegations and missions; calls for the EU and its Member States to incorporate UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security in its conflict resolution efforts in the broader Middle East; reiterates its calls for the EU's Gender Action Plan III to be fully implemented and prioritised in every aspect of EU external action; calls for the EU and its Member States to urge all parties to conflict in the region to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict; stresses the importance of supporting local women's organisations as a means of empowerment;
37. Calls on the authorities in the region to uphold the ban on torture under all circumstances, as enshrined in particular in the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which most of the countries in the region have signed and ratified; calls for the abolition of the death penalty throughout the region; regrets that the joint communication on a strategic partnership with the Gulf failed to introduce any human rights safeguards for counterterrorist cooperation with the Gulf States and insists that any cooperation in this field with the Gulf and Middle East countries be subject to the strict application of such safeguards; notes with deep concern the persistent pattern in the countries of the region of adopting vaguely drafted 'anti-terrorism' laws, the implementation of which in practice leads to the criminalisation of legitimate, peaceful dissent; welcomes the holding of bilateral human rights dialogues with Arab Gulf countries, as well as Israel, Jordan and Lebanon; stresses, however, that such dialogues should not be box-ticking exercises and should instead aim to secure concrete commitments and deliverables for specific human rights progress in partner countries; further emphasises that yearly human rights dialogues should not be the only opportunity for human rights talks with the respective countries; calls for the EU and leaders of the Member States to echo concerns and formulate recommendations expressed in the dialogues during all high-level interactions with their counterparts in GCC member states; is deeply concerned about the steady deterioration of the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia, which is reflected in the rise of executions in 2022 and the sentencing of Saudi citizens, such as Salma al-Shehab, to 45 years of prisons for using social media; is deeply concerned about the lack of meaningful accountability for the murder of the Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi;
38. Highlights the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as key promoters of regional stability; stresses the need to further enhance cooperation between the EU and countries in the region in order to fulfil all of the goals, particularly the ones concerning challenges that require global cooperation, such as climate change, by setting out clear strategies, timeframes and goals in these areas; stresses that the best way for the EU to promote security and stability in the region is through tackling underlying causes;

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39. 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 governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretaries-General of the League of Arab States, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the governments and parliaments of their member countries.