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TEXTS ADOPTED

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**P9\_TA(2022)0427**

**Situation of human rights in the context of the FIFA world cup in Qatar**

**European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2022 on the situation of human rights in the context of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar (2022/2948(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Council conclusions of 20 June 2022 on a strategic partnership with the Gulf region,
- 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 entitled ‘A strategic partnership with the Gulf’ (JOIN(2022)0013),
- having regard to the fourth EU-Qatar human rights dialogue held in Brussels on 12 September 2022,
- having regard to the EU-Qatar Cooperation Arrangement of 7 March 2018,
- having regard to the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families of 18 December 1990,
- having regard to the announcement by the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) of 2 December 2010 regarding the selection of Qatar as the venue for the 2022 Football World Cup,
- having regard to Laws Nos 17, 18 and 19 adopted by the Government of Qatar in 2020 on the freedom of movement and on a minimum wage for migrant workers,
- having regard to the Human Rights Watch report of 24 October 2022 entitled ‘Qatar: Security Forces Arrest, Abuse LGBT People’,
- having regard to Article 285 of Qatar’s Criminal Code and to Law No 17 of 2002 on Protection of Community,
- having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on the death penalty,

- having regard to the progress report on the technical cooperation programme between the Government of Qatar and the International Labour Organization (ILO) of 31 October 2022,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Qatar ratified on 21 May 2018,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on Qatar, in particular that of 21 November 2013 entitled ‘Qatar: situation of migrant workers’<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Qatar is the first country in the region that is hosting the FIFA World Cup; whereas in 2010, FIFA awarded Qatar the World Cup without conducting human rights or environmental due diligence or laying down conditions for the protection of migrant workers; whereas Qatar won the FIFA World Cup bidding process amid credible allegations of bribery and corruption that led to judicial investigations;
  - B. whereas in Qatar, there is estimated to be more than 2 million foreign nationals, who make up some 94 % of the workforce; whereas migrants are employed mainly in construction, services and domestic work; whereas it has been reported that worker’s rights have been violated in these sectors; whereas because of this number, Qatar has the highest ratio of migrant workers to domestic population in the world;
  - C. whereas to work in Qatar, many workers were forced into debt by recruitment companies that illegally charged them fees, and many of them suffered wage theft and were subject to gruelling working conditions in extreme heat that exposed them to the risk of illness, injury and death;
  - D. whereas thousands of migrant workers reportedly died and many more were injured during construction works related to the World Cup in Qatar;
  - E. whereas according to the ILO, some European companies have refused to engage in the Joint Committees, whose aim is to bring together management and worker representatives to discuss, prevent and resolve workplace conflicts;
  - F. whereas prior to reforms enacted in Qatar, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) lodged a complaint against Qatar with the ILO in 2014, regarding its non-observance of the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 and the Labour Inspection Convention of 1947; whereas according to the ITUC, laws in Qatar have been changed and the country is continuing to make progress on implementing these changes;
  - G. whereas Qatar is the first country in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to have opened an ILO project office; whereas Qatar has signed a number of partnerships with the ILO, UN organisations and EU Member States, such as a memorandum of understanding with Sweden in January 2020 and with France in March 2022, to improve workers’ rights; whereas the ILO has noted tangible progress in the five years leading up to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, notably in the areas of labour migration governance, the enforcement of

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 436, 24.11.2016, p. 42.

labour law and access to justice, and strengthening the voice of workers and social dialogue; whereas according to the ILO, it is still not legal for migrant workers to join and form unions;

- H. whereas workers in Qatar previously required permission from their employers to change jobs or to leave the country; whereas these requirements constituted the most problematic features of the *kafala* sponsorship system, as they made workers overly dependent on their employers and thus created opportunities for exploitation and forced labour; whereas as a result of these changes, the Ministry of Labour has approved around 420 000 applications by migrant workers to change jobs in the two years since these reforms were introduced; whereas, however, many workers still face obstacles to leaving their jobs and moving to new ones, such as retaliation from their employers;
- I. whereas in March 2021, Qatar became the first country in the Gulf region to adopt a non-discriminatory minimum wage that applies to all workers, of all nationalities, in all sectors, including domestic work; whereas according to the ILO, a total of 13 % of the workforce – 280 000 people – have seen their wages rise to the new minimum threshold since the new legislation was introduced;
- J. whereas the new legislation provides workers in Qatar with greater protection from heat stress;
- K. whereas Qatar has taken steps to improve workers' access to justice by establishing a new online platform for workers to submit complaints and by creating new labour tribunals to settle disputes;
- L. whereas reportedly, however, some of the discriminatory practices related to foreign workers remain in place in Qatar and other GCC countries, such as arbitrary deductions from and non-payment of wages and the withholding of travel documents;
- M. whereas Article 285 of Qatar's Penal Code punishes extramarital sex, including same-sex relations, with up to seven years in prison; whereas arbitrary arrests of LGBTQ+ people have reportedly been based on Law No 17 of 2002 on Protection of Community, which according to Human Rights Watch, allows for provisional detention without charge or trial for up to six months if 'there exist well-founded reasons to believe that the defendant may have committed a crime', including 'violating public morality', which leads to frequent abuse of LGBTQ+ persons; whereas a Qatar FIFA World Cup ambassador shared a publicly homophobic statement; whereas seven football federations, including in Europe, have decided that their players can wear a rainbow-coloured 'OneLove' armband; whereas nevertheless, FIFA decided that players can be given a yellow card or expelled for displaying that armband, as it is as an alleged political statement;
- N. whereas in 2016, FIFA signed up to the UN guiding principles on business and human rights, which compel FIFA to refrain from interfering in human rights and to remedy the negative effects of its activities in the field of human rights;
- O. whereas at a time of insecurity and significant challenges to the rules-based international order both in Europe and in the Gulf region, and as the world faces the consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the urgent imperative of the green and digital transitions, the EU stands much to gain from a stronger and more strategic partnership with the GCC and its member states, including Qatar;

whereas in 2021, diplomatic relations were restored between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt;

- P. whereas the EU-Qatar Cooperation Arrangement signed in 2018 provides a framework for political and sectoral consultations on areas of mutual interest; whereas Qatar is an important partner of the EU and their relations cover a multitude of important areas; whereas Qatar has a key role to play in implementing the European energy security strategy; whereas engagement between the EU and Qatar has intensified significantly, leading to the opening of an EU delegation in Doha in 2022; whereas Qatar was a co-sponsor of a UN General Assembly resolution in February 2022 calling for Russia to withdraw from Ukraine, and voted in favour of resolutions condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine;
- Q. whereas the fourth EU-Qatar Human Rights Dialogue was held on 12 September 2022; whereas the Human Rights Dialogue represents a crucial moment of engagement to advance human rights;
1. Deplores the deaths of thousands of migrant workers and the injuries sustained by workers during the preparations for the World Cup; expresses its condolences to the families of these workers and demands accountability;
  2. Urges Qatar to fully implement its new legislation protecting workers' rights and to dismantle the remaining components of the kafala sponsorship system, such as absconding penalties for workers;
  3. Stresses that the EU is committed to supporting human rights in its relations with Qatar, including issues raised in the context of the FIFA World Cup; is concerned about reports that hundreds of thousands of migrant workers still face discriminatory laws and practices in Qatar; deplores the lack of transparency and the clear lack of a responsible risk assessment that characterised the awarding of the FIFA World Cup to Qatar in 2010; recalls its long-held view that corruption within FIFA is rampant, systemic and deep-rooted, and continues to believe the organisation has seriously damaged the image and integrity of global football, despite attempts to reform it, such as the introduction of human rights requirements;
  4. Urges public authorities, sports federations and organisations to uphold the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law when awarding host status for major sporting events, as well as when choosing sponsors; asks for clear criteria and a charter with strong values to be set in this regard; calls for particular attention to be paid, ahead of hosting such major sports events, to the protection of workers' rights, equality and non-discrimination, and for the establishment of independent and credible environmental impact assessments;
  5. Calls on the EU Member States, particularly those with large national football leagues, such as Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, to exert pressure on UEFA and FIFA for the latter to engage in fundamental reform, including the introduction of democratic and transparent procedures in the awarding of football World Cups and the strict implementation of human rights and sustainability criteria for hosting countries; urgently calls for violations of fundamental rights and human rights, especially evident systematic gender-based violence, to be made into binding exclusion criterion for the awarding of international sporting events in order to protect athletes and fans and to put an end to

sportswashing; calls for the investigations into, and prosecutions for, the awarding of World Cups tainted with corruption to be continued; calls on EU Member States to authorise access to archived information on the attribution of the 2022 World Cup;

6. Acknowledges the important contribution of migrant workers to Qatar's economy and the FIFA World Cup 2022; urges the Qatari authorities to conduct a full investigation into the deaths of the migrant workers, certify the death of migrant workers and provide reparations to families in cases where workers died as a result of their working conditions; supports Qatar's efforts to improve their working conditions and respect for their rights, which the international community has raised; calls for the full implementation of the reforms that have been adopted; welcomes Qatar's cooperation with the ILO; calls on Qatar to continue to engage with the ILO on reforms; underlines that corporate responsibility, including for European companies, necessitates respecting workers' rights and the same standard of due diligence required in the EU;
7. Acknowledges, nevertheless, that the ILO and the ITUC consider the reforms undertaken in Qatar to be an example for the Gulf region;
8. Stresses that victims of human rights violations have legal avenues to seek justice and hold EU-based companies accountable under existing due diligence laws in some Member States; notes the ongoing EU-level work on the directive on corporate sustainability due diligence that will further expand such legal avenues; considers that the relevant companies have failed to fully respect their obligations under Directive 2014/95/EU<sup>1</sup> and those arising from internationally recognised human rights conventions;
9. Strongly condemns the participation of European companies in any migrant workers' rights violations that they have caused, contributed to or benefited from, in particular in the construction and finance sectors, during the preparation of the 2022 FIFA World Cup;
10. Welcomes the fact that, according to the ILO, the Qatari Government has reimbursed USD 320 million to wage abuse victims through the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund; regrets, however, that the fund only became operational in 2018, which resulted in millions of workers and their families remaining excluded from its application; urges Qatar to carry out a thorough review of its data collection and inquiry standards for cases of work-related injuries or death; calls for the fund to be expanded in order to include all victims since the beginning of the works related to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, including all deaths and other abuses of workers' human rights associated with preparations for the World Cup, such as wage theft, injuries and all uninvestigated and uncompensated deaths; calls on FIFA to contribute to a comprehensive remediation programme for workers' families, as compensation for the working conditions from which they suffered;
11. Welcomes the reforms the Qatari authorities have enacted in consultation with the ILO to address the governance of labour migration, to enforce labour law and enable access to justice, and to strengthen the voice of workers and social dialogue; notes that these changes have already improved the working and living conditions of hundreds of thousands of workers; regrets however, that many workers still do not benefit from these reforms, facing obstacles to accessing these improvements and retaliation from their

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2014/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 amending Directive 2013/34/EU as regards disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups (OJ L 330, 15.11.2014, p. 1).

employers; notes its concern about documented and repeated allegations that migrant domestic workers are subjected to abuse and exploitation;

12. Calls on Qatar to abolish any legislation allowing companies to impose recruitment fees on foreign workers;
13. Welcomes Qatar's new legislation against heat on construction sites; calls on all countries of the GCC to adopt similar legislation and to fully implement it;
14. Reiterates its call on Qatar to ratify the UN's International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;
15. Urges Qatar, in cooperation with the ILO, to ensure that all workers and employers can benefit from the *kafala* reforms on labour mobility, to streamline access to justice and the recovery of wages due, and to fully implement the law regarding domestic workers' rights; welcomes, in this regard, the fact that more than 420 000 workers have changed job across Qatar and more than 300 000 have benefited from the introduction of the minimum wage;
16. Points out that the right of association and to self-organisation should be recognised for all workers, including migrants; calls on the Qatari Government to ensure that workers have the right to associate freely without retaliation and enjoy safe and secure access to justice, including by joining and forming national unions;
17. Welcomes the EU's continued engagement on human rights with Qatar, including through the EU-Qatar Human Rights Dialogue, which should be intensified, and through strengthening the institutional set-up for cooperation between the EU and Qatar; stresses that the Qatari National Human Rights Committee has established regular interaction with EU institutions and Qatar has invited the EU Special Representative for Human Rights to visit the country; underlines that migrant workers' rights, labour reforms, women's rights and freedom of expression are recurrent topics;
18. Calls on the Member States and the EU Delegation to Qatar to closely monitor Qatar's social reforms, with special attention to the concrete implementation of its legislation, including by European companies in Qatar, and calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to regularly inform Parliament about the progress of these reforms; welcomes, in this respect, Qatari Minister of Labour Ali Bin Samikh Al Marri's engagement with Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights on the ongoing reforms and remaining gaps to be closed, and notes his commitment to compensate any workers or their families who have not received what is due to them;
19. Calls on the Qatari authorities to continue their efforts to ensure that the National Human Rights Committee fully complies with the principles on the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and that the committee is able to carry out its mandate fully, effectively and independently, including by promoting the pluralism and diversity of its members and staff;
20. Calls on the Qatari authorities to fully enforce existing legislation forbidding torture and mistreatment;

21. Recalls its commitment to the universal abolition of the death penalty and calls on the Qatari authorities to adopt a moratorium on this issue;
22. Urges the Qatari authorities to strengthen measures to ensure gender equality, including by abolishing the remnants of women's guardianship, while stepping up their efforts to achieve the equitable representation of women in the formal labour market, and in the public and political spheres, including the Shura Council and executive bodies, particularly in decision-making positions, and to treat women and men equally as heads of households; calls on the Qatari authorities to amend the Nationality Act to ensure that Qatari women and men have equal rights to pass on their nationality to their children and their foreign spouses; encourages Qatar to ensure that data on violence against women is collected and that all cases of violence against women, including domestic violence, are thoroughly investigated, and that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions;
23. Notes the global trend towards decriminalising consensual same-sex relations; calls on Qatar to repeal Article 285 of its criminal code and all other related laws used to criminalise consensual same-sex sexual relations, and to introduce legislation against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression; deplors the reports of abuses to the LGBTQ+ community by the Preventive Security Department forces of Qatar and their use of Law No 17 of 2002 on Protection of Community, which allows for provisional detention without charge or trial for up to six months; is appalled, in this context, by FIFA's decision regarding the 'OneLove' armbands;
24. Calls on the Qatari authorities to ensure respect for the human rights of all persons attending the 2022 World Cup, including international guests and those living in the country, including for their freedom of religion and belief;
25. Notes and welcomes Qatar's deep concern expressed following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; welcomes Qatar's important decisions to vote in favour of all relevant UN resolutions on the issue, in contrast to various GCC members;
26. Welcomes the cooperation and dialogue between the EU and Qatar, as well as with other Gulf states, which is essential to achieve key objectives of the EU, notably: peaceful and prosperous Gulf and Middle East regions; a strong economic recovery; sustainable, affordable and secure energy supplies; strong collaboration on the green transition; and a strong response to global humanitarian and development needs; welcomes, in this regard, the normalisation of relations between Qatar and its neighbours; praises Qatar's role in assisting the evacuation of tens of thousands of people from Afghanistan following its violent takeover by the Taliban in September 2021;
27. 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 Government and Parliament of the State of Qatar, the International Federation of Association Football, the Union of European Football Associations, the International Labour Organization and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.