



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2024)0104

Implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2023

European Parliament resolution of 28 February 2024 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2023 (2023/2117(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), in particular Articles 21 and 36 thereof,
- having regard to the report of 15 June 2023 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) entitled ‘CFSP Report – Our priorities in 2023’,
- having regard to the ‘Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security’, endorsed by the European Council on 24 March 2022,
- having regard to the new NATO Strategic Concept adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Madrid on 29 June 2022,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 1 February 2024,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 14 and 15 December 2023,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 29 and 30 June 2023,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 23 and 24 June 2022,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 24 and 25 March 2022,
- having regard to Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 of 22 March 2021 establishing a European Peace Facility, and repealing Decision (CFSP) 2015/528¹,

¹ OJ L 102, 24.3.2021, p. 14.

- having regard to the Commission proposal of 20 June 2023 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the Ukraine Facility (COM(2023)0338),
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank of 1 December 2021 entitled ‘The Global Gateway’ (JOIN(2021)0030),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 November 2023 entitled ‘2023 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy’ (COM(2023)0690),
- having regard to the 2023 enlargement reports and to the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, which were presented by the Commission on 8 November 2023,
- having regard to its recommendation of 23 November 2022 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning the new EU strategy for enlargement¹,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 15 December 2023 concerning the decision to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, the opening of accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina once the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria is achieved, and the granting of candidate status to Georgia on the understanding that the relevant steps set out in the Commission’s 2023 communication on EU enlargement policy (COM(2023)0690) of 8 November 2023 are taken,
- having regard to the statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 16 February 2024 on a planned Israeli military operation in Rafah,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament and the Council of 7 June 2023 entitled ‘A New Agenda for Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean’ (JOIN(2023)0017),
- having regard to the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 23 February 2023 entitled ‘Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine’ (A/RES/ES-11/6), and to previous UN General Assembly resolutions on the aggression against Ukraine,
- having regard to the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 7 April 2022 entitled ‘Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council’ (A/RES/ES-11/3),
- having regard to the resolution entitled ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ (Agenda 2030) (A/RES/70/1), which was adopted by the UN

¹ OJ C 167, 11.5.2023, p. 105.

General Assembly on 25 September 2015 at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York and which established the Sustainable Development Goals,

- having regard to Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/162 of 23 January 2023 on a European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA)¹,
- having regard to the Council Decisions (CFSP) 2022/1970 of 17 October 2022² and 2022/2507 of 19 December 2022³ amending Decision 2010/452/CFSP on the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, EUMM Georgia,
- having regard to its resolutions of 15 March 2023 on EU-Armenia relations⁴ and EU-Azerbaijan relations⁵, to its resolution of 19 January 2023 on the humanitarian consequences of the blockade in Nagorno-Karabakh⁶ and to its resolution of 5 October 2023 on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh after Azerbaijan's attack and the continuing threats against Armenia⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 April 2023 on the implementation of civilian CSDP and other EU civilian security assistance⁸,
- having regard to its recommendation of 5 October 2022 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's strategic relationship and partnership with the Horn of Africa⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 June 2023 on the deterioration of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, notably the case of Jimmy Lai¹⁰,
- having regard to the mid-term revision of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe,
- having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2023 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation¹¹ and to its resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union¹²,
- having regard to its resolutions on breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, adopted in accordance with Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ OJ L 22, 24.1.2023, p. 29.

² OJ L 270, 18.10.2022, p. 93.

³ OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 110.

⁴ OJ C, C/2023/404, 23.11.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/404/oj>.

⁵ OJ C, C/2023/405, 23.11.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/405/oj>.

⁶ OJ C 214, 16.6.2023, p. 104.

⁷ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0356.

⁸ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0106.

⁹ OJ C 132, 14.4.2023, p. 115.

¹⁰ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0242.

¹¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0219.

¹² OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 61.

- having regard to the EU action plan on gender equality and women’s empowerment in external action 2021–2025 (GAP III) and to the EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2019-2024,
 - having regard to Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection¹, which established temporary protection for people fleeing from Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine,
 - having regard to the Council of Europe declaration of 16-17 May 2023 entitled ‘Reykjavik Declaration – United around our values’,
 - having regard to the Declaration of Future Membership of Belarus in the European Union, to the Declaration by the Democratic Forces of Belarus on Solidarity with the People of Ukraine and to the Political Declaration by the Democratic Forces of Belarus, all of which were adopted at the New Belarus Conference on 6 August 2023,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 July 2023 on recommendations for reform of European Parliament’s rules on transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption²,
 - having regard to the report of 9 May 2022 on the final outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe,
 - having regard to the study entitled ‘Qualified majority voting in common foreign and security policy – A cost of non-Europe report’, published by its Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services on 28 August 2023³,
 - having regard to its recommendation of February 1999 on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps⁴;
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0389/2023),
- A. whereas the rules-based international order is increasingly being challenged by autocratic actors, working alone or through concerted action, that attempt to influence or undermine multilateral organisations, set up competing organisations, cause destabilisation through a return to sphere-of-influence thinking and threaten the rules-based international order as well as global and regional security;

¹ OJ L 71, 4.3.2022, p. 1.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0292.

³ Study – ‘Qualified majority voting in common foreign and security policy – A cost of non-Europe report’, European Parliament, Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services, 28 August 2023.

⁴ OJ C 150, 28.05.1999, p. 164.

- B. whereas these increasingly autocratic actors also challenge the universality of human rights and undermine democratic standards worldwide; whereas the EU and like-minded partners should defend the rules-based international order as a matter of priority;
- C. whereas Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its consequences, including economic uncertainty, food insecurity and high energy prices, have increased instability in the EU's immediate neighbourhood, thus prompting the EU to give renewed priority to its enlargement policy, which has proven to be its most effective foreign policy instrument;
- D. whereas the European Council endorsed, on 14 and 15 December, the 2023 enlargement package presented by the Commission on 8 November 2023, thereby recommending to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina once the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria is achieved and to grant candidate status to Georgia on the understanding that certain steps are yet to be taken; whereas the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans is designed to boost economic integration within the Western Balkans and close the socio-economic gap between the Union and our partners by the end of this decade; whereas funds will be released upon the delivery of individual reform agendas; whereas the enlargement policy must be governed by the Copenhagen criteria and should remain a merit-based process; whereas the EU must accelerate its enlargement policy while accession countries continue to reform and achieve the required benchmarks; whereas consistent messages and a clear path towards integration for candidate countries are vital for keeping the pro-European perspective alive; whereas the countries of the Western Balkans must focus on conflict resolution, reconciliation, alignment with the common foreign and security policy (CFSP), mutual cooperation and reforms in order to achieve the common security and stability of the region;
- E. whereas stability in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea is paramount for the security of Europe, including its energy security, as declared in the EU's Strategic Compass and by NATO, and therefore requires comprehensive strategies and meaningful actions; whereas the EU cannot be perceived as a successful and credible global actor if it cannot provide security in its immediate neighbourhood;
- F. whereas the Council has extended the temporary protection for people fleeing from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine from 4 March 2024 to 4 March 2025;
- G. whereas on 1 February 2024, the Council reached an agreement on the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, including the provision for a Ukraine Facility worth EUR 50 billion, in order to provide coherent, predictable and flexible support for the recovery, reconstruction and modernisation of Ukraine in the period 2024-2027;
- H. whereas the Russian war of aggression has reaffirmed the role of NATO as the cornerstone of its members' collective defence and confirmed once more the indispensability of a strong transatlantic bond; whereas NATO's decision to commit a minimum of 2 % of gross domestic product to defence spending has only been implemented by a few EU NATO members; whereas Russia's intention to dismantle the Euro-Atlantic security architecture failed utterly owing to the heroic defence of Ukraine and the quick and decisive reaction by NATO allies;

- I. whereas Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has accentuated the need for more ambitious, credible, strategic and unified EU action on the world stage and for Member States to demonstrate the required political will to strengthen the CFSP and to transform it into a fully fledged European policy;
- J. whereas the 2021 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought was awarded to Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny; whereas he had been imprisoned since February 2021 in inhumane conditions, and most recently in Yamalo-Nenets in western Siberia, where he was murdered on 16 February 2024, for which the ultimate responsibility lies with President Putin and the Russian authorities; whereas this shows the cruel and relentless character of Putin's totalitarian regime; whereas the murder of Navalny should be a wakeup call to the EU, encouraging it to reinforce its support for Ukraine and strengthen its tools for defending democracy and human rights both inside and outside the EU;
- K. whereas the terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel have highlighted the volatile and dynamic security situation in the Middle East and the need for the EU and other international actors to assume greater responsibility and assist governments and civil society organisations of the region with reaching a durable and sustainable peace, in particular by continuing to support a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine; whereas on 7 October 2023, 1 139 Israelis and foreign citizens were killed and 240 people were taken hostage during Hamas' despicable terrorist attack; whereas tens of thousands of innocent Palestinians and hundreds of UN staff, medical personnel and journalists have been killed in the Gaza Strip as a result of the Israeli Government's response; whereas the continuous bombardment and forced evacuation of Palestinians to the south of the Gaza Strip have created a dire and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation; whereas attacks by Israeli forces and settlers have killed at least 330 Palestinians in the West Bank since 7 October 2023; whereas the International Court of Justice has, in its interim ruling, ordered Israel to implement provisional measures in the case concerning the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel);
- L. whereas there is an urgent need to enhance the capabilities of the EU and its Member States, including in the field of defence policy, which will allow the Union to better defend its interests without undue reliance on third states, but in close cooperation with its allies, promote its values and strengthen its contribution to global multilateralism, the peaceful resolution of conflict and the development of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights worldwide;
- M. whereas the increased instability and volatility of the international environment poses multifaceted threats to the security and stability of the Union; whereas the EU needs to strengthen transatlantic relations in response and build strategic partnerships based on respect and mutual trust with like-minded partners in the Global South;
- N. whereas on 19 September 2023, Azerbaijan launched an unprovoked military offensive to regain, by force, control over its internationally recognised territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, which ended with the exodus of the Armenian population from this territory; whereas the renewed hostilities in the South Caucasus are a cause for serious concern and require more proactive EU involvement in the region; whereas all state institutions of the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Republic have been dissolved as of 1 January 2024; whereas prospects for normalising relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan remain

fragile, which is why the EU should support and encourage both sides on their path to achieving a historic peace agreement, including by offering prospects for closer integration with the EU, if they decide to pursue that path;

- O. whereas Israel has an internationally recognised right to defend itself against the terrorist threat posed by Hamas in the Gaza Strip; whereas the terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel on 7 October 2023 have underscored the volatile security situation in the Middle East; whereas the risk of escalation in the region is the highest it has been in decades, thus amplifying the need for the EU and other international actors to assume greater responsibility for a durable and sustainable peace, in particular by garnering support for a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine;
- P. whereas there is a need for a comprehensive peace-building approach involving civilian specialists in order to implement practical measures for peace; whereas local and international nongovernmental organisations perform crucial activities aimed at preventing conflicts and resolving conflicts peacefully, and it is of the utmost importance to make the most of their experience;
- Q. whereas growing instability in the EU's Southern Neighbourhood and the wider Mediterranean, as well as in the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa, poses serious challenges to the security and stability of the Union and to its ability to become a decisive actor on the international stage;
- R. whereas the tensions in the Indo-Pacific region are gaining more relevance, most notably given the increasingly assertive posture adopted by the People's Republic of China against Taiwan;
- S. whereas the decline in media freedom, the ongoing attacks on journalists, the spread of disinformation and foreign interference threaten EU democracies and security; whereas the EU must cooperate with like-minded partners to defend media freedom and freedom of expression and to counter disinformation and foreign interference in third countries;
- T. whereas the consequences of climate change are having an increasingly severe impact on different aspects of human life, including the geopolitical order and global security and stability; whereas it is of crucial importance that fighting climate change, which necessitates climate action, aids those that face the most serious repercussions;
- U. whereas in view of the collapse of important arms control and disarmament agreements, but also in view of emerging technologies, arms control and non-proliferation should become a focus of EU's foreign and security policy;
- 1. Underscores that its resolutions on the implementation of the CFSP are a key component of its contribution to EU foreign policy making; underlines that these resolutions manifest the practical implication of the strengthened right of scrutiny in the area of foreign policy conferred on Parliament by the Treaty of Lisbon; recalls that the 2023 resolution is the last resolution on the implementation of the CFSP in this legislative term and aims to serve as a guide for the next EU executive when setting foreign policy priorities for the next term and further implementing them; highlights that in an ever-volatile international environment, the EU needs to simultaneously tackle numerous foreign policy challenges affecting it directly and indirectly, such as the ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, increasing great power

competition, potentially redefining the global balance of power, constant attempts to undermine the multilateral rules-based international order and an increased nexus of foreign and internal crises; strongly believes that in order to stay relevant on the international stage and be able to effectively defend its interests and values, the EU must unleash the political will of the Member States to achieve foreign policy goals through EU-level instruments, increase capacities, work with like-minded partners and regional organisations and focus on providing a competitive offer for the Global South, making as effective a use as possible of all the resources, policies and tools at its disposal as part of the integrated approach; highlights that in order to act as a global player in the current global environment, the EU has to conduct a determined, disciplined and assertive foreign policy that fulfils its own strategic objectives and continue proactively defining, asserting and defending its interests in the world;

2. Stresses that the EU's ability to act as a global foreign policy player, a reliable international partner and a credible security and defence actor rests on the development and strengthening of its external actions within the CFSP, as well as on its ability to proactively define, assert and defend its interests in the world without undue reliance on the resources of third states, which could leave the Union open to internal division, on the reinvigoration of existing partnerships and the creation of new ones, and on the political will to take greater initiative and responsibility on the global stage while effectively safeguarding, defending and promoting its values; further stresses that the Member States need to enable the EU to speak with one voice, thus increasing credibility and preserving coherence; reaffirms, in this context, that it is paramount to strengthen unity and solidarity by further developing a common perception of threats;
3. Recalls that the EU should be guided in its external action by the values and principles enshrined in Article 2, Article 3 (5) and Article 21 TEU, which have inspired the EU's own creation, development and enlargement, including democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity and respect for the principles of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, the European Convention on Human Rights and international law; regrets that the Union at times falls short of these objectives, with a negative impact on its interests, security and international reputation; underscores that the ambitious commitment of the EU's external human rights policy requires it to be consistent and exemplary;
4. Believes that the EU should shape its CFSP accordingly, and on the basis of the following four objectives:
 - (a) addressing the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine,
 - (b) progressively adapting EU structures, instruments, capabilities, funds and decision-making procedures,
 - (c) reinforcing and defending a rules-based multilateralism, and
 - (d) asserting interests through the development of robust strategic alliances and like-minded partnerships;

Addressing the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

5. Is concerned that the illegal, unprovoked and unjustified Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, enabled and supported by the illegitimate Lukashenka regime in Belarus and the regime in Iran, has brought war back to the European continent; reiterates its condemnation, in the strongest possible terms, of the actions of the Russian leadership, which include breaking international law, violating recognised borders, unlawfully transferring and deporting protected persons and children and committing land theft and serious war crimes; demands that Russia and its proxy forces cease all military action and that the Russian leadership immediately and unconditionally withdraw its troops from the internationally recognised territory of Ukraine and from any other country whose territory, or parts thereof, it unlawfully occupies; condemns any hybrid attacks used by Russia in Ukraine and strongly denounces the spread of Russia's propaganda about its war in Ukraine;
6. Condemns the role of the illegitimate regime of Aliaksandr Lukashenka for de facto surrendering national sovereignty to the Kremlin in order to maintain its grip on Belarus;
7. Reiterates that Georgia experienced Russian military aggression as early as August 2008; strongly condemns Russia's ongoing illegal occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and similarly condemns the undermining of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova through the presence of Russian troops in Transnistria; reaffirms its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and Moldova and underlines that Russia's malicious attempts to forcibly change the borders of sovereign states in Europe pose a serious threat to the EU's security; encourages the EU and the Member States to strengthen security cooperation with Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, particularly in countering hybrid threats, disinformation and cybersecurity;
8. Pays tribute to the brave people of Ukraine, who are not only courageously defending their country, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, but also European values and security, and are upholding the norms and principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act; expresses its respect and gratitude for the support provided by individuals and civil society organisations to the people of Ukraine; commends the actions of the people of Georgia and Belarus who actively support the Ukraine's fight; welcomes the extension of the temporary protection for people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
9. Emphasises that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine destabilises and threatens the security and stability of the Eastern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans, which in turn jeopardises the security of the EU itself; considers that the EU should therefore prioritise the reform of its neighbourhood policy and accelerate the enlargement process in parallel with the institutional and decision-making reforms necessary to safeguard the Union's integration capacity;
10. Calls for a more active communication strategy in order to promote the role and benefits of enlargement in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership, as well as promoting the EU's financial and technical assistance; recalls, in this context, that the EU is already the biggest trading partner and the largest provider of investment and financial assistance in the Western Balkans; notes that more than EUR 6,5 billion had already been committed from IPA III up to the end of 2023 and that the EU mobilised EUR 16,6 billion in investments to the region within the time frame 2021-2023;

11. Notes with particular concern the spillover effect of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, notably in the Southern Neighbourhood, the wider Mediterranean, the South Caucasus, Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East; deplores Russian malign influences, hybrid warfare and disinformation campaigns in these regions and calls for greater EU involvement and assistance;
12. Welcomes the third meeting of the European Political Community (EPC) as a platform for discussion, dialogue and cooperation with partner countries; calls for the close involvement of Parliament in clarifying the scope and the future work of the EPC; underlines that, for the future success and coherence of this format, some level of alignment on democratic values and principles is essential; reiterates that the EPC may under no circumstances form a pretext for delays to the accession of enlargement countries to the EU;
13. Reiterates the need for the Member States to make collective and well-coordinated investments in defence and calls for the full and swift implementation of the Strategic Compass, integrating the lessons learnt from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, with the objective of achieving a genuine European Defence Union that is interoperable and complementary with the NATO alliance and can act independently when needed;
14. Highlights, in particular, the need to engage further with NATO on the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Capacity and urges the Member States to ensure that the Military Planning and Conduct Capability is fully operational by 2025; strongly encourages the VP/HR to propose a Council decision on an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity to protect the Union's values and serve the interests of the Union as a whole, to respond to imminent threats and to react rapidly to a crisis situation outside the Union, including in non-permissive environments and during all stages of a conflict cycle; underlines that the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity should be set up as a force that is permanently available and trains together with the goal of becoming a standing force;
15. Stresses the need to increase the production of military ammunition in the EU, which should be achieved through increased industrial cooperation and joint production; reiterates the urgent need to reach the 35 % European collaborative defence equipment procurement benchmark and the 20 % European collaborative defence research and technology benchmark agreed by all Member States within the European Defence Agency; calls for the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre and the European External Action Service (EEAS) Crisis Response Centre to be strengthened through the establishment of a system of automatic flows of intelligence from Member States to the EEAS and to the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre on foreign and security issues occurring outside the EU;
16. Welcomes the additional funding for the European Peace Facility and calls on the Member States to improve the Facility's ability to act through sustainable and appropriate funding; welcomes, in this regard, the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 January 2024 as well as the conclusions of the European Council on 1 February 2024 indicating an agreement on the modalities and the overall financial ceiling of a new 'Ukraine Assistance Fund'; expects the final decision to be taken at the European Council on 21 and 22 March 2024; welcomes the decisions to establish the Act in Support of Ammunition Production and the European defence industry reinforcement through common procurement act in order to reinforce European defence

capacities; reiterates its call to urgently launch a discussion with a view to establishing another off-budget financial facility that would address the entire life cycle of military capabilities at EU level;

17. Notes that the EU's response to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is being closely watched by autocratic actors around the world and will have a decisive influence in shaping their behaviour on the international stage; commends the Council and the Member States for the determined response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; welcomes the mobilisation of unprecedented amounts of macroeconomic, financial, economic and humanitarian assistance for Ukraine, the adoption, in unison with like-minded partners, of twelve packages of sanctions that should have a devastating impact on the Russian economy and the delivery of weapons and ammunition by Member States, which was also made possible by the European Peace Facility; is concerned, however, by the fact that Hungary is still blocking the eighth tranche of the European Peace Facility dedicated to Ukraine; calls for the Russian Federation to be isolated and pressured further by reinforcing the application of restrictive measures, also against Belarus; appeals to reinforce the diplomatic outreach towards all of the States that abstained or did not participate in the vote on the UN General Assembly resolutions of 13 October 2022 and 2 March 2023; appeals for proactive diplomacy with third countries, in concert with like-minded partners, most notably the US, Canada and the UK, in order to minimise the circumvention of these sanctions and close all remaining legal loopholes to stop this practice; regrets that the EU's twelfth package of sanctions extends the wind-down periods for the import of specific steel products;
18. Welcomes the resolve displayed by the Union and most Member States in the pursuit of full energy independence from the Russian Federation; reiterates its call for an immediate and full embargo on Russian imports of fossil fuels and products made with Russian crude oil; urges the Commission and the Council to enhance monitoring capacities for fossil fuels in order to prevent re-export; expresses concern about the fact that, in the past year, some Member States have increased their imports of Russian natural gas and LNG;
19. Recalls that the consistent and uniform application of restrictive measures in all Member States is a precondition for the credibility and effectiveness of the EU's external action; calls on all third countries, and in particular EU candidate countries, to show unambiguous commitment to international law and EU strategic interests and values and to align with the EU's restrictive measures against Russia; calls for the Commission to critically assess EU assistance to third countries that actively support Russia's aggression against Ukraine and urges the Council to impose restrictive measures on third countries enabling Russia's invasion of Ukraine, whether through the facilitation of sanction circumvention or through the provision of direct military assistance, such as in the case of Iran or the DPRK;
20. Encourages the Commission, the VP/HR and the Member States to mobilise international support for the peace formula presented by Ukraine and to engage in security commitments towards Ukraine as recommended in the Kyiv Security Compact; welcomes the bilateral security agreements signed between the UK, Germany, France and Ukraine respectively, fulfilling the commitments made by the G7 on 12 July 2023 to deter any new Russian attack on Ukraine in the foreseeable future; underscores the urgent need for the EU and its Member States to push for the creation of a special

international tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression, crimes amounting to genocide and war crimes against Ukraine, including conflict-related sexual violence, perpetrated by the Russian Federation and its allies, in particular Belarus, including their political and military leadership; calls on the Commission and the Council to designate the Russian state-funded private military Wagner Group as a terrorist organisation; welcomes the newly established International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, hosted by the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), which will facilitate case-building for future trials; urges the Commission to locate and map immobilised Russian assets and to come up with a legally sound and effective proposal for using these assets to finance the defence and reconstruction of Ukraine, ensuring that this legally sound proposal is developed in close coordination with the G7 partner countries; highlights that demining and the clearance of unexploded ordnance are prerequisites for Ukraine's reconstruction, including its agricultural production, which is vital for the country's economy and for global food security; highlights that these efforts will require comprehensive, long-term funding;

21. Welcomes the rapid creation and successful implementation of the European Union Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine and suggests that the EU consider strengthening it; notes that this mission is a tangible demonstration of the EU's unwavering support for the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity; calls for work to be done towards setting up other international missions in order to safeguard freedom of navigation and support humanitarian corridors and the safe passage of Ukrainian grain;
22. Calls on the Member States to maintain the resolve and unity that they have already demonstrated and to provide Ukraine with further political, humanitarian, military, infrastructure-related, economic and financial support to win this war; welcomes, in this respect, the assistance provided by the Member States, both individually and through EU instruments, including the Commission proposal on establishing the Ukraine Facility; welcomes the interinstitutional agreement reached on 6 February 2024 ensuring predictable financial support for Ukraine amounting to EUR 50 billion over the 2024-2027 period to contribute to the country's recovery, reconstruction and modernisation; underlines the need for full transparency in the Facility's implementation; calls on the Member States to continue to provide the necessary military aid for Ukraine to expel Russian forces from its territory; urges the Member States to produce ammunition and provide it to Ukraine's armed forces, along with other necessary resources for Ukraine to service its military hardware; encourages the Member States to continue providing financial and political support for civil society in and around Ukraine;
23. Insists that the EU cannot persistently rely on ad hoc mobilisation and recalls, in this context, the need to improve and clearly define the EU's capacity to act in response to global crises in a sustainable manner; stresses, in this regard, that the EU should continue to develop its own autonomous and resilient instruments in its external action and within the CFSP; recalls that the Strategic Compass sets an ambitious course of action and gives the EU the tools to be both an effective security provider and a more assertive global actor, and therefore calls for its swift and full implementation; calls for the EU institutions to strengthen their capacity for strategic foresight in order to prepare for future challenges;

24. Calls for a more dynamic and consistent use of the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EU Magnitsky Act), which remains underutilised in the EU's foreign policy toolbox; welcomes the VP/HR's proposal for an anti-corruption sanctions regime, which would allow the EU to target serious acts of corruption worldwide; insists that corruption has a verifiable impact on the state of human rights and undermines the functioning of state institutions and the rule of law; calls, in this context, for the swift adoption of the proposed anti-corruption sanctions regime by the Council;

Progressively adapting EU structures, instruments, capabilities, funds and decision-making procedures

25. Acknowledges that the requirement for unanimity forces the Member States to work relentlessly to achieve compromise and unity, which is the source of the EU's political leverage on the world stage; points out, however, that the trade-off between the ideal of unity and the high costs of unanimity in terms of credibility should be assessed critically, particularly bearing in mind the effective functioning of an enlarged EU; regrets, in this context, the fact that individual Member States have used their veto right to water down agreements, delay decision-making or thwart a common policy altogether;
26. Reminds the Member States to adhere to the principles of the Treaties, particularly Articles 24 and 42(7) TEU and Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which call for the Member States to support the European Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity; underlines that the conditions for the activation of Article 42(7) TEU and the modalities for support have never been clearly defined; considers it necessary to urgently develop a solidarity policy strategy and operational implementation measures for the mutual assistance clause established in Article 42(7) TEU;
27. Regrets that the potential for fast, efficient and effective foreign, security and defence action, as provided for, inter alia, by the passerelle clauses of the TEU, has been used only in a very limited manner; reiterates its call for the Council to gradually switch to qualified majority voting for decisions in areas of the CFSP that do not have military or defence implications; acknowledges the concerns of some Member States, which fear a decreased ability to influence foreign and security policy at EU level; recognises that progress towards the application of qualified majority voting can only be gradual, building on the formation of a European strategic culture; encourages, in this context:
- (a) the introduction of qualified majority voting in identified priority areas, such as the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EU Magnitsky Act), and on issues pertaining to the adoption and implementation of the next EU action plan on human rights and democracy, in line with Article 22(1) TEU;
 - (b) the application of the passerelle clauses provided for in the Treaties, except for the creation of military missions or operations with an executive mandate under the common security and defence policy (CSDP), for which unanimity will still be required;
 - (c) the use of constructive abstention in line with Article 31(1) TEU, pending the full application of qualified majority voting to decisions without military or defence implications;

- (d) the more effective use of the integrated political crisis response mechanism and the creation of a Security Council, comprised of Member State ministers, in order to respond swiftly in emergencies and develop an integrated approach to conflict and crises;
 - (e) the revision of the Treaties as provided for in Article 48 TEU, with the objective of, inter alia, enshrining qualified majority voting for matters relating to the CFSP;
 - (f) the regular revision of the threat analysis underpinning the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence to allow for Member States to converge on and define a common threat perception;
28. Reiterates that Parliament plays an integral role in the CFSP, making a specific contribution thereto by virtue of its parliamentary diplomacy and its distinct instruments, channels and contacts, including its democracy support programmes, which have great potential to engage key political stakeholders and facilitate democratic governance; stresses, in particular, the added value of parliamentary diplomacy during the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and highlights, in this context, the valuable cooperation at political and technical level between the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the European Parliament;
29. Emphasises the importance of parliamentary diplomacy, which should be conducted through the existing channels, like the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, official delegations and democracy support activities, such as regular parliamentary dialogues with partner countries; insists that the EU's foreign and security policy must orient itself towards the objectives of crisis prevention, cooperative regional security cooperation, global climate and environmental action, strengthening human rights and ensuring the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda; calls for the further development of the EU's preventive diplomacy, including peace mediation and dialogue, as a proactive foreign policy tool; urges the EEAS to conduct 'lessons learnt' exercises and analyse prior European diplomatic efforts and their results, as well as the work of Special Representatives and Special Envoys; insists that it is necessary to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy with partners in Latin America, Africa and Asia in order to contribute to the EU's objective of strengthening relations with like-minded partners to address common geopolitical, economic, social and environmental challenges;
30. Calls for further clarification on the functioning, format of representation and accountability of the 'Team Europe' approach in order to ensure the effective allocation of resources and avoid duplication in the EU's foreign and security policy; insists that Parliament is part of 'Team Europe' and should be treated as such;
31. Highlights the necessity of updating the 2010 Declaration on Political Accountability as the framework for relations between the EEAS and Parliament; believes that Parliament needs the means to leverage its instruments to counteract the global backsliding of democracy, including through election observation and mediation, conflict prevention, strengthened local-level communication on democracy and parliamentary diplomacy; highlights Parliament's complementary role in the EU's diplomacy;

32. Highlights the role of the VP/HR as a bridge builder between the CFSP and EU external relations to ensure the highest level of coordination and coherence in EU external action; regrets, nonetheless, that in some cases, there is a lack of clarity in the external representation of the EU; stresses the need to clearly define the competences of the VP/HR, the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council with regard to the EU's external action and representation;
33. Believes that there is a need for stronger institutionalised parliamentary oversight of the EU's external action, including regular and timely, yet secure, access to confidential information, briefings in the European Parliament and swifter channels of communication with the EEAS; recalls, in this context, Parliament's right to information on CFSP matters under Article 36 TEU; welcomes the establishment of the high-level geopolitical dialogue and encourages more open discussions, including by continuing regular consultations with members of the Commission and the EEAS and by involving Parliament in the implementation of the European Peace Facility, the Strategic Compass and the Global Gateway initiative;
34. Affirms that Parliament should make full use of its oversight and budgetary powers with regard to Union decisions on international affairs; calls for a change in the structure of the CFSP budget, with one budget line per civilian CSDP mission, in order to allow for better scrutiny and increased transparency;
35. Regrets the fact that the CFSP budget for civilian CSDP missions has only marginally increased from the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014-2020 to the MFF for 2021-2027, even though the number of missions and the tasks they perform have increased, the security environment has become more challenging and the cost of operations has risen; urges the Member States to dedicate sufficient funding to the CFSP in light of the need to defend peace, democracy and the rule of law and to ensure better coordination with other policy areas; calls, in this context, for an appropriate adjustment to the MFF and for increased financing for EU external action;
36. Reiterates further that the EU and its Member States need to mainstream democracy support further into the programming of the EU financial instruments and stresses, in this context, the need to equip relevant EU delegations with appropriate means to increase public diplomacy activities and to develop their strategic communication capabilities to fight against disinformation and propaganda; calls for the EEAS – both its headquarters and EU Delegations – to be strengthened through the provision of the appropriate financial and human resources so that the EU can be better prepared for current and emerging global challenges, such as increasing instability, more assertive authoritarianism and the climate emergency; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to pursue a feminist foreign and security policy that is in accordance with Parliament's resolution of 10 March 2022 on the EU Gender Action Plan III¹;
37. Welcomes the implementation of the pilot project entitled 'Towards the creation of a European Diplomatic Academy'; calls for the establishment of a permanent structure supported by the necessary resources; calls for an exploration of and a decision on ways to access the EEAS for those graduating from this Academy, which can contribute to the full development of an autonomous EU diplomacy shaped by a common diplomatic culture from an EU perspective; reiterates its call on the Commission to create a

¹ OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 150.

permanent residential training programme on the EU's external action and CFSP for junior diplomats from EU candidate countries;

Reinforcing and defending a rules-based multilateralism

38. Emphasises that multilateral forums, in particular the UN and its agencies, should be considered the EU's format of cooperation of choice; expresses concern, in this respect, about the increasing relevance of exclusive formats of cooperation, which bear witness to increasing competition between great powers; observes, at the same time, that international institutions and norms are increasingly being instrumentalised and points, in this context, to disputes within the WTO and the WHO; stresses that this trend puts the EU in a delicate position, balancing the need to appeal for a broad and inclusive concept of multilateralism while prioritising cooperation with selected like-minded partners at the same time; calls on the Member States to reinforce inclusive forms of multilateral governance and encourages, in this context, the Commission, the EEAS and the Council to step up interinstitutional cooperation with multilateral organisations that are integral to the international rules-based system and the management of global commons, including the UN and its agencies, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the WHO, the WTO and NATO;
39. Notes the necessity of ensuring unity, coherence and complementarity of efforts between the EU and NATO in upholding international peace and security; underlines that NATO remains the cornerstone of European security and calls for cooperation between NATO and the EU to be enhanced further while strengthening the European pillar within NATO, inter alia by consistently meeting NATO's defence spending benchmark of 2 % of gross domestic product; calls for greater cooperation with NATO on fighting disinformation and hybrid threats originating from third countries;
40. Calls for the EU institutions and the Member States to actively support a comprehensive institutional reform of multilateral institutions, first and foremost the United Nations system and particularly the UN Security Council, which should include measures aimed at limiting the use of veto, boosting regional representation, making executive bodies accountable to the assemblies that elect them, and redefining the composition of the Security Council's membership to better reflect geopolitical reality, including by establishing a permanent seat for the EU; calls on the Commission to focus on ensuring the EU's strategic indispensability in an increasingly multipolar world; calls for the EU institutions to ensure that the EU speaks with one voice in the UN, particularly in the Security Council; calls for continued dialogue with the UK to be ensured in order to maintain cooperation within the Security Council; calls on all UN member states to take action to revoke Russia's veto powers in the Security Council;
41. Calls on the VP/HR to promote a convincing, durable and targeted democratic narrative that demonstrates that democracy delivers for individuals and societies across the globe and is capable of withstanding autocratic pressure and influence; deplores the fact that the People's Republic of China, Russia, Iran and other totalitarian or authoritarian regimes use information manipulation and malign interference as integral instruments to exert pressure on multilateral institutions and democratic values and norms, to erode checks on the abuse of power, to increase the incidence and severity of human rights violations, to constrict spaces for civil society, independent media and democratic opposition movements and to spread anti-Western disinformation; encourages, in this context, investment in strategic communications and the fight against foreign

interference and the spread of disinformation, and welcomes the EEAS's engagement with the UN on a global code of conduct for information integrity;

42. Highlights the increasing phenomenon of transnational threats against human rights defenders and political activists by the national authorities of their countries or by proxies; encourages the Commission and the Member States to provide foreign human rights defenders and activists residing in the EU with appropriate financial and other means to enable them to continue their work remotely and without fear of retaliation; praises the relentless work of civil society organisations and human rights defenders worldwide and calls for the EU to step up its support of civil society and human rights defenders; expresses its serious concern about the increasing attacks on various minorities worldwide, including the LGBTIQ community and religious minorities, such as Christians; emphasises the need to address intersectionality in all EU actions, including in the implementation of the CFSP, in order to promote fully fledged gender equality;
43. Condemns, in the strongest terms, the killing on 16 February 2024 of Alexei Navalny, a prominent Russian political figure and 2021 Sakharov Prize laureate, who was incarcerated in a penal colony and subjected to ill treatment, including torture, arbitrary punishment and psychological pressure; calls for improved conditions for political prisoners in Russia, in line with its international commitments; denounces the Russian regime's escalating human rights violations and condemns the ongoing suppression of government critics, human rights defenders and independent journalists; urges the EU and its Member States to provide assistance to Russian human rights defenders, pro-democracy activists and independent journalists both within and outside Russia; urges the Council to adopt restrictive measures against those responsible for the killing of Alexei Navalny and for the arbitrary prosecutions and torture of anti-war protesters;
44. Recognises that several actors in the Global South are becoming more assertive; emphasises, in this context, that the term 'Global South' projects a degree of unity onto what is in reality a very diverse group of actors characterised by diverging aspirations and alignments; recognises the international leverage of these actors;
45. Recalls that the EU is the world's leading donor of official development assistance; underlines that the EU must remain a reliable ally in development cooperation worldwide; expresses its concern that the EU is facing increasing scepticism and disengagement; calls for the EU to respond to partner countries' expectations and to deliver quickly on political agreements with them in order to show that the EU is a key and strategic partner and demonstrate that the international rules-based system can meet contemporary challenges; encourages, in this context, stronger political presence in countries where the EU's footprint has predominantly consisted of development cooperation; highlights, in particular, the importance of the EU's presence in Africa and calls on the Commission and the Member States to consolidate the political dialogue at national and regional levels, as well as providing a diversified range of technical support, including funding at government and local community levels, to achieve greater efficiency and visibility; stresses the importance of establishing political agreements with third countries, based on common European values and fundamental rights;
46. Calls on the Council to launch the project to establish a European civil peace corps, bringing together the expertise of institutional and non-institutional actors in conflict

prevention, peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation with a view to making EU civilian crisis management more credible, consistent, effective, flexible and visible;

47. Recalls that the EU should be a more assertive global actor for peace and human security; notes that effective development cooperation and an ambitious trade policy are also crucial in addressing the root causes of migration and other challenges facing the Union;
48. Calls on the Commission to effectively and swiftly use the Global Gateway as a sustainable alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative and as an instrument to increase the EU's presence and visibility worldwide by means of infrastructure and telecommunications investment that creates national value in partner countries and enables their socio-economic development, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, while pursuing the EU's prosperity and security interests; recalls that the Global Gateway is to be understood as a strategic concept integrating foreign, economic and development policy; stresses, in this context, that coordination with international financial institutions, well-defined private-sector involvement and tailored strategic communications are essential in order for the instrument to reach the desired scale; welcomes, in this context, the first high-level Global Gateway Forum hosted by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in October 2023; insists that Parliament should be more closely involved in the decision-making process in order to guarantee transparent governance and make sure that the Global Gateway is properly coordinated with the G7 Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment;
49. Notes that EU investment and assistance should focus on common objectives at the most appropriate level of action, with clear visibility in receiving countries, and on tailor-made investments that respond to our partners' needs, as defined through a more proactive and constructive engagement with them;
50. Calls for multilateral solutions to new challenges and realities, such as cybersecurity, biotechnology and artificial intelligence; insists on the centrality of multilateralism for the effective maintenance of order in outer space and on the need to deepen current initiatives, and launch new ones, to preserve the peaceful uses of outer space;

Asserting interests through the development of robust strategic alliances and like-minded partnerships

51. Emphasises the need to build strategic solidarity between like-minded partners as the best response to a more dangerous and unpredictable security environment; emphasises the need to strengthen existing partnerships with countries that share our values, particularly on issues such as strategic dependencies, economic coercion, political interference and disinformation, and highlights the significance of building new alliances, inter alia in the Global South, taking into account mutual needs and interests in order to foster real and balanced partnerships; believes that the 'more for more' principle should be integrated fully into relations with third countries, whereby the EU will develop stronger partnerships with those that uphold the principles of the CFSP and CSDP and the fundamental values of the Union; believes, conversely, that the 'less for less' principle should apply in relation to third countries which display a manifest disregard for human rights and international law, as well as to those which enable other third countries to commit these violations; recalls that the level and intensity of EU

engagement should be adapted accordingly, in particular in terms of development cooperation, trade benefits and access to EU programmes;

52. Stresses the importance of strong and strategic transatlantic cooperation, including that between NATO and the EU, based on shared values, interests and objectives and on the principle of a partnership of equals; calls on the Commission to foster closer ties with key partners in both the US and Canada in order to counter global challenges that affect our shared values, interests, security and prosperity; urges the Commission and the VP/HR to engage closely with both partners by intensifying and consolidating the cooperation mechanisms already established, including the EU-US Trade and Technology Council; stresses, in particular, the need to progress on key foreign policy files, including on our respective relations with China, on Europe's Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood, on Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and on the Indo-Pacific; points, with regard to the latter, to the dedicated US-EU dialogue on security and defence and the Indo-Pacific with a view to developing closer and more ambitious cooperation, and highlights the first ever EU-US joint naval exercise in the north-western Indian Ocean in March 2023; calls for stronger transatlantic cooperation on trade and on combating challenges caused by rapid technological changes and growing cyber threats;
53. Recalls that the US is the EU's most important ally; reiterates its request that EU-US summits be held on a regular basis in order to lend sustained impetus to the indispensable nature of transatlantic cooperation; reiterates its support for the establishment of a transatlantic political council that would serve as a forum for regular and effective institutional dialogue between the US and the EU on foreign and security policy; calls on the House of Representatives to establish a standing Congressional delegation for the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD), in line with the 1999 joint statement on the establishment of the TLD between the US Congress and the European Parliament, as this would enhance our capacity for policy dialogue and cooperation;
54. Calls for the EU and the US to make decisive progress in the negotiations on strengthening international supply chains for critical minerals with a view to finding mutually acceptable solutions to address the discriminatory impact of the US Inflation Reduction Act;
55. Welcomes the conclusion of the Windsor Framework and recalls the importance of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement for a strong and constructive partnership with the UK; highlights the crucial and multi-layered significance of the Northern Ireland Protocol and the Windsor Framework for long-lasting relations with the UK;
56. Regrets the fact that the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement does not include provisions on cooperation on foreign policy and defence; calls, in this context, for greater involvement of the UK in European security and defence projects and for more structured and regular engagement with the UK on foreign affairs, building on the constructive experience of EU-UK cooperation in countering Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including the adoption and monitoring of sanctions; welcomes the joint missions to third countries by representatives of the EU and the UK with a view to preventing the circumvention of sanctions; highlights shared interests and collective responsibilities and calls for more permanent forms of coordination with regard to foreign and security policy in various regions; welcomes the UK's participation in the European Political Community and its hosting of its fourth summit;

is convinced that the European Political Community can facilitate trust between the UK and the EU, promote closer dialogue on shared challenges, particularly relating to security, and serve as an incubator for concrete cooperation projects;

57. Welcomes both the launch of the Belarus-EU consultative group to enable continuous dialogue between the EU and Belarusian democratic forces, and the ongoing support provided to Russian human rights defenders and to independent media inside and outside Russia; is shocked by the death of 2021 Sakharov Prize laureate Alexei Navalny, who was arrested and sentenced on dubious and politically motivated grounds and who sacrificed his life to defend democracy and oppose oppression and corruption in Russia; calls on the Russian regime to shed light on the circumstances of Alexei Navalny's death without delay; reiterates its support for the Belarusian democratic opposition, all political prisoners and the brave activists and journalists in Belarus who continue to resist the regime of the illegitimate leader and the regime's complicity in the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine in spite of ongoing crackdowns, and who have expressed their desire to achieve the democratic development of Belarus and its membership of the EU, inter alia at the New Belarus Conference held in Warsaw in August 2023; underlines that such efforts demonstrate the fundamental role of civil society in strengthening democracy;
58. Condemns the Lukashenka regime's active role in supporting Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; emphasises the urgent need for the mirroring of sanctions between Belarus and Russia, with Lukashenka's regime being fully complicit in the war crimes committed, such as the abduction of thousands of Ukrainian children;
59. Is shocked and appalled by the murder of 2021 Sakharov Prize laureate and Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny, who sacrificed his life to defend democracy and oppose oppression and corruption in Russia;
60. Welcomes the 2023 enlargement package and the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, which includes a facility of EUR 6 billion in grants and loans to accelerate socio-economic convergence with the EU between 2024 and 2027; confirms that it is examining the proposal for the reform and growth facility for the Western Balkans and will cooperate with the Council to ensure rapid ratification; calls on the Council to demonstrate genuine political commitment to the EU membership perspective of the countries in Western Balkans; notes that this should include advancing accession negotiations with Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; supports efforts to achieve, as a matter of priority, the relevant constitutional changes in North Macedonia and calls on all political forces to play a constructive role in this regard; asks, in particular, the governments of the Member States that set this additional requirement for North Macedonia to do their utmost to support these efforts; regrets the unjustified delays in the accession processes of North Macedonia and Albania and recalls that candidate countries should be assessed on the basis of their own merit in complying with the objective criteria for accession, including their implementation of EU-related reforms and their policy alignment with the CFSP, such as the positions and restrictive measures adopted in response to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine; welcomes the fact that the majority of countries in the Western Balkans are aligned with the CFSP, while calling on Belgrade to urgently do the same, particularly considering that Serbia is one of the very few European countries not yet in line with the sanctions adopted in response to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine; recalls that accession can only proceed once the country in question aligns with EU sanctions

against Russia and makes significant progress on EU-related reforms; remains very concerned about the destabilising influence on the whole region of the Serbian authorities;

61. Takes note of the preliminary findings and conclusions of the International Election Observation Mission (I-EOM) of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on Serbia's early parliamentary elections of 17 December 2023; welcomes the high voter turnout, but is concerned by the irregularities and procedural deficiencies reported; stresses that the proper functioning of Serbia's democratic institutions is at the core of the country's EU accession process and calls on the competent authorities to investigate properly and follow up on the I-EOM's recommendations; encourages Serbia's political leadership to ensure constructive, inclusive dialogue across the political spectrum and to deliver on the necessary reforms for Serbia to progress on the path to EU accession;
62. Is strongly concerned about a public statement from President Vučić in February 2024 explicitly endorsing possible military measures from the PRC against Taiwan in contradiction to the EU's policy supporting the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and warning against unilateral measures, in particular by force or coercion.
63. Regrets the fact that high political tensions and polarisation in Montenegro delayed progress on EU-related reforms and plunged the country into a deep political and institutional crisis, stalling Montenegro's EU accession process; welcomes the formation of a new government and stresses the importance of the government being able and committed to take forward EU-related reforms and keep Montenegro firmly on the EU strategic path;
64. Deplores the fact that the Serbian parliamentary and local elections held on 17 December 2023 deviated from international standards and Serbia's commitments to free and fair elections, owing to the incumbents' persistent and systematic abuse of institutions and media in order to gain an unfair and undue advantage; considers that these elections cannot be deemed to have been held in just conditions; is alarmed by reports of the widespread and systematic scale of fraud that compromised the integrity of the elections in Serbia; notes that the I-EOM stated that the election was conducted smoothly, but that the day was marked by numerous procedural deficiencies, including the inconsistent application of safeguards during voting and counting, frequent instances of overcrowding, breaches of voting secrecy and numerous instances of group voting, and was dominated by the decisive involvement of President Vučić together with the ruling party's systemic advantages; expresses its serious concern over these irregularities and the overall election environment, which fell below the standards expected of an EU candidate country; reminds the Serbian authorities that the proper functioning of Serbia's democratic institutions is at the core of Serbia's EU accession process and the EU accession methodology; calls for an independent international investigation by respected international legal experts and institutions into the irregularities of the parliamentary, provincial and municipal elections, with special attention to the elections to the Belgrade City Assembly, as certain allegations, including those regarding organised voter migration at local level, go beyond the scope covered by the OSCE/ODIHR reports;
65. Welcomes the European Council's decision to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina once the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria

is achieved; eagerly awaits the Commission's report on progress, which is expected in March 2024 at the latest; urges the country's political leaders to implement the substantial set of reforms, including electoral reforms, in accordance with the decisions of domestic and international courts in order to ensure the principles of equality and non-discrimination for all citizens and constituent peoples, as enshrined in its constitution and in full respect of the judgments of domestic and international courts, including all rulings of the European Court of Human Rights regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina; denounces the recurring inflammatory rhetoric and secessionist laws and policies of the leadership of the Republika Srpska (RS) entity, including the celebration of the unconstitutional 'RS Day' on 9 January 2024; calls on Member States and representatives of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina to promote and support the implementation of these rulings; reiterates its call for targeted sanctions against destabilising actors within Bosnia and Herzegovina, notably Milorad Dodik, as well as other high-ranking officials of RS and Serbian officials providing political and material support for secessionist policies; calls on all Member States to ensure that such sanctions can be adopted by the Council and to impose them bilaterally or in concert with other Member States if their adoption in the Council is not possible; welcomes the agreement reached to extend the mandate of the EU Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina's Operation Althea until 2 November 2024 and recalls that this mission still plays a pivotal role in the security and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina; urges the EU's military mission to actively prevent unlawful parades and other provocations as well as threats against everyone working to help the victims of genocide and investing in inter-ethnic reconciliation and a peaceful future for the country;

66. Welcomes the fact that the unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine has prompted the EU to reprioritise its enlargement policy; reaffirms that the pace of the enlargement process depends both on the individual countries' capacity to meet the criteria for accession and on the commitment of the political leaders in the Western Balkan countries and the EU Member States; is concerned about the rise of ethnonationalism in the Western Balkans; calls on the EEAS to monitor the situation closely in order to prevent tensions; underlines the importance of the democracy support activities facilitated by Parliament, such as the Jean Monnet Dialogue and the Parliamentary Dialogue Process;
67. Welcomes recent signals regarding the accelerated timeline for candidate countries; calls for it to be ensured that ongoing and future accession negotiations will not be delayed because of particular national interests or the need to reform the Treaties; reiterates the need to continue to work on the accession of new Member States and the deepening of the EU in parallel; underlines the importance of financial instruments, such as the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance III, in order to strengthen the partnership between the EU and candidate countries; calls for the development of a coherent strategy for the gradual integration of all candidate countries, including into sectoral policies and as observers in the various institutions of the Union; remains deeply concerned about reports that the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement is deliberately seeking to circumvent and undermine the centrality of democratic and rule of law reforms in EU accession countries; urges the Commission to initiate an independent and impartial investigation into whether the conduct displayed and the policies furthered by the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Commission and of the Commissioner's obligations under the Treaties;

68. Notes the strategic importance of the Western Balkans in today's geopolitical context, as well as for the security and stability of the EU as a whole; reiterates the need for greater European presence and visibility in the region in order to divert foreign malign influences and their hybrid activities;
69. Condemns the terrorist attack carried out on 24 September 2023 against Kosovo Police officers in Banjska in the north of the Republic of Kosovo, and other provocations; re-emphasises its position as adopted in its resolution of 19 October 2023¹; urges all sides, in this context, to work to de-escalate the situation and avoid any rhetoric or action that could lead to further tensions; is closely following the ongoing investigations and reiterates that the perpetrators responsible must be held accountable and face justice; calls on the Commission and the Council to take measures against the Serbian Government if investigations reveal that the Serbian State was directly involved in the aforementioned attack or the violent attacks that took place in the north of Kosovo in May 2023, or if the Serbian authorities are unwilling to cooperate fully;
70. Supports the normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia and the development of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina; calls on Kosovo and Serbia to engage in the Dialogue in good faith and in the spirit of compromise to achieve a comprehensive, legally binding agreement on the normalisation of their relations, based on mutual recognition, in accordance with international law and without further delay; recalls that failure to advance on the normalisation of relations would negatively impact the EU integration of both countries; regrets the restrictive measures imposed by the Council against Kosovo and calls for their immediate lifting; calls for the EU to adopt a balanced approach to the mediation between the parties in order to overcome the current stalemate; recalls that the failure of the Dialogue would also have consequences for the EU's role as a credible foreign policy player;
71. Regrets the numerous irregularities that were reported by observers during the Serbian early parliamentary elections of 17 December 2023, including, but not limited to, misuse of public resources, pressure on public-sector employees, intimidation and pressure on voters, vote buying and media capture; calls for a prompt independent investigation into these irregularities; against this background, calls on the Serbian authorities to follow up on the recommendations from the international election observation mission; is concerned about the deep polarisation within Serbian society and the recent violent episodes, including the reported beating of an opposition politician by the Serbian secret services;
72. Welcomes the European Council's decision to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and with the Republic of Moldova; calls on the Council to adopt the respective negotiation frameworks once the relevant steps set out in the respective Commission recommendations of 8 November 2023 are taken; takes positive note of the recommendation to also open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina once the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria is achieved; welcomes Kosovo's application for EU membership and asks the Commission to respond to it; recalls that Kosovo's bid to be considered a candidate country will be assessed on the

¹ European Parliament resolution of 19 October 2023 on the recent developments in the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue, including the situation in the northern municipalities in Kosovo (Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0372).

basis of its own merits and of its success in meeting the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership; welcomes, however, the lifting of visa requirements for Kosovo citizens;

73. Takes positive note of the European Council's decision to grant the status of candidate country to Georgia, on the understanding that the relevant steps set out in the Commission recommendation of 8 November 2023, including those on fighting disinformation, aligning with the CFSP, improving the implementation of parliamentary oversight and addressing political polarisation, de-oligarchisation and anti-corruption are taken; reiterates its calls to release former president Mikheil Saakashvili on humanitarian grounds and encourages President Salome Zourabichvili to use her constitutional right to pardon him, which would contribute to reducing the political polarisation in the country; underlines the Georgian people's legitimate European aspirations and accordingly stresses the importance of EU support for the country, with a focus on civil society actors working towards Georgia's integration into the EU; points to the potential stabilising role that Georgia can play in the South Caucasus;
74. Calls for the EU institutions and the Member States to take decisive steps to ensure that Russia fulfils its obligations under the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement, in particular to withdraw all its military and security forces from Georgia's occupied territories, to allow the deployment of international security mechanisms on the ground and to grant the EU Monitoring Mission unimpeded access to the Russia-occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia; encourages the EU institutions and the Member States to further strengthen the EU Monitoring Mission's capacities and further extend its mandate; further calls for the EU institutions and the Member States to use the term 'occupation' with regard to the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia that are illegally occupied by and under effective control of Russia, as established by the respective judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and the investigation of the International Criminal Court;
75. Believes that Ukraine's and the Republic of Moldova's accession to the EU would be a geostrategic investment in a united and strong Europe; welcomes the support package and the launch of the civilian EU Partnership Mission in the Republic of Moldova; commends the progress already achieved on reforms and urges the Commission to present an ambitious roadmap for accession negotiations to start as soon as possible, as well as for Ukraine's and Moldova's gradual integration into EU policies and programmes; underlines the complexity and merit-based nature of the enlargement process, which requires steps to be taken steadily and in a timely manner; further insists that a continuous effort must be made to adjust existing accession tools and build the legal basis for the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance III; looks forward to the European Council's addressing internal reforms concerning enlargement at its upcoming meetings with a view to adopting, by the summer of 2024, the conclusions on a roadmap for future work;
76. Reiterates the need to re-think the Eastern Partnership multilateral policy to restore regional engagement and the regional democratic reform agenda, including through the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly;
77. Regrets the fact that Azerbaijan chose a military solution over diplomacy with regard to Nagorno-Karabakh, while recognising that Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as Azerbaijani territory; condemns, in the strongest terms, the pre-planned

and unjustified attack by Azerbaijan against the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and the people who have remained in the region; calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to allow the safe return of the Armenian population to Nagorno-Karabakh and to offer solid guarantees regarding the protection of their rights; demands the protection of the Armenian cultural, historical and religious heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh in line with UNESCO standards and Azerbaijan's international commitments; deplores the fact that Baku's offensive represented a gross violation of international law and human rights and a clear infringement of the trilateral ceasefire statement of 9 November 2020 and of the commitments that Azerbaijan made in the negotiations mediated by the EU; believes that genuine dialogue between Azerbaijan and Armenia is the only sustainable way forward and calls for the EU and its Member States to support such efforts; supports the ongoing peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which have been seriously hampered by the recent military operation against Nagorno-Karabakh, which led to the exodus of Armenian population; highlights that a dignified and durable regional peace that maintains sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity for both countries is a prerequisite for stability in the neighbourhood; is concerned by attempts by some leaders and regional powers to exploit the current situation in a way that could threaten the fragile prospects for peace; warns that any efforts to achieve goals by using force and violating the territorial integrity of neighbouring countries should be met with a decisive response by the EU and the international community;

78. Calls on the EU civilian mission in Armenia (EUMA) to closely monitor the evolving security situation on the ground, provide transparent reporting to Parliament and actively contribute to conflict resolution efforts; calls for the EU and its Member States to strengthen EUMA's mandate, increase its size, extend its duration and also place monitors along the border with Türkiye; calls on Azerbaijan to allow EUMA's presence on its side of the border and in Nagorno-Karabakh;
79. Calls on the VP/HR and the EEAS to further support Armenia via the European Peace Facility, in particular with a view to strengthening its defence capabilities against hybrid threats in order to enlarge its security space beyond the Collective Security Treaty Organization; welcomes the establishment of the EU-Armenia Political and Security Dialogue and its second meeting on 15 November 2023;
80. Stresses that Parliament's multiple warnings about the situation have not led to any change in the EU's policy regarding Azerbaijan; insists that any deepening of EU relations with Azerbaijan must remain conditional on the country making substantial progress on respect for human rights, the rule of law, democracy and fundamental freedoms, including the protection of ethnic minorities; expresses, in this regard, its serious concern about the recent worsening crackdown on independent journalists and human rights defenders in Azerbaijan; further calls on the EU to immediately impose sanctions on Azerbaijan and to suspend the Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy; further, questions the suitability of Azerbaijan hosting COP29 in 2024 while the country plans to increase its fossil fuel production by a third over the next decade;
81. Reiterates its support for the democratically elected government of Armenia and its full respect of the country's sovereignty, democracy and territorial integrity; praises Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's declaration that Armenia will not be dragged into a new war with Azerbaijan and his recent calls for the resumption of peace talks at the highest level with Azerbaijan; condemns Russian's interference in Armenia, which are aimed at

spreading unrest; calls for the EU to strengthen its engagement in the South Caucasus; welcomes Armenia's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

82. Remains concerned by the fact that Türkiye's Government has not reversed the negative trend of deterioration of democracy, the rule of law, fundamental rights and the independence of the judiciary, that Türkiye's foreign policy continues to be at odds with EU priorities under the CFSP and that Türkiye has not aligned with EU sanctions against Russia; strongly disagrees with and expresses its disappointment about the statements made by the President of Türkiye claiming that Hamas is not a terrorist organisation;
83. Stresses that in the absence of a drastic change of course by the Turkish Government, Türkiye's EU accession process cannot be resumed; calls for the EU and the Turkish Government to move forward towards a closer, more dynamic and strategic partnership, considering the key role played by Türkiye in the region and its significance as a NATO ally; recommends starting a reflection process to find a parallel and realistic framework for EU-Türkiye relations that encompasses the interests of all parties involved, which would anchor Türkiye to the EU instead of pushing it towards Russia or Iran;
84. Welcomes the partial de-escalation of tensions in the East Mediterranean and Aegean and calls on Türkiye to work on a constructive, and not assertive or aggressive, approach with its partners in these regions; welcomes, in this regard, Türkiye's and Hungary's long-delayed decision to finally approve Sweden's accession to NATO and urges the Turkish national authorities to cooperate closely with the EU's Sanctions Envoy;
85. Condemns the launch of illegal construction work by the Turkish Cypriot side within the buffer zone near the bi-communal village of Pyla/Pile in Cyprus, as well as the assaults against UN peacekeepers and damage to UN vehicles on 18 August 2023; calls for the status of the buffer zone and the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus to be respected; recalls that threats to the safety of UN peacekeepers and damage to UN property constitute crimes under international law; urges Türkiye and the Turkish Cypriot leadership to cease and reverse all such unilateral activities and avoid any further actions and provocations that are not conducive to the resumption of the UN-led negotiations; welcomes the understanding reached by the sides to find a way forward on the Pyla/Pile road in Cyprus and to stabilise the situation and calls for engagement in peaceful negotiations and a real process of dialogue;
86. Deplores the fact that, more than 25 years after the start of the Barcelona Process, the creation of a shared area of prosperity, stability and freedom with the Mediterranean countries of the Southern Neighbourhood has not been achieved; encourages the VP/HR and the Commission to strengthen the southern dimension of the EU's neighbourhood, including through increased dialogue and strengthened conditionality tied to the disbursement of funds, and to secure adequate resources for the timely and effective implementation of the new agenda for the Mediterranean, stresses the important role played by the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood in the management of migration based on the principles of the human rights of migrants and refugees as enshrined in international, regional and national law, solidarity, balance and the sharing of responsibility between countries; stresses the importance of cooperation with these countries in order to mitigate the root causes of migration, consequences of irregular

migration, human trafficking and smuggling of illicit weapons and cultural goods; points out that many countries in the Southern Neighbourhood are rich in energy resources and can contribute more to the diversification of energy supply in European countries;

87. Takes note of the political agreement on a comprehensive partnership package with Tunisia; recalls that this memorandum of understanding comes with conditions and urges the Commission to ensure compliance with these; regrets, however, the fact that the memorandum of understanding failed to include the human rights obligations expected by the EU in its agreements with third countries; believes, furthermore, that EU-Tunisia relations should be based on the framework of the EU-Tunisia Association Agreement and on respect for democracy, human rights and rule of law, with full parliamentary oversight regarding the implementation of the Association Agreement and the disbursement of EU funds to Tunisia; firmly believes that the transfer of EU funds should be conditional on Tunisia's compliance with human rights standards and include conditionality and accountability provisions; calls on the Commission to present a mechanism to ensure compliance in this regard, exploring all relevant options;
88. Is highly concerned about the authoritarian drift by the Tunisian leadership, the detention of opposition and civil society figures and the persecution of refugees and asylum seekers, and urges the Tunisian authorities to respect international humanitarian rights law and migrants' rights; condemns, furthermore, the decision of the Tunisian authorities to refuse entry to the delegation from Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and urges the Tunisian authorities to allow open political dialogue;
89. Highlights the necessity of engaging more strategically with the Gulf countries, particularly on the promotion of regional security cooperation, climate action, human rights and the fight against corruption; welcomes the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran; welcomes, furthermore, the proposed establishment of a structured security dialogue between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council; recalls, in this regard, the need for full transparency and accountability in the strategic partnership between the EU and the Gulf countries; calls for the EU and the Member States to continue to emphasise respect for human rights and gender equality and the gradual alignment of values, in particular when responding to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its consequences;
90. Underlines that the CFSP aims to develop and consolidate democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and that these goals are not shared by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; takes note of the fact that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to engage with the EU in the framework of a regular dialogue on human rights; condemns, however, the country's persistent violation of human rights, in particular the application of death sentences and executions and the restrictions on civil and political rights, as well as free speech, and calls for the death penalty to be abolished;
91. Denounces the brutal crackdown by Iranian police and security forces, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), on demonstrations following the killing of Jina Mahsa Amini and many others tortured and killed who opposed the regime; calls for additional restrictive measures against the IRGC, its subsidiary forces and all those responsible for the human rights violations against peaceful protests, including the highest-ranking officials; calls on the Council to designate the IRGC and its subsidiary

forces, including Iran's Morality Police, the paramilitary Basij militia and the Quds Force, as a terrorist entity;

92. Reiterates its support for the peaceful opposition movement across Iran, which protests against the systemic and increasing oppression of women and the severe violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms; condemns the Iranian regime for its campaign of harassment, surveillance, kidnappings and death threats against Iranian activists and for its systematic discrimination against women through laws and regulations that severely restrict their freedoms; calls for the establishment of an international investigative and accountability mechanism for human rights violations perpetrated by the Iranian Government;
93. Condemns the Iranian regime for its provision of military equipment to Russia in the latter's brutal and illegal aggression against Ukraine; stresses that the Islamic Republic is contributing to war crimes in Ukraine, as the equipment is being used to target civilians and civilian infrastructure, and calls for a robust EU response to Iran's involvement in Russia's war; condemns Iran's sponsoring of designated terror groups, including Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Houthis; condemns the illegal, unacceptable and profoundly destabilising Houthi attacks against commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea, using missiles, small boats, and attempted hijackings; stresses that these have caused significant disruption to global trade, as shipping companies are forced to reroute much of the Red Sea's traffic around the southern tip of Africa; calls for collective action and encourages enhanced EU engagement and international cooperation; welcomes, in this context, the decision by the Member States to launch a maritime CSDP operation, under the name ASPIDES, to protect merchant vessels, by strengthening maritime situational awareness and accompanying vessels to deter attacks and ensure the freedom of navigation on one of the world's most critical waterways; calls for an immediate end to these illegal attacks and the release of unlawfully detained vessels and crews; expresses concern about the destabilising effect of Iran's activities on the Middle East and the prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace; stresses the need to address and counter Iran's wider malign and destabilising activities across the Middle East and beyond; strongly opposes Iran's hostage diplomacy and demands that all European nationals being detained in Iran be freed and allowed to leave the country; calls on the regime in Teheran to cease its intimidation and repression campaign against Iranian diaspora groups in the EU and worldwide; calls on the Member States' governments to be aware of the specific transnational repression tactics employed by Iran;
94. Expresses grave concern over the Islamic Republic's continued enrichment of uranium up to 60 % purity and its repeated violations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA); encourages the resumption of negotiations on the JCPOA Treaty;
95. Condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the despicable terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages taken by the terrorist group Hamas and for the bodies of deceased hostages to be returned; recognises Israel's right to self-defence, as enshrined in and constrained by international law, and that as such the actions of Israel must strictly comply with international humanitarian law, which outlines that all parties to a conflict must distinguish between combatants and civilians at all times, that attacks must only be directed at military targets and that civilians and civilian infrastructure must not be targeted in attacks; condemns the Israeli military's disproportionate response, which has caused a civilian

death toll of unprecedented scale; is very concerned about the extremely deteriorated humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and calls for a permanent ceasefire so that aid can be provided to civilians in the Gaza Strip; urges the international community to continue and increase its humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in the area and reiterates that EU humanitarian aid must continue being delivered to them; urges the Israeli authorities to ensure the continuous access of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, with a focus on the uninterrupted delivery of essentials such as fuel, food, water, medical supplies and shelter, in line with international law; regrets the fact that the Palestinian Authority has not held elections since 2005, which hampers its credibility, and expects elections to be held soon;

96. Calls on Member States to support the ICJ and to demand that Israel immediately comply with the legally binding orders issued by the court;
97. Deplores the fact that Hamas and its allies are increasingly looking to take the conflict to a far broader arena in order to exert pressure on Israel as the Gaza ground offensive intensifies; is accordingly concerned that Iran and its allies are pushing for a regional war; is extremely worried about the escalatory potential of the war, as well as its impact on the wider region, especially the situation at the Israeli-Lebanese border, as fighters loyal to Hezbollah are firing rockets into Israel; stresses the importance of defusing tensions in the region;
98. Reiterates its unwavering support for a negotiated two-state solution for Israel and Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders, with two sovereign, democratic states as peaceful neighbours and with Jerusalem as their shared capital; encourages the EEAS and the Member States to take a European initiative to put the two-state solution back on track; calls, in this context, on the VP/HR and the Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process to garner international support for the 'Peace Day Effort' for Middle East Peace, launched in New York at the UN General Assembly in September 2023; is aware of the fact that, for negotiations to resume, international stakeholders, including the US, the United Nations, the EU and Arab states, need to complement each other's efforts for them to be constructive; recalls that settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal under international law; strongly condemns the rise in extremist settler violence committed against Palestinians; calls for an immediate end to the settlement policy, as well as an end to the occupation of the Palestinian territories, which are major impediments to the viability of the two-state solution; calls for restrictive measures to be imposed on extremist settlers who violate human rights and international law; supports a just, viable and agreed-upon solution to the question of Palestinian refugees; emphasises that continued support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East remains a key element of the EU strategy for contributing to stability and peace in the Middle East; takes note with concern of the recent allegations made by Israel against 12 staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); welcomes the UN's immediate and determined response to the allegations, including the immediate dismissal of the employees in question and the launching of two separate investigations into the matter by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the independent review group led by former French Minister Catherine Colonna and three European organisations; calls on Israel, in this regard, to cooperate closely and provide all necessary evidence to the OIOS and the independent review group; welcomes the Commission's decision not to suspend funding to UNRWA before the UN has announced the outcome of the investigations and the actions it will

take; urges all donor countries which have suspended their funding to UNRWA owing to the allegations to reconsider their decision in the light of UNRWA's immediate response to the allegations and its crucial role of delivering life-saving assistance to the two million people in the Gaza Strip who depend on it for their survival amid one of the largest and most complex humanitarian crises in the world;

99. Reiterates the EU's strong support for the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice; calls for those responsible for terrorist acts and for violations of international law to be held to account and calls, to that end, for all possible war crimes to be investigated; reiterates that deliberate attacks on civilians are serious violations of international law, as is the forcible transfer of populations; demands justice for the victims of Hamas's terrorist attacks, which included mass murder and sexual torture, both on 7 October 2023 and since then; takes note of the case brought by South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice;
100. Recognises that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine presents both challenges and opportunities for the states in Central Asia, which have traditionally maintained close relations with Russia; is concerned about Russian and Chinese pressure exerted in the region and stresses the need to scale up the EU's presence in Central Asia in response; underlines the EU's interest in increasing economic relations and intensifying political ties with the countries of Central Asia, in part to address the circumvention of sanctions against Russia and Belarus; calls on the national authorities of these countries, particularly those of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, to cooperate closely with the EU, in particular its Sanctions Envoy, and also recalls, in this regard, the relevance of closer working relations with the OSCE;
101. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to continue promoting political and economic reforms that strengthen the rule of law, democracy, good governance and respect for human rights, including in the context of the generalised scheme of preferences (GSP) and GSP+ where relevant, and to encourage good neighbourly relations; reiterates that all countries of the Central Asia region must commit to upholding the UN Charter, particularly the principles of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries;
102. Welcomes the outcomes of the second EU-Central Asia Economic Forum in Almaty in May 2023 and the second meeting between the President of the European Council and the Heads of State of all five Central Asian countries in June 2023; calls for these high-level meetings and declarations to be followed up on with concrete actions; welcomes, in this context, the fact that the first EU-Central Asia summit is planned for this year; welcomes the endorsement of the Joint Roadmap for Deepening Ties between the EU and Central Asia, which serves as a strategic blueprint to advance dialogue and cooperation in specific areas, including building cultural, social and economic resilience; urges the Commission and the Member States to sign the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) with Kyrgyzstan, finalise preparatory work towards signing the EPCA with Uzbekistan and rapidly progress in the ongoing negotiations for an EPCA with Tajikistan;
103. Recalls that the countries of Central Asia are major suppliers of raw materials and energy; takes the view that the EU has a strong interest in reinvigorating the Middle Corridor not only as a regional economic zone, but also as an alternative to the New Eurasian Land Bridge, which passes through sanctioned Russian and Belarusian

territory; stresses the significance of promoting regional integration along the Middle Corridor, also in order to attract financing for infrastructure projects under the Global Gateway;

104. Reiterates its non-recognition of the de facto Afghan Government; is concerned by the dire economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, as well as by the violation of the rights of women and girls in the country; denounces the drastic reduction in the capacity of the World Food Programme to provide food aid to the Afghan population and calls on the Commission and the Member States to make sure that critical humanitarian aid is provided to the Afghan population and ensure supplementary funding for emergency aid; calls on the VP/HR to raise the idea of prosecuting Taliban leaders at the ICC for their crimes against women and girls;
105. Supports the five key benchmarks that were adopted by the Council on 21 September 2021 and serve as guiding principles for future engagement with the Taliban, but believes that a major effort in defining a long-term strategy is needed to address the human rights emergency and gender apartheid occurring in Afghanistan today; stresses that the EU evacuation programme for people in Afghanistan who worked for European missions, were counting on European protection and are still in imminent danger cannot be ended as long as people fulfilling the criteria remain in the country;
106. Deplores the Russian Federation's veto, in the UN Security Council meeting of 11 July 2023, with regard to the renewal of UN Security Council Resolution 2672(2023) regarding the cross-border delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in north-western Syria via Bab al-Hawa, putting at risk more than four million people who depend on humanitarian aid to meet their basic needs for food, medicine and other vital supplies; takes note of Syria's reintegration into the Arab League; considers that a normalisation with the current Syrian regime cannot take place and stresses that the Syrian political process is deadlocked;
107. Reiterates that a peaceful, free, connected, open, stable and rules-based Indo-Pacific is a vital European interest; is concerned that great power competition is imposing parameters on the EU's ability to promote multilateralism in the region; points out, in this context, that the Asia-Europe Meeting is still hamstrung because of the geopolitical tensions with Russia; acknowledges the VP/HR's efforts to engage with the region, as evidenced by the organisation of the third EU-Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum on 2 February 2024 and the VP/HR's participation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum on 14 July 2023; calls for the EU to actively support the Ministerial Forum on Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific as an annual event;
108. Encourages closer political ties with like-minded partners, in line with the EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, particularly with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and the ASEAN member states, including on maritime security, non-proliferation and resilience to hybrid threats; welcomes EEAS efforts in capacity building in the Indo-Pacific region that aim to create resilience against foreign information manipulation and interference; highlights the need to enhance people-to-people relations with our partners, in particular youth exchanges and civic and think tank cooperation; underlines that preserving peace, stability and the freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region remains of critical importance to the interests of the EU and its Member States;

109. Calls on the DPRK to abandon its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner; deplores, in the strongest possible terms, the ongoing crimes against humanity and urges the country's authorities to undertake a process of reform whereby all human rights are respected and protected; stresses the urgent need for the EU and the international community to prevent military cooperation and arms exchanges between Russia and the DPRK;
110. Notes that geopolitical challenges have strengthened the shared interest of India and the EU in ensuring security, prosperity and sustainable development; emphasises the full implementation of the 2018 EU strategy on India and the EU-India Roadmap to 2025, in close coordination with the Member States' own actions to actively engage with India; welcomes the creation of the EU-India Trade and Technology Council; encourages the deepening of relations between India and the EU as strategic partners; calls, in this context, for the commitment to regular multilevel dialogues and summits to be upheld to keep bilateral relations high on the agenda; encourages, in addition, a more structured interparliamentary dialogue between the European Parliament and its Indian counterpart; believes that such a dialogue would assist in the coordination of positions and initiatives in multilateral forums, particularly the UN, the World Trade Organisation and the G20; highlights the importance of a successful conclusion of the negotiations on an EU-India free trade agreement, taking into account sensitivities on both sides; expresses the hope that India will align its position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine with that of the transatlantic community and calls on the Council and the VP/HR to make diplomatic efforts in this regard; recalls, in this context, that any deepening of the partnership should be based on the values of freedom, democracy, pluralism, the rule of law, equality, respect for human rights, sustainable development and a commitment to promoting an inclusive rules-based global order;
111. Expresses deep concern about the latest shifts in China's domestic and military posture since the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party; considers that the growing assertiveness of China, in part through a policy of economic coercion, remains one of the primary geopolitical challenges of the 21st century; holds the view that China demonstrates that it has both the intent and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to tilt the international rules-based order; insists that this requires a multi-dimensional response through which the EU maintains its selective engagement with China on a number of key issues while de-risking its relationship by increasingly reducing economic dependence in critical sectors, in line with the EU's economic security strategy; notes that substantive engagement with China is increasingly difficult due to the more prominent competition and systemic rivalry dimensions; stresses that China remains important in many policy areas, including climate change; warns that the continued growth of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership, including in the areas of technology and military capability transfers and cooperation in the Arctic region, may increase China's ability to coerce the EU's partners in Asia and around the world; reiterates its call for a more assertive EU-China strategy that shapes relations with China in the interest of the EU and takes full account of the challenges stemming from China's rise as a global actor;
112. Condemns acts of hybrid warfare, such as cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and the surveillance or espionage of Chinese citizens within the EU; urges China to put an immediate end to these malign acts and to its information manipulation and electoral interference and calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement, as a matter of urgency, initiatives related to foreign interference in all democratic processes

in the EU, including disinformation, as suggested by Parliament; condemns the sanctions against Members of the European Parliament (and other EU entities), national parliaments, European think tanks and researchers and calls for their immediate and unconditional lifting;

113. Condemns the Chinese government-led system of forced labour and its violations of human rights, which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has said may constitute crimes against humanity including high risk of genocide in Xinjiang and crimes against humanity in Tibet and Inner Mongolia, as well as the oppressive policies against other ethnic minorities; recalls that the EU's 'One China policy' remains a cornerstone of EU-China relations; reiterates its condemnation of China's violation of its international commitments, its breaches of the Sino-British and Sino-Portuguese Joint Declarations, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 'one country, two systems' principle and the Hong Kong Basic Law as well as the crackdown on the special administrative region's autonomy and opposition figures, including members of civil society and their family members; calls on the Commission to assess the autonomous status of Hong Kong and Macao in light of China's breaches of the Sino-British and Sino-Portuguese Joint Declarations and the crackdown on Hong Kong's autonomy;
114. Stresses the need to ensure a unified European approach when China uses its economic leverage to silence opposition to its human rights abuses; urges China to investigate and prevent any violations of human rights and international law; recalls that China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has a special responsibility with respect to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; is concerned about the situation of Christians and other religious minorities, including their freedom of worship in China, as they face ongoing persecution;
115. Condemns the growing trend of transnational repression by China and calls on those EU Member States that have not yet done so to suspend their extradition treaties with China and Hong Kong and to close all remaining illegal Chinese 'police stations' on their territories; expresses concern about the agreement on 'strengthening law enforcement cooperation and joint patrols' signed by the Chinese Ministry of Public Security and the Hungarian Ministry of Interior on 16 February 2024; calls on the Hungarian Government to immediately and fully disclose all details of the agreement and its potential adverse effects on the common security and sovereignty of the European Union; calls on the EEAS to closely monitor the trials of political prisoners in Hong Kong and to call for the release of such political prisoners, including the founder of Apple Daily, Jimmy Lai;
116. Takes note of the latest BRICS summit that took place in Johannesburg in August 2023, of China's geopolitical objectives with regard to BRICS and of China's narratives in the context of its Global Development, Global Security and Global Civilization Initiatives; highlights the need for the EU and its Member States to increase dialogue and cooperation with some members of BRICS+ to counter Russia's malign actions and China's rising global influence;
117. Urges the EU and China to intensify dialogue and close cooperation in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and, more generally, with regard to the sustainable use of marine biological resources and ocean governance; calls for the EU to strengthen cooperation with the UK, the US, Japan and other key actors in ocean and

fisheries policy, using its diplomatic tools to encourage China to make progress on the necessary reforms of its fisheries governance framework;

118. Strongly condemns China's continued military provocations against Taiwan and reiterates its firm rejection of any unilateral change to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, which endangers regional stability; calls for the EU and its Member States to ensure, through clear and consistent signalling, that any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, particularly by means of force or coercion, cannot be accepted and will have high costs; highlights that China's territorial claims have no basis in international law; denounces, furthermore, China's blocking of Taiwan's participation in multilateral organisations; calls on the Commission and the Member States to support Taiwan's meaningful participation in relevant international organisations such as the WHO, the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; reiterates that Taiwan is a key EU partner and a democratic ally in the Indo-Pacific region; recognises the importance of Taiwan in securing global supply chains, especially in the high-tech sector, and urges the EU and its Member States to engage in closer cooperation with Taiwan; welcomes the visits to Taiwan, since 2021, by consecutive official delegations from Parliament committees and encourages further exchanges between the EU and Taiwan; calls on the Commission to launch, without delay, preparatory measures for negotiations on a bilateral investment agreement with Taiwan;
119. Denounces statements by the Chinese President that China will never renounce the right to use force with respect to Taiwan and encourages China's leadership to exercise caution and restraint in the wake of the Taiwanese presidential and parliamentary elections; notes that neither Taiwan nor China is subordinate to the other; expresses grave concern over China's use of hostile disinformation to undermine trust in Taiwan's democracy and governance; calls for the EU and its Member States to cooperate with international partners in helping to sustain democracy in Taiwan, keeping it free from foreign interference and threats, and underlines that only Taiwan's democratically elected government can represent the Taiwanese people on the international stage; notes the need to also focus on preventive diplomacy to avoid any escalation in the Taiwan Strait;
120. Notes that China has focused on strengthening its influence in the Indo-Pacific through increased aid, development, diplomacy and security cooperation over the last decade; highlights that resources need to be pooled to effectively enhance the EU's political footprint and assert the EU as a reliable and strategic partner in the Pacific; expresses concern about China's attempts to dominate its near-seas region, including the South China Sea and the East China Sea, which could seriously tilt the regional balance of power and negatively affect the EU's economic and political interests; urges China, in this regard, to stop any military actions and pressure directed against the Philippine Navy and its occupied islands in the South China Sea; encourages the Member States to join forces and engage at ministerial level with Pacific island countries and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States; stresses that a serious follow-up to COP28 is a key concern for the countries in the region and therefore urges the EEAS to promote global support for a sustainable green transition and to step up its climate diplomacy to consolidate cooperation on climate change adaptation and mitigation measures;

121. Underlines that ASEAN is a crucial ally in reinforcing rules-based multilateralism; calls for close cooperation in line with the EU-ASEAN joint leaders' statement of 14 December 2022 in order to shape regional dynamics beyond the binary constraints of Chinese-American competition; further stresses, in this context, the importance of preserving freedom of navigation in the South and East China Seas; recalls the need to fully implement the EU-ASEAN Plan of Action 2023-2027;
122. Welcomes the signature of the Samoa Agreement, and its regional protocols, which will allow for an unprecedented regional focus on African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, and calls for swift ratification by both the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the EU; urges the Commission and the VP/HR to ensure that the EU-African Union summit of February 2022 is followed up on in order to deepen cooperation on initiatives of shared interest and to meet the needs of partner countries in Africa; calls for the postponed third EU-African Union ministerial meeting to take place as soon as possible; emphasises that the EU should pursue geographical priorities on a bilateral level, focusing on key African partners, but also on a regional level, focusing on the implementation of regional strategies for the Sahel and coastal countries, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa; welcomes, in this context, Operation Atalanta, which, as the first EU naval operation with the dedicated objective of protecting UN World Food Programme vessels, has become a successful counter-piracy operation; encourages the Council and the Member States to consider extending the geographical scope of Operation Atalanta;
123. Attaches particular importance to strengthening security collaboration with countries of the Gulf of Guinea, supporting their integration and intra-regional solidarity; welcomes, in this respect, the launch of the EU security and defence initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea, for an initial duration of two years, in close coordination with Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin; expresses grave concern about the deterioration of stability in the Sahel, exacerbated by the military coup in Niger and the dissolution of democratic institutions; does not and will not recognise the authorities resulting from the coup in Niger; reiterates its very clear call for the full restoration, without delay, of the constitutional order and fully associates itself with the declarations of the Economic Community of West African States and its African and international partners in this regard;
124. Denounces Russia's interference in Africa, in particular via the increased footprint of the Wagner Group on the continent, and strongly condemns the abuse and crimes committed; recalls that stability in the Sahel has direct repercussions for the security and stability of European external borders in the Mediterranean; calls for the EU to increase resources and enhance cooperation with our partners to combat human trafficking through the Mediterranean and Belarus and dismantle the criminal networks used for human trafficking; takes the view that EU policy with regard to the Sahel has not produced the expected results and takes note of the VP/HR's announcement about revising the EU's strategy with regard to the Sahel;
125. Stresses the need to adapt the current approach in order to retain influence and calls for EU engagement and support to the region to be strengthened; welcomes the Commission's preparation of a 'new strategic approach' to the partnership with Africa, taking into account the new geopolitical situation, and urges the Commission and the Council to develop a mutually beneficial partnership that focuses on common issues for Europe and Africa; welcomes the Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package

of EUR 150 billion, aimed at supporting African partners in the development of a strong, inclusive, green and digital recovery and transformation; considers that efforts to fight disinformation and better demonstrate the EU's support to Africa have to be urgently increased and improved;

126. Stresses that access to safe drinking water is one of the major challenges of the 21st century, especially since nearly 60 % of aquifer resources cross political territorial borders; highlights that water scarcity can lead to the most serious conflicts if the use of flows in an integrated and shared manner is not envisaged; highlights the need for the EU to adopt a strategy to facilitate technological and geopolitical solutions in areas affected by water scarcity, which has highly destabilising potential; encourages countries situated in the main areas of water-related conflict to sign the 1992 Helsinki Water Convention on the protection and use of cross-border waterways and international lakes;
127. Condemns the actions undertaken by Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela, which present a direct threat to the sovereignty of Guyana; calls on the international community to engage in discussions to determine a diplomatic solution respecting the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on this longstanding dispute;
128. Condemns the authoritarian regime of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo who are systematically undermining Nicaragua's democratic structures, including the separation of powers, the electoral system and respect for human rights; recalls that the regime in Nicaragua maintains strong ties to other autocracies, such as those in Iran, Venezuela and Cuba, while consistently demonstrating its support for the Kremlin by, inter alia, authorising a Russian military presence in Nicaragua; calls for the liberation of all political prisoners, among whom are several Catholic bishops and priests, who have been detained in an attempt to silence dissidents, for the return to the rule of law and for a dialogue between the regime and the opposition to be facilitated by the EU; condemns the continued psychological and physical abuse that all detainees suffer at the hands of police and prison authorities, and the situation of incommunicado detention in which some of them are being held, without access to their lawyers, families or medical care; reminds the Nicaraguan regime of its responsibility to ensure that detention conditions comply with its international human rights obligations and with standards such as the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules);
129. Considers the EU's political approach towards Cuba to be constructive but critical, as enshrined by the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement in 2016; regrets that the Cuban regime has continually ignored and breached these principles and rights for decades; condemns, in the strongest terms, the systematic human rights violations and abuses, which have increased in recent times, against the thousands of political prisoners, protesters, political dissidents, religious leaders, human rights activists and independent artists, among others, perpetrated by the Cuban regime; urges the Cuban authorities to immediately put an end to the policy of repression; notes that the fourth Human Rights Dialogue took place in Cuba in November 2023, but condemns the fact that no independent civil society organisations took part; concludes, therefore, that this exercise did not yield tangible results; believes that the EU considers the dialogue to be an end in itself and not an instrument to improve the living conditions of Cuban citizens who have witnessed serious food shortages and health crises prompting a large-scale exodus; rejects the fact that the Cuban regime currently forbids 'in loco' visits as part of

an oversight mechanism available to impartial international actors such as the European Union; strongly condemns, in this light, that the Cuban regime denied a delegation from the European Parliament to visit the country;

130. Notes that the EU should take a particular interest in reinvigorating its partnership with countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; notes that the EU's engagement in the region has dwindled in recent decades, which has created a vacuum for foreign malign actors; urges countries across Latin America to adopt a firmer attitude of condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine; is concerned about the increase in organised crime and drug trafficking in Latin America, which also has an impact on the EU; strongly condemns the violence and criminal attacks carried out by armed groups involved in drug trafficking in and around Ecuador; calls for a substantial increase in bi-regional cooperation to combat this phenomenon;
131. Takes note of the summit on 17 and 18 July 2023 between the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and hopes that it will improve bi-regional relations, particularly given the growing influence of China and Russia in Latin America and the Caribbean; calls on the Member States and the EEAS to pursue proactive diplomacy in the region, with a strong emphasis on defending the multilateral global order, international law and respect for democracy and human rights; welcomes the signing of the new EU-Chile Advanced Framework Agreement, which consists of a political and cooperation part as well as a trade and investment part, and calls for progress to be made towards the signing and ratification of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement; calls on the Commission and the Belgian Council Presidency to advance decisively and conclude the agreement with Mercosur before the end of the current parliamentary term, while keeping the highest level of ambition in relation to the enforcement of its sustainability provisions; also welcomes the finalisation of the ratification process of the EU-Central America Association Agreement;
132. Stresses the importance of fostering even stronger relations with Norway, the EU's most closely associated partner through the Agreement on the European Economic Area; welcomes the conclusion of explanatory talks with Switzerland and calls for making progress in negotiations for a new agreement; welcomes the outcome of the negotiations for an Association Agreement between the EU and Andorra and San Marino; takes note of the suspension of negotiations on an association agreement with Monaco;
133. Calls for stronger EU engagement in the Arctic, as it is of key geostrategic importance for the EU in view of the consequences of climate change, industrial and economic competition, security threats, inter alia caused by Russian military expansion in the High North, and the freedom and safety of navigation; notes that NATO has underlined the significance of the High North, in particular due to the expansion of possible maritime routes, access to natural resources, climate conservation and territorial claims, which all may lead to increased geopolitical tensions; highlights that the EU's engagement in the region must involve cooperation with local partners, including indigenous people;
134. Calls for stronger support for the EU maritime security strategy, as freedom of navigation presents a growing challenge; insists that freedom of navigation must be respected at all times, with priority given to de-escalation and the prevention of armed conflicts and military incidents;

135. Highlights that the southern polar region should be considered an emerging area of interest given shifting geopolitical dynamics; underlines the importance of multilateral cooperation in the management of marine protected areas; encourages the EU to develop a purposeful European polar agenda that seeks to integrate its regional ambitions into its CFSP and which brings together the Member States' considerable interests in science, ocean conservation, fisheries, regional peace and rules-based multilateralism; calls for an enhanced EU-China-Antarctic dialogue;

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136. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.