

Human rights in the world 2012 and EU policy on the matter

European Parliament resolution of 11 December 2013 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2012 and the European Union's policy on the matter (2013/2152(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other UN human rights treaties and instruments,
- having regard to the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000 (A/Res/55/2) and the relevant resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly,
- having regard to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012 adopted by the Council on 6 June 2013,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2012 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2011 and the European Union's policy on the matter¹,
- having regard to the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (11855/2012), as adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 25 June 2012,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2012 on the Review of the EU's Human Rights Strategy²,
- having regard to Council Decision 2012/440/CFSP of 25 July 2012 appointing the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights³,
- having regard to its recommendation of 13 June 2012 on the EU Special Representative for Human Rights⁴,
- having regard to the Council Conclusions of 14 May 2012 on 'Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change',
- having regard to its recommendation to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, to the Council and to the Commission of 13 June 2013 on the 2013 review of the organisation and the functioning of the EEAS⁵,

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0503.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0504.

³ OJ L 200, 27.7.2012, p. 21.

⁴ OJ C 332 E, 15.11.2013, p. 114.

⁵ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0278.

- having regard to the European Union’s Guidelines on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law¹,
- having regard to the European Union’s Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief, and to Parliament’s recommendation to the Council of 13 June 2013 on the draft EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief,
- having regard to the European Union’s Guidelines to Promote and Protect the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Persons,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Dialogues adopted by the Council on 13 December 2001 and reviewed on 19 January 2009,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2013 on corruption in the public and private sectors: the impact on human rights in third countries²,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 February 2013 on the 22nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council³,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 November 2011 on EU support for the ICC: facing challenges and overcoming difficulties⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2011 on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy⁵,
- having regard to the Joint Communications of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 20 March 2013 on ‘European Neighbourhood Policy: Working towards a Stronger Partnership’ (JOIN(2013)4), and of 25 May 2011 on ‘A new response to a changing Neighbourhood: A review of the European Neighbourhood Policy’ (COM(2011)0303),
- having regard to the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Strategy Paper for 2011-2013 and to the Commission’s proposal for a new financial regulation for the EIDHR 2014-2020 (COM(2011)0844),
- having regard to its recommendation of 29 March 2012 to the Council on the modalities for the possible establishment of a European Endowment for Democracy (EED)⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on EU policies in favour of human rights defenders⁷,

¹ http://www.eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/docs/guidelines_en.pdf.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0394.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0055.

⁴ OJ C 153 E, 31.5.2013, p. 115.

⁵ OJ C 168 E, 14.6.2013, p. 26.

⁶ OJ C 257 E, 6.9.2013, p. 13.

⁷ OJ C 236 E, 12.8.2011, p. 69.

- having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2011 on EU external policies in favour of democratisation¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2012 on a digital freedom strategy in EU foreign policy²,
 - having regard to the UN General Assembly resolution 67/176 of 20 December 2012 on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty,
 - having regard to United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013) on women, peace and security,
 - having regard to the report on the EU indicators for a Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security, adopted by the EU Council on 13 May 2011,
 - having regard to the UN General Assembly resolutions on the rights of the child, most recently that of 4 April 2012 (66/141),
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2010 on human rights and social and environmental standards in international trade agreements³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2010 on international trade policy in the context of climate change imperatives⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2010 on corporate social responsibility in international trade agreements⁵,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Development and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0418/2013),
- A. whereas the various transitional processes, including popular uprisings, conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as trapped transitions in authoritarian countries, have posed increasing challenges to the EU's policies in support of human rights and democracy in the world; whereas the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012 demonstrates the need for the EU to continue to develop flexible policy responses; whereas the most fundamental policy choice for the EU concerns the resilience and political determination to stay true to the founding values of the European Union in challenging times under the pressure of other policy objectives and interests;
- B. whereas justice, the rule of law, responsibility, transparency and accountability, the fight against impunity, fair trials and an independent judiciary are indispensable elements in the protection of human rights;

¹ OJ C 33 E, 5.2.2013, p. 165.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0470.

³ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 31.

⁴ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 94.

⁵ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 101.

- C. whereas Article 21 of the TEU further strengthened the EU's commitment to act on the international scene guided by the principles of 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 United Nations Charter, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international law;
- D. whereas the Copenhagen political criteria of 'stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities' remains a fundamental feature of the enlargement process;
- E. whereas the uprisings in the Arab world prompted the European Union to acknowledge the failure of past policies and to commit itself to a 'more for more' approach in the Review of the Neighbourhood Policy, based on a commitment to 'adapt levels of EU support to partners according to progress on political reforms and building deep democracy', as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including free and fair elections, freedom of association, expression and assembly, a free press and media, the rule of law administered by an independent judiciary, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief;
- F. whereas the Council Conclusions on the European Commission's Agenda for Change in EU Development Policy, adopted in May 2012, specifically state that 'support to partners will be adapted to their development situation and commitment and progress with regard to human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance'; whereas the latest EU Common Position regarding the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness pledges that systematic reference should be made in development co-operation to 'democratic ownership' where partner countries are responsible for promoting an enabling environment for civil society and for strengthening the role of parliaments, local authorities, national audit institutions and the free media;
- G. whereas the EU Council, in June 2012, adopted a Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, committing the EU institutions to the attainment of several tangible policy objectives; whereas the EU Council, in July 2012, created the position and named the first thematic EU Special Representative for Human Rights; whereas the procedure to adopt a new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, due to take effect in January 2015 when the current action plan expires, needs to start in the spring of 2014;
- H. whereas the European Endowment for Democracy was established in October 2012 with the main purpose of making direct grants to pro-democracy activists or organisations struggling for democratic transition in the European Neighbourhood and beyond;
- I. whereas the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) was accompanied by assurances that support for human rights and democracy would be a silver thread running through the new EU diplomatic service; whereas the network of EU Delegations around the world provide the Vice President of the Commission/EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) with a new capability to carry out EU human rights policy;
- J. whereas in its resolutions on the previous Annual Report and on the review of the EU human rights strategy (both of which were adopted in December 2012), Parliament

stressed the need for a reform of its own practices to mainstream human rights in its activities and follow up on its urgent resolutions condemning breaches of democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

- K. whereas the European Parliament Eurobarometer survey of public opinion, carried out in the 27 EU Member States in November and December 2012, shows once more that the protection of human rights remains the most important value in the eyes of Europeans; whereas credible implementation of stated EU commitments to support human rights and democracy in its external policies is crucial to maintaining the overall credibility of EU foreign policy;
- L. whereas in December 2012 the European Union received the Nobel Prize for its contribution to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe;

General points

1. Considers human rights to be at the centre of the EU's relations with all third countries, including its strategic partners; stresses that EU human rights policy needs to be consistent in complying with the Treaty obligations, ensuring coherence between internal and external policies and avoiding double standards in external policies; calls, therefore, for the adoption of EU Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on human rights and strategic partners that would establish a common threshold for Member States and for EU officials in terms of the human rights concerns that they have to raise, as a minimum, with their strategic partner counterparts;
2. Calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security (VP/HR), the EU Special Representative for Human Rights and the EEAS to pursue these commitments and mainstream human rights and democracy in the EU's relations with its partners, including at the highest political level, by making use of all relevant EU external policy instruments;
3. Recognises the crucial role played by civil society in the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights; calls on the VP/HR to ensure close cooperation and partnership with civil society, including human rights defenders; considers also that the EU should throw its full weight behind all advocates of human rights, democracy, liberty and transparency throughout the world;
4. Recognises that EU institutions and all Member States should take a firm and coherent approach to human rights abuses worldwide in a transparent and accountable manner; considers that, when faced with cases of persistent human rights violations, the EU should speak up with one voice and ensure that its message is heard by both abusive governments and their peoples; calls on the Foreign Affairs Council to hold an annual public debate on human rights;
5. Recalls its determination to be closely associated with and consulted on the implementation of the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy;

The 2012 EU Annual Report

6. Welcomes the adoption of the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012; expects a continuous commitment from the VP/HR, with regular reports to Parliament; calls for active and constructive discussions among EU institutions in preparing future reports that will raise the profile of the EU's activities in this field;
7. Believes that the Annual Report should become an essential tool for the communication and discussion of EU activities in the area of human rights and democracy; welcomes therefore the commitment of the VP/HR and the EEAS to use EU annual reports as implementation reports on the EU Strategic Framework and the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy;
8. Notes the references to actions by the EU Special Representative on Human Rights in the Annual Report and encourages the VP/HR and the EEAS to include more in-depth analyses, especially when it comes to his role in implementing the Strategic Framework and the Action Plan, in order to provide an adequate description of his role and work;
9. Acknowledges the efforts made to list the various EU actions in the field of human rights and democracy support in the country reports, which provide a wealth of information about the work of the EU institutions around the world; regrets, nevertheless, that the country reports still seem to lack a systematic, clear and coherent framework that would allow for more rigorous analysis on the impact and efficiency of EU action;
10. Reiterates its view that the country reports should be further strengthened and should reflect the implementation of the human rights country strategies and thus refer to specific benchmarks based on a set of indicators to assess both positive and negative trends, evaluate the efficiency of EU actions and provide grounds for adapting the levels of EU support according to progress on human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance;
11. Welcomes the effort to include activities by the European Parliament in the Annual Report, calls for use to be made of Parliament's achievements and potential, including the numerous studies and analyses carried out by Parliament, and strongly encourages the VP/HR and the EEAS to report on the EU action taken on Parliament's resolutions, including on urgency resolutions relating to breaches of human rights; calls for a constant flow of information and cooperation between Parliament and the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, particularly in emergency situations;
12. Welcomes the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012, as it shows the efforts that the EU is deploying to promote the mainstreaming of human rights, gender equality, democracy and good governance in development policies and instruments;

EU Policy Framework

Strategic Framework and the Action Plan

13. Reiterates its appreciation of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy as an important milestone in integrating and mainstreaming human rights across all EU external policies; underlines the need for a general consensus and enhanced coordination of the EU's human rights policy between the EU institutions and the Member States; calls on the EEAS to step up its efforts to increase the sense of

ownership of this Action Plan among Member States; calls for the inclusion of a section on the implementation of the Action Plan by Member States in the Annual Report;

14. Stresses the vital importance of efficient and credible implementation of the stated commitments, both in the Strategic Framework and in the Action Plan; points out that credibility requires adequate resourcing of dedicated human rights policies and consistent mainstreaming at a high political level, such as at ministerial and summit meetings with third countries, including with strategic partners;
15. Regrets the fact that economic, social and cultural rights remain largely neglected by the EU's human rights policy in contrast with the EU's stated commitment to the indivisibility and interdependence of rights, and calls on the EEAS, the Commission and the Member States to step up their efforts in this direction, including in the field of labour and social rights;
16. Notes that the current Action Plan will be concluded at the end of 2014; expects the VP/HR and the EEAS to engage in a timely review and consultations with the Member States, the Commission, Parliament and civil society, leading to the adoption of a new Action Plan that will take effect in January 2015;

EU Special Representative for Human Rights

17. Recognises the importance of the mandate given to the first EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights; encourages the EUSR to enhance the visibility, mainstreaming, coherence, consistency and effectiveness of EU human rights policy, in particular on women's rights and the rights of all minorities, and to strike the right balance between silent and public diplomacy in carrying out his mandate; repeats its recommendation that the EUSR provide Parliament with a regular report on his activities and clarification of his thematic and geographic priorities, and ensure that concerns raised by Parliament are followed up;
18. Commends the EUSR on the openness of the dialogue which he has conducted with Parliament and civil society, thus establishing an important practice that should be continued and consolidated to ensure due transparency and accountability; welcomes the EUSR's cooperation with regional bodies and in multilateral fora and encourages him to further expand such activities;
19. Welcomes the fact that cooperation with the EUSR for Human Rights was included in the mandate of the geographic EUSR for the Sahel, and urges the Council and the VP/HR to adopt this practice too, with regard to the mandates of future geographic EUSRs;

EU Guidelines on Human Rights

20. Welcomes the adoption of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief, and on the human rights of LGBTI persons; reminds the EEAS, however, to respect good interinstitutional practice and engage in a timely manner and with the proper political bodies within Parliament when developing any new strategic tools such as guidelines or when reviewing existing ones; recalls Parliament's recommendation to the Council on the Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief, in which Parliament proposed an ambitious set of instruments, providing suggestions for the practical implementation of the Guidelines in order to achieve substantial progress in the protection and promotion of this

fundamental and universal freedom; commends the practice adopted by the EEAS and the Council of reviewing and revising older guidelines; encourages the EEAS to adopt a more rigorous review process involving thorough consultation of stakeholders in order to adapt to changing circumstances;

21. Urges the EEAS and the Council to pay particular attention to the issue of proper implementation plans for the Guidelines; recommends further training and awareness-raising among EEAS and EU Delegation staff, as well as among Member State diplomats; expresses its particular concern regarding the implementation of the Guidelines on international humanitarian law and the Guidelines on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;

Human rights dialogues with third countries

22. Notes the continued difficulties in achieving concrete progress in several of the EU's human rights dialogues and consultations; encourages the EU to seek new ways of making the dialogues with countries of concern more meaningful; underlines the need to pursue determined, ambitious, and transparent human rights policy in these dialogues; calls, therefore, on the EU to draw clear political conclusions when the human rights dialogue is not constructive and, in such cases or in cases of persistent human rights violations, put more emphasis on political dialogue, démarches and public diplomacy; warns, furthermore, against diverting human rights discussions away from high-level political dialogues;
23. Believes that human rights dialogues and consultations should be strengthening and supporting civil society, human rights defenders, trade unions, journalists, lawyers and parliamentarians who stand up and challenge abuses at home and demand that their rights be respected; calls on the EU to ensure that human rights dialogues and consultations are ambitious and accompanied by clear public benchmarks on the basis of which their success can be objectively measured;
24. Recalls the fact that corruption in the public and private sectors perpetuates and aggravates inequalities and discrimination when it comes to equal enjoyment of civil, political, economic or social and cultural rights, and underlines the fact that it is proven that acts of corruption and human rights violations involve the misuse of power, lack of accountability and various forms of discrimination; requests the highest level of accountability and transparency of external aid and public budgets in relation to the EU budget and external aid;

Human rights country strategies and human rights focal points

25. Notes the efforts made by the EEAS to finalise the first cycle of EU human rights country strategies; reiterates its support for the objective of giving ownership of the country strategy to the EU Delegation and Member States' embassies on the ground, while ensuring quality control at headquarters level; regrets, however, the lack of transparency regarding the contents of the country strategies; reiterates its call for public disclosure of, at least, the key priorities of each country strategy, and for Parliament to have access to the strategies so as to allow a proper degree of scrutiny; encourages the EU to produce a public assessment of the lessons learnt during the first cycle of EU human rights country strategies and to identify best practices for the next cycle;

26. Welcomes the nearly complete network of human rights focal points in EU Delegations; calls on the VP/HR and the EEAS to develop a plan on how this network can be used to realise its full potential; invites the EU Delegations to publish the contact details of all human rights focal points and EU Liaison Officers for Human Rights Defenders;

Human rights in the EU's trade policy

27. Supports the practice of including legally binding and non-negotiable human rights clauses in the EU's international agreements concluded with third countries, and considers that human rights clauses should also be systematically included in trade agreements; calls for effective monitoring of their application and reporting back to Parliament's relevant committee on their assessment and suggested response;
28. Points out that Parliament should withhold its consent to international agreements when serious breaches of human rights occur;
29. Recalls that the revised GSP scheme will come into force on 1 January 2014; welcomes the continuation of the GSP+ scheme whereby countries can enjoy additional preferential tariffs once they have ratified and implemented the 27 core human rights, labour and environment conventions; recalls the possibility of suspending GSP, GSP+ and Everything But Arms (EBA) preferences in the event of serious human rights violations; calls on the Commission to make the assessments for GSP+ eligibility publicly available, in order to increase transparency and accountability;
30. Calls, furthermore, on the EU to define and adopt specific policy guidelines on the effective inclusion of human rights in its trade and investment agreements in order to achieve methodological consistency and rigour in the human rights impact assessments;

Human rights in EU development policies

31. Underlines the fact that the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation has called on the international community to adopt a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to international cooperation in order to boost the effectiveness of development efforts;
32. Calls on the Commission to conduct extensive impact assessments of EU development cooperation projects, which should include an assessment of their impact on the human rights situation, in order to ensure that EU development efforts do not contribute to further marginalisation of groups suffering discrimination and that EU funds are distributed fairly among different regions within a country, on the basis of their needs and level of development;
33. Reiterates that the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) should be accountable for the adoption of a rights-based approach in the future programming exercise;
34. Takes the view that national parliaments and civil society organisations play an important role in implementing human rights provisions effectively, and stresses that appropriate conditions should be put in place for their participation in decision making in order to promote genuine ownership of development strategy policy choices;

European Union policy on transition processes

35. Notes the overwhelming evidence from recent years indicating the crucial importance of EU foreign policy adequately addressing dynamic transition processes in third countries; encourages the EU to continue to learn from past experiences, both positive and negative, to avoid repeating certain policy mistakes, and to establish best practices in order to influence and consolidate democratisation processes; acknowledges the requirement for policy flexibility in diverging situations, and encourages the development of policy tools that could be applied in different transition scenarios in order to integrate human rights and democracy support measures into the EU approach in a flexible and credible manner;
36. Emphasises that political transition and democratisation need to be combined with respect for human rights, the promotion of justice, transparency, accountability, reconciliation, the rule of law and the establishment of democratic institutions, with due regard for gender equality and juvenile justice; stresses the importance of the right to redress concerning human rights abuses committed by former regimes; stresses that the EU should always advocate a context-sensitive approach to transitional justice while strictly upholding the principle of accountability for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law;
37. Emphasises that the EU should give its full support to countries that have dislodged authoritarian regimes and are undergoing a transition to democracy by supporting civil society as a crucial actor in advocating the rule of law, accountability and transparency and in promoting social movements for political change and participation; recalls that the police, the military and the judiciary are often used as mechanisms to perform systematic violations of human rights; stresses, therefore, that institutional reform of these bodies needs to provide for greater accountability and transparency in transition processes;
38. Considers the EU's external financial instruments an important tool for promoting and defending EU values abroad; welcomes, in this context, the commitment to put human rights, democracy and the rule of law at the core of EU external action; calls for improvements in the coherence and effectiveness of different thematic and geographic instruments in order to achieve this strategic objective;
39. Strongly encourages the EU to support an active and independent civil society worldwide, both politically and financially, in particular through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR); suggests that opening -up European student exchange programmes to young people from non-EU countries and establishing training programmes for young professionals would foster the active participation of young people in democracy-building and would strengthen civil society; regrets that freedom of assembly, as a fundamental condition for any democratic development and as a particularly sensitive issue in transition countries, appears to have been overlooked in the EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy; calls on the EEAS and the Member States to draw up Guidelines on freedom of assembly;
40. Welcomes the establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) and calls for it to engage in providing support for those striving for democratic change by offering them flexible funding tailored to their needs; calls for appropriate financial support for the EED to be guaranteed by the EU and its Member States; recalls the critical importance of avoiding any overlap between the mandate and activities of the EED and those of EU external instruments, especially those in the field of human rights and democracy;

Enlargement policy, democratisation and human rights

41. Stresses the momentous importance of the enlargement process as a means of supporting democratisation and enhancing human rights protection;
42. Welcomes the Commission's decision to place the rule of law at the heart of the enlargement process; urges the EU to remain vigilant during the enlargement processes and to demand rigorous implementation of provisions critical to human rights, such as active protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in order to safeguard equal treatment of these minorities with regard to education, healthcare, and social and other public services, the establishment of the rule of law together with vigorous action to combat all forms of corruption, effective access to justice and steps to guarantee fundamental freedoms and full and effective equality between persons belonging to national minorities and those belonging to the national majority, in all areas of social, economic, political and cultural life;
43. Stresses the urgent need to bring about a fair and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East with a view to achieving a two-State solution – an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State and the State of Israel, living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the internationally recognised 1967 borders;
44. Notes with concern that respecting the rights of minorities is one of the key challenges identified in the Commission's Enlargement Strategy for 2012-2013; encourages the Member States, as well as the candidate and potential candidate countries, to launch a general public debate on the acceptance of minorities and their inclusion in the education system, civil society engagement, improved living conditions and awareness-raising in general; regrets the fact that the Roma community is particularly disadvantaged throughout the Western Balkans, and that this has an adverse effect on partnership processes; urges the countries concerned to implement effective measures so as to address problems such as discrimination and segregation, and access to housing and healthcare; condemns the fomenting of hatred and prejudices in general, and negative acts and discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation, or against vulnerable groups and people with disabilities; stresses that this is a recurring issue in many enlargement countries and in a majority of the Member States;
45. Notes that media freedom has generally advanced in enlargement countries; deplores, however, the lack of measures to ensure freedom of expression in certain enlargement countries, which often leads to self-censorship, political interference, economic pressures, harassment and the use of violence against journalists; is seriously concerned, in this connection, about increasing violations of freedom of expression and press freedom in Turkey;

Challenge of transitions in the Neighbourhood Policy

46. Recognises the challenges related to democratic transitions in the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood; notes the increasing divergence in democratic reforms across the EU neighbourhood; reiterates the importance of civil society and human rights organisations in the democratic transition process; encourages, therefore, a differentiation to be made between the Southern and Eastern dimensions of the Neighbourhood Policy in order to target the specific properties and needs of each geographical area more effectively;
47. Calls on the EU to act consistently as a democratic reform-driven partner in its neighbourhood; supports, in this connection, further engagement in association processes

with the neighbourhood countries; acknowledges the conclusions of the Vilnius Summit and calls for further strengthening of relations between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries, supports the democratic and pro-European processes in Ukraine and condemns the recent use of force against peaceful public demonstrations in Kiev as a violation of the fundamental principles of freedom of assembly and freedom of expression;

48. Notes the new EU approach aimed at strengthening the partnership between the EU and the countries and societies of its Neighbourhood, based on mutual accountability and shared commitment to the universal values of human rights, democracy, social justice and the rule of law;
49. Notes with concern the fragile state of democratic processes and the deterioration of human rights and fundamental freedoms in most of the Neighbourhood countries; emphasises that good governance, transparency, the freedom of association, expression, thought, conscience, religion and assembly, a free press and free media, the rule of law and an independent judiciary are essential for underpinning democratic transitions; reiterates the importance of upholding and promoting gender equality and women's rights, together with social development and the reduction of inequalities; recognises the key role of civil society in building public support for democratic reforms in the Neighbourhood countries;
50. Regrets the fact that in some countries civil society organisations continue to face serious constraints such as obstacles to the freedom of movement, lawsuits against NGO leaders and human rights defenders, cumbersome administrative procedures, the aggressive use of criminal defamation laws against NGOs or a complete ban on their operation, restrictive rules controlling foreign funding or making the acceptance of financial support subject to authorisation; stresses, in this context, the importance of the European Endowment for Democracy as a flexible and discreet means of supporting the pro-democratic potential of societies in countries prior to or during the process of democratic transformation;
51. Regrets the lack of progress in achieving a sustainable political solution as regards 'frozen conflicts'; stresses that the political dialogue should give full consideration to and fully respect the territorial integrity and the internationally recognised borders of the countries concerned; urges the EU to engage more actively in this respect;
52. Underlines the importance of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in the human rights architecture at national level, including in terms of human rights monitoring and awareness raising and ensuring redress for violations; urges the EEAS and the Commission to develop a policy in support of NHRIs, and to support the establishment and strengthening of NHRIs in line with the Paris Principles as a priority in external assistance, notably under the ENPI;
53. Remains concerned about the lack of democracy, rule of law, fundamental freedoms and respect for human rights in Belarus;
54. Notes with concern instances of selective justice in certain Eastern Neighbourhood countries; recalls that the EU has continually asked for the release of political prisoners such as Yuliya Tymoshenko in Ukraine; reiterates that political and criminal

responsibility should be clearly separated in countries that are committed to democratic values;

55. Supports all steps leading to political dialogue, which is essential to move the transition in Egypt forward; expresses its deep concern about recent crises and the political polarisation in the country, including the street battles between the army and Muslim Brotherhood supporters, terrorism and violent clashes in the Sinai; condemns the extremist violence against minorities, including Coptic Christian communities; expresses its solidarity with Egyptian people fighting for democracy, welcomes the efforts by the European Union and the VP/HR to find a way out of the crisis, and points once again to the urgent need for a constructive and inclusive political dialogue in order to set up a clear roadmap for transition to a real and sustainable democracy; calls on all political leaders in the country to find a way to break the dangerous stalemate and agree on implementing tangible confidence-building measures in order to avoid the risk of more bloodshed and polarisation in the country; calls for a rapid return to the democratic process, including the holding of free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections in a fully inclusive process; urges the Egyptian authorities to advance the work on an inclusive constitution with equal rights for all;
56. Calls for an immediate end to all acts of violence, sexual assault and other forms of degrading treatment against female protesters and women's rights activists and for serious and impartial investigations into all such cases and full accountability for those responsible;
57. Remains deeply concerned about the critical situation in Syria; deplores in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons and the excessive use of force and violence against the civilian population and minorities in the country, which cannot be justified under any circumstances, and abhors the scale of state abuses that may constitute crimes against humanity; reiterates its strong endorsement of the call by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for the situation in Syria to be referred to the ICC by the UN Security Council (UNSC) for a formal investigation; calls on all armed factions to put an immediate end to violence in the country; expresses grave concern at the ongoing humanitarian crisis, including the situation of refugees, and the implications for neighbouring countries and stability in the region; stresses again that humanitarian assistance to those in need of basic goods and services in Syria and its neighbours must be an immediate priority for the international community and the European Union; believes that the key to solving the conflict lies in political mechanisms and diplomatic processes; stresses the importance of the strict implementation of the Convention on the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction; welcomes the recent UNSC resolution and the UN Secretary General's proposal for a Geneva II conference to be held in December 2013; condemns the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East;
58. Recalls its resolutions of 25 November 2010 on the situation in Western Sahara¹, of 22 October 2013 on the situation of human rights in the Sahel region², and calls for a guarantee of human rights for the Saharawi people and stresses the need to address these rights in Western Sahara and in the Tindouf camps, including freedom of association,

¹ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 87.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0431.

freedom of expression and the right to demonstrate, to be respected; demands the release of all Sahrawi political prisoners; demands the opening of the territory to independent observers, NGOs and the media; supports a fair and mutually acceptable political solution on Western Sahara, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including those allowing self-determination;

Transitional justice and the challenge of post-conflict peacebuilding

59. Considers accountability for past violations to be an integral element in the process of building sustainable reconciliation; calls on the EU and its Member States to support, and stresses the vital importance of, the systematic participation of women in peace processes and in political and economic decision making, including in democratic transition and conflict resolution situations; calls for war criminals to be brought before the ICC, and calls on the Member States to enhance their cooperation with the ICC in this respect; welcomes the intention of the EEAS to develop a dedicated policy on transitional justice in order to help societies deal with past abuses and fight impunity, and encourages the timely development of such a policy; stresses the need to deal with transitional justice in a manner that is consistent with the EU's support for international criminal justice in general, and the ICC in particular; draws particular attention to the EU's experience in the Western Balkans as a source of inspiration; calls on the EU to actively support the newly created mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur for the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence;
60. Emphasises that a key element of the EU approach to transitional justice should be support for institutional reform of the judiciary to enhance the functioning of the rule of law in line with international standards; stresses the need for criminals whose crimes were committed some time ago to be prosecuted through national or international courts; emphasises the importance of public dialogue to confront the past and for proper victim consultation and compensation programmes, including reparations; considers that vetting the background of personnel working in the transitional institutions is a credibility test for transitional justice;
61. Notes the particular complexity of developing consistent policies for transitions in post-conflict contexts; emphasises, therefore, the need to enhance compliance with, and monitoring of, international human rights and humanitarian law norms in armed conflict situations, and encourages the EEAS to support civil society organisations dedicated to promoting respect for humanitarian law by armed state and non-state actors, with a special focus on women's rights and the best interests of the child;
62. Condemns in the strongest terms serious human rights violations perpetrated in armed conflict situations in recent and ongoing crises such as Syria, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, and in particular summary executions, rape and other forms of sexual violence, acts of torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions, especially regarding the situation of women and children, who are particularly vulnerable; calls on the EU to fight against impunity in all of these cases and to support action by domestic judiciaries and the ICC to bring the perpetrators to justice; encourages the EU to integrate torture prevention mechanisms into all EU external relations activities;
63. Calls on the VP/HR and the EEAS to conduct a thorough policy review of the tragic events in Syria, Libya and Mali and other recent conflicts in order to revise the EU

Guidelines on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and to seek more effective implementation of those guidelines; calls on the EU to support the on-going initiative of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Swiss Government to reform the current international governance framework regarding IHL; supports the EU in engaging in a reform of the UNSC, in order to enable it to respond effectively to contemporary crises;

64. Welcomes the launch in January 2014 of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, which will create opportunities for more than 8 000 EU and non-EU citizens to be trained for and deployed to humanitarian operations worldwide, and notes that another 10 000 people are expected to support the EU Aid Volunteers as ‘online volunteers’, with tasks that can be carried out from home on a computer;
65. Calls for the EU to develop a common EU position on armed drones,

Trapped transitions and countries of concern

66. Draws attention also to the trapped transitions in countries and regions where reform movements and transitional processes have been stopped or put down by the ruling regime; calls on the EU to continue its efforts to persuade the ruling elites in these countries, as well as in other countries of concern still under authoritarian rule, to initiate a reform process to develop strong and stable democracies in which the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms are upheld; takes the view that this persuasion must take place in all dialogues with its partners, including at the highest political level, by making use of all the relevant fields of EU external policy, i.e. development, trade, etc.;
67. Recalls that countries and regions trapped in transition lack democratic reforms and political accountability; reiterates that all citizens have the right to fully and freely participate in political life in which free, fair and open elections take place with more than one party and with different alternative and independent media sources;
68. Expresses its serious concern about recent repressive laws and their arbitrary enforcement by the Russian authorities, often leading to the harassment of NGOs, civil society activists, human rights defenders, minorities and LGBTI persons, and calls for the EU to express this concern at all political levels; calls for the release of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and other political prisoners, and deplores the political use of justice; urges the Russian authorities to impartially investigate and bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of Sergei Magnitsky, Natalia Estemirova, Anna Politkovskaya, Stanislav Markelov, and Vasily Alexanian; regrets the Council’s failure to consider Parliament’s recommendation of 23 October 2012 on the Magnitsky case; calls on the Council, therefore, to adopt a decision establishing a common EU list of officials involved in the death of Sergei Magnitsky; adds that this Council decision should impose targeted sanctions on those officials; expresses its deepest concern at the activities of far-right vigilante groups contacting LGBTI persons online to entrap and assault them and post hundreds of videos of these acts online; calls on the EU delegation and Member State embassies in Russia to increase their support for defenders of the human rights of LGBTI persons, in line with the relevant guidelines;
69. Expresses its concern about continued repression of independent journalists and human rights activists and the suppression of political dissent in Cuba; draws attention to the

situation of prisoners of conscience in Cuba, who continue to be sentenced on trumped-up charges or held in pre-trial detention; calls on the EEAS and the VP/HR to promote, in the framework of the United Nations, an international and independent committee of inquiry to investigate the circumstances in which the Cuban human rights defenders and peaceful dissidents Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas (Sakharov laureate 2002) and Harold Cepero died in July 2012;

70. Stresses the need for international monitoring of the human rights situation in China and calls on the EU Member States to actively engage in establishing this monitoring in the light of the failure of the EU-China dialogue on human rights to achieve significant and tangible results; remains concerned about the increasing restrictions targeting human rights defenders, lawyers, civil society activists, journalists and bloggers; supports the internal demand among Chinese people for the basic freedoms and rights to which they are entitled; recalls that the EU could serve as a facilitator in this regard by creating greater trust, finding new modalities for dialogue, and improving already existing instruments;
71. Urges the Chinese authorities to engage seriously with the Tibetan people in order to assess the underlying causes of the high number of self-immolations; condemns the non-voluntary resettlement and relocation of Tibetan nomads which is a threat to the survival of a way of life that is integral to Tibetan identity; urges the EEAS, in line with the newly adopted EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion and Belief, to pay particular attention to the issue of religious repression in Tibet and to call on China to put an end to its restrictive policies on Tibetan Buddhism; stresses the need for improvement of the education system with special regard to bilingual education in the region in order to preserve national identity and heritage and to tackle the causes of youth unemployment;
72. Expresses grave concern regarding the human rights situation in Iran, the continued repression of reformists, the growing number of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience and faith, the discrimination against and persecution of the Baha'i community, the consistently high number of executions, including of minors, the widespread torture, the unfair trials and exorbitant sums demanded for bail, and the heavy restrictions on the freedom of information, expression, assembly, religion, education and movement; welcomes the release of several prisoners of conscience in Iran, including lawyer and Sakharov Prize winner Nasrin Sotoudeh; calls on the Iranian authorities to release the three opposition leaders held under house arrest with no charges for over two years, Mehdi Karroubi, Zahra Rahnava and Mir Hossein Mousavi, allow the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran to visit the country, work towards a moratorium on the death penalty, remove internet censorship and allow freedom of expression in Iran; notes the resumption of diplomatic contacts between Iran and the international community and hopes for a satisfactory and mutually acceptable conclusion to negotiations between the E3+3 and Iran on Iran's nuclear programme;
73. Expresses its deepest concern regarding the deteriorating human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), draws attention to the relevant urgency resolutions (Rule 122) adopted by the European Parliament, and calls on the DPRK to engage in a meaningful dialogue on human rights with the European Union; calls on the DPRK to put an end to extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, release political prisoners and allow its citizens to travel freely both within and outside the country; calls on the DPRK to allow freedom of expression and press freedom for

national and international media, and to allow its citizens uncensored access to the internet; notes that all the provocative actions of the DPRK and the restrictive measures imposed on its citizens have led to widespread poverty and material deprivation;

74. Raises profound concerns with reference to Kashmir, where any act of violence against civilians is to be strongly deplored; is aware that investigations into the issue of unidentified graves have been undertaken; urges, nevertheless, human rights protection mechanisms to be placed at the heart of any attempt to identify responsibility and ensure accountability for abuses against civilians;
75. Calls for the European Union to embark on a coordinated and inclusive strategy in the Sahel to improve security in the region on the one hand and to promote human rights on the other, so that human rights violations such as torture, the often arbitrary arrest of opponents and journalists, the suppression of peaceful demonstrations, acts of violence against women such as rape, forced marriage or genital mutilation, and ethnic or caste-based discrimination come to an end, thereby helping to establish the rule of law guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms;
76. Is highly concerned by the growing trend of state violence against LGBTI persons in several sub-Saharan countries, especially Uganda, Nigeria, Cameroon and Senegal; firmly condemns attempts to enact ever more repressive laws in countries where homosexuality is already criminalised; calls on fellow parliaments to stop responding to populist and conservative pressure, including from religious leaders, and to protect the rights of all citizens, including LGBTI persons; points out that 76 countries still criminalise homosexuality, including five which provide for the death penalty; regrets again that the Cotonou Agreement was signed with no discussion of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation as part of its political dialogue, as requested numerous times by this Parliament; reminds the Commission and the Council of Parliament's firm resolve to include this aspect in the next revision of the Agreement;
77. Calls on the EU to build an efficient sanctions policy towards all regimes exercising repressive methods towards civilians;
78. Calls on the EU to continue to actively support human rights defenders, including by the timely provision of temporary shelter to those at risk; calls for the EU to extend its policy in support of human rights defenders to whistle-blowers and investigative journalists, who may significantly contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights;

Election observation and democracy support policies

79. Welcomes the EU's continued support for electoral processes around the globe by deploying Election Observation Missions (EOMs) and Electoral Expert Missions (EEMs) and providing electoral assistance and support for domestic observers; notes that these missions have recently contributed to support for democratic development in the EU's neighbourhood, and have witnessed the transfer of power to the opposition (Senegal) and the consolidation of democracy emerging from conflict (Sierra Leone);
80. Stresses the importance of following up on the reports and recommendations of Election Observation Missions; highlights its initiative of strengthening the follow-up to EOM recommendations by using them as part of the 'road map for democracy' in the country

concerned, and to charge the Chief Observer with a special role to ensure follow-up and implementation of the recommendations with the support of Parliament's standing bodies;

81. Emphasises the importance of enhancing the operational capacity of parliaments between elections; recalls, in this context, the EU pledge in the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to base development cooperation on 'democratic ownership', with particular reference to the strengthened role of parliaments; urges the EU to work towards a rights-based approach, with the aim of integrating human rights principles into EU operational activities, and to advocate human rights issues on the global development agenda, as undertaken in the Action Plan;
82. Recalls the VP/HR's commitment to focus on the participation of women and national minorities in election observation and on persons with disabilities both as candidates and voters; requests that the conclusions of EU Election Observation Missions (EOMs) always be taken into account when drawing up programmes to support women's full and equal participation in electoral processes and in implementing the missions' recommendations;

Freedom of expression

83. Emphasises the particular importance of freedom of expression, including free media, in transition situations; welcomes the EU's commitment to producing Guidelines on Freedom of Expression (online and offline), and further recommends that the EU develop a methodology to monitor and react to changes in legislation which restrict pluralism and freedom of the press in third countries;
84. Expresses serious and continuing concern regarding online censorship and its unfortunate prevalence in many countries; stresses that in its policies the EU must prioritise the implementation of the right to participation and the right to access information as core principles of democracy that must also be realised online, and make use of available mechanisms to enhance public accountability, such as the principles of open data; considers that this should be the case at all levels of dialogue with third countries, including in bilateral relations and at the highest levels; emphasises the importance of online media to the operation and effectiveness of civil society, including for human rights defenders, trade unions and whistle-blowers; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to step up efforts to mainstream digital freedom in EU external relations;
85. Notes the regrettable trend to enact laws restricting freedom of expression and assembly for those who support the human rights of LGBTI persons; notes that such laws currently exist in Lithuania and Russia, are under consideration in Ukraine and have been proposed in Georgia, Armenia and Kazakhstan; congratulates Moldova for repealing a law prohibiting the 'propagation of any other relations than those related to marriage or family'; calls on EU delegations in the relevant countries to express the EU's particular concern about these laws;

EU support for universal human rights

86. Supports fully the affirmative position taken by the EU in the Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy regarding the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as the pledge to 'speak out against any attempt to undermine respect for the universality of human rights'; reiterates its full support for, and calls on the EU to uphold,

the indivisibility and universality of human rights, which includes the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in conformity with Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union (Title V, Chapter 1 – General Provisions on the Union’s External Action);

UN human rights system

87. Reiterates its support for strengthening the UN human rights system as fundamental to the advancement of universal human rights; acknowledges the EU’s efforts in the Review of the UN Human Rights Council, and calls on all members of the Human Rights Council to uphold the highest standards of human rights and to live up to their pledges made before their election; considers the independence of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the UN Special Procedures mandate holders as a key prerequisite to their efficient functioning, and emphasises the need for non-earmarked funding to ensure this;
88. Welcomes the start of the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, and calls for continued close EU attention to enhancement of the UPR procedure and the degree of implementation of UPR recommendations which countries have accepted and promised to carry out;
89. Calls on the EU Member States to build upon the commitment they made in the EU Strategic Framework to ratify and implement the key international human rights treaties, by ratifying and implementing, in particular, the ten core UN human rights treaties and the optional protocols thereto, and to make the relevant declarations on ensuring the acceptance of all individual complaints and inquiry procedures; stresses the importance of these ratifications for the internal and external credibility of the EU’s human rights policy; expresses its deep concern at the fact that the persistent failure of certain EU Member States to submit their periodic reports to the relevant UN human rights monitoring bodies in a timely manner is also undermining the credibility of the EU’s human rights policy towards third countries;
90. Calls on the EU to encourage third countries to fully cooperate with UN Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts on human rights including through issuing standing invitations and receiving such experts;
91. Encourages the EU and its Member States to support the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the implementation of her 2012 report on strengthening the UN Treaty Bodies which play a key role in monitoring the actual implementation of human rights obligations by states which are parties to the UN human rights treaties;
92. Regrets the adoption by the United Nations Human Rights Council of its resolution A/HRC/RES/21/3 on traditional values, undermining the principle of universal and indivisible human rights, and commends the EU’s opposition to it; regrets the absence of follow-up to resolution A/HRC/RES/17/19 on ‘Human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity’, and calls on the group of states working on this issue, including South Africa, to follow up on this resolution as soon as possible; commends the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTI persons, notably through statements, reports, and the new Free and Equal campaign; calls on the UN High Commissioner to continue

this work, and voice strong concern regarding so-called ‘anti-propaganda’ laws limiting freedom of expression and assembly;

93. Emphasises, in view of the principles of international humanitarian law spell out in the 1907 Hague Regulations (Articles 42-56) and the Fourth Geneva Convention (GC IV, Articles 27-34 and 47-78) and in provisions of Additional Protocol I, the need for the EU to ensure that those partners falling within the occupying power category fulfil their duties towards the population in occupied territories; recalls that, according to international humanitarian law, public health standards and the provision of food and medical care to the population under occupation must be granted by the occupying power; reiterates that any transfer of the civilian population of the occupying power into the occupied territory is prohibited, and that those charged with criminal offences must be afforded proceedings providing internationally recognised judicial guarantees, such as being informed of the reason for their arrest, charged with a specific offence and given a fair trial as quickly as possible;

International Criminal Court

94. Reiterates its strong support for the International Criminal Court (ICC); considers the increasing number of states parties to be an important development in strengthening the universality of the Court; welcomes the ratification of the Rome Statute by Guatemala in April 2012 and by Côte d’Ivoire in February 2013;
95. Calls on the EU Foreign Ministers to adopt Foreign Affairs Council conclusions affirming the strong support of the EU and its Member States for the International Criminal Court, taking note of the EU’s efforts to continuously review, update, and expand its instruments on the International Criminal Court, and expressing renewed commitment to working towards the universality of the Rome Statute in order to widen access to justice for victims of serious crimes under international law;
96. Regrets that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is still not included in the new GSP Regulation’s list of conventions required for GSP+ status; notes that a number of GSP+ applicants are not states parties to the Statute or have not ratified it (e.g. Armenia and Pakistan); reiterates its recommendation that the Rome Statute be added to a future list of conventions;
97. Calls for the EU and its Member States to emphasise the need to ratify and implement the Statute and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (APIC) in negotiations and political dialogues with third countries, regional organisations and other regional groups, and to include provisions concerning the ICC and international justice in EU agreements with third countries;
98. Encourages the EEAS to ensure that all EU Delegations and EU Special Representatives are fully informed of the EU Council’s Decision and Action Plan on the ICC, and the EU’s complementarity toolkit and actively promote the ICC, the enforcement of its decisions and the fight against impunity for Rome Statute crimes;
99. Calls on the EU Delegations and EU Special Representatives, in particular the EU Special Representative on Human Rights, to actively promote the ICC, the enforcement of its decisions, and the fight against impunity for Rome Statute crimes, in political dialogues

and meetings with third countries; suggests, furthermore, the strengthening of the financial support provided to the ICC;

100. Welcomes the adoption of the EU Toolkit on Advancing Complementarity and calls on the EEAS and the Commission to take additional steps for its effective implementation; encourages the EU to ensure that support for the ICC is appropriately mainstreamed in all relevant areas of EU foreign policy;
101. Calls on the EU Member States to fully implement the Rome Statute by aligning national legislation with all Statute obligations and to comply with the ICC's requests for assistance and cooperation at all stages of the Court's proceedings, particularly with regard to preliminary examination, investigation, arrest and surrender, protection of victims and witnesses, interim release and the enforcement of sentences; regrets that contributions to the Trust Fund for Victims remain insufficient and calls on EU Member States to provide the resources required for it to fully fulfil its mandate;
102. Expresses support for appropriately funded outreach and public information activities through the regular budget of the Court and underlines the importance of these activities in ensuring that justice is visible;
103. Calls on the EU Member States to ratify the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute and to encourage its ratification by third countries;
104. Calls on the EU and its Member States to increase their efforts to fight impunity within the EU's own borders; encourages them in this connection to take into consideration the recommendations of the European Network of contact points in respect of persons responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes;

The death penalty and capital punishment

105. Reiterates its univocal opposition to capital punishment, and considers implementation of a universal moratorium with a view to the global abolition of the death penalty to be a central objective of the EU's policy on human rights; emphasises the fact that the death penalty has never been proved to be an effective deterrent to crime and that, according to the data available, it is the disadvantaged who are punished most by the death penalty; applauds the efforts of the European Union and its Member States at the United Nations that led to the adoption of the General Assembly resolution regarding the moratorium on the use of the death penalty in December 2012; is concerned, however, by the resumption of executions in a number of countries; calls for the EU to continue to undertake targeted campaigns on the death penalty and to intensify engagement with retentionist countries; expects to be appropriately consulted in the course of the review of Regulation (EC) No 1236/2005 on trade in goods which can be used for capital punishment or torture, which was planned for 2013;
106. Deplores the fact that Belarus remains the last country on the European continent to retain the death penalty; reiterates again that the executions of Dmitri Kononov and Vladislav Kovalev are deeply regrettable; repeats its call to Belarus to implement a moratorium on the death penalty, which should ultimately lead to its abolition;

Business and human rights

107. Reaffirms that European companies should ensure that their activities respect human rights standards, including when operating outside the EU; expresses its concern regarding the reported cooperation of certain EU companies with authoritarian regimes, especially where trade in sensitive goods, e.g. in the field of information technologies and communication, has led to human rights abuses.
108. Recalls the importance of promoting corporate social responsibility (CSR), including in business operations outside the EU, and ensuring CSR along the whole supply chain; is convinced that European companies and their subsidiaries and subcontractors should play a key role in the promotion and dissemination of the international standards on business and human rights worldwide; stresses the importance of meaningful reporting on the human rights, social and environmental impact of projects supported by the European Investment Bank (EIB) or by export credits granted by European credit agencies; underlines the fact that financing operations carried out by these institutions should contribute to the general principles guiding Union external action, as referred to in Article 21 of the TEU;
109. Calls on the EEAS to report on implementation of the commitments made in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights with regard to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; regrets the lack of progress made by the Commission in answering Parliament's request that it propose legislation requiring EU companies to ensure that their purchases do not support perpetrators of conflicts and grave human rights violations;
110. Reminds the Commission of its commitment in September 2010 to examine the issue of forced prison labour in third countries and to review the EU response accordingly, and requests that the Commission report to Parliament on the outcome of this process; calls on the Commission to introduce legislation banning imports into the EU of goods manufactured by forced and prison labour;

Eradication of all forms of discrimination

111. Recalls the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and are entitled to the rights and freedoms therein without distinction of any kind; stresses the importance of fighting all forms of discrimination, including those based on race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, caste, social origin, culture, age, birth, disabilities or other status; reiterates its call for the EU to combat discrimination and intolerance as a key part of its human rights policy, and to base this policy on an inclusive and comprehensive definition of non-discrimination; emphasises that respect for the rights of minorities is a crucial factor for peace, development and democracy; welcomes and further encourages EU engagement with the United Nations and regional organisations in this cause;
112. Calls for the EU to pay particular attention to discrimination based on forms of social stratification, such as caste and analogous systems of inherited status, which have a seriously harmful and sometimes destructive impact on the prospects for equal enjoyment of human rights; considers that those countries where a caste system still exists should be urged to prohibit it and ensure that laws against the caste system are genuinely implemented;

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief

113. Stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, as encapsulated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, is a fundamental human right, interrelated with other human rights and fundamental freedoms, encompassing the right to believe or not to believe, the freedom to practise theistic, non-theistic or atheistic belief alike, either in private or public, alone or in a community with others, and the right to adopt, change and abandon or return to a belief of one's choice; calls for the EU to promote the right to freedom of religion or belief within international and regional fora and in bilateral relations with third countries;
114. Recalls that the right to conscientious objection to military service constitutes a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and urges the EEAS and the Member States to call on countries with a system of compulsory military service to allow for an alternative service of a non-combatant or civilian character, in the public interest and not of a punitive nature, and to refrain from punishing, including through prison sentences, conscientious objectors for failure to perform military service;
115. Condemns in the strongest terms discrimination, intolerance, violence and killings on grounds of religion or belief, wherever and to whomever they occur; is particularly concerned about the increasing attempts to resolve differences within peoples divided along religious lines by resorting to violence and persecution, as these actions constitute an impediment to long-lasting peace and reconciliation; is also concerned about the increasingly hostile attitudes of governments society at large in many countries which continue to deny minority religious or belief groups the freedom to worship or publicly express their religion or belief; notes that social hostility and attacks against religious or belief groups, which have resulted in many deaths and injuries, are on the increase, and that impunity and the lack of protection for minority religious or belief communities remain a concern;
116. Opposes any legislation that penalises individuals for changing their religion or belief; expresses profound concern at the fact that, as a result of such legislation, individuals in certain countries face imprisonment or even the death penalty; is also concerned at the fact that those who have left or changed their religion are subjected to social hostility, such as violence and intimidation; opposes laws that penalise expressions deemed blasphemous, defamatory or insulting to religion or religious symbols, figures or feelings; states that these laws do not comply with accepted international human rights standards; condemns blasphemy law provisions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which allow for imprisonment and the death penalty;
117. Welcomes recent EIDHR calls for proposals prioritising and supporting civil society actions combating discrimination on the basis of religion or belief; encourages the EU to support inclusive efforts towards intercultural and interfaith dialogue and cooperation at various levels, involving community leaders, women, youth and ethnic minority representatives, and with the aim of promoting peace building and societal cohesion; calls for the EU and the Member States to develop grant schemes for the protection and promotion of freedom of religion or belief in countries where this right is most at risk;
118. Welcomes the EU's commitment to promoting the right to freedom of religion or belief within international and regional fora including the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and other regional mechanisms;

encourages the EU to continue tabling its yearly resolution on freedom of religion or belief at the UN General Assembly and supporting the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief;

The rights and empowerment of women and children

119. Expresses its full support for the UN's work to uphold the rights and empowerment of women; encourages the EU to undertake a targeted campaign on the political and economic participation of women and to support initiatives against gender-based violence and femicide; supports the implementation of the Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development; calls on the EU Delegations to introduce specific measures on the role of external assistance and development cooperation in their local strategies for the implementation of the EU Guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them, including forced marriages; highlights the fact that the role of the Commission and the Member States in this area, both within and outside the EU, cannot be limited to combating violence against women in all its forms, whether physical, psychological, social or financial, and that priority must be given to non-gender based education from the youngest possible age; urges the Commission and the Council to further encourage third countries to take account of women's rights when drawing up national legislation and to ensure that all relevant provisions are duly implemented;
120. Reaffirms its condemnation of abuse and of all forms of violence against women including domestic violence; calls, therefore, on all member states of the Council of Europe to sign and ratify the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and on the EU to engage in the process of accession to the Convention in order to ensure consistency between EU internal and external action on violence against women; stresses the importance of conducting information and awareness campaigns in communities where female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual abuse of young girls, early and forced marriages, femicides and other gender-based human rights violations are practised, and of involving human rights defenders already fighting for an end to these practices in the preparation and implementation of these campaigns ; encourages the EEAS and the Member States to continue to address the issue of FGM in their political and policy dialogue with partner countries where FGM is still practised;
121. Calls for the EU to further protect reproductive rights and stresses the need to place these policies at the heart of development cooperation with third countries; strongly condemns the disgraceful practice of female genital mutilation in certain parts of Africa, honour killings, gender-based abortion and forced marriage; recalls the important conclusions reached at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo;
122. Supports the 'Education First' initiative of the UN Secretary-General, as access to education increases protection against threats to girls' futures, such as early marriage and pregnancy, HIV, poverty, domestic and sexual violence, and also reduces child and maternal mortality;
123. Calls for efforts to be stepped up to ensure the fullest possible achievement, prior to the expiry of the deadlines, of the Millennium Development Goals as regards gender equality, maternal health and access to adequate health systems, education and sexual and reproductive health rights, especially for the most vulnerable groups such as girls and young women, on the basis of a solid commitment on the part of governments to enhance

accountability and monitoring mechanisms for existing human rights obligations, promote access to justice for all and ensure effective participation for all, including the most marginalised and disadvantaged, in development, decision making and implementation; strongly recommends that a stand-alone goal for women's rights and gender equality be included in the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals, with a strong emphasis on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights;

124. Urges the EU and its Member States to ensure that the ICPD+20 review process results in a comprehensive review of all aspects related to the full enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights and to reaffirm a strong and progressive approach to the issue of sexual and reproductive rights for all in conformity with international human rights standards, as well as calling for greater accountability as regards achievement; also calls on them, in particular, to ensure that the review process is conducted in a participatory manner and provides opportunities for the different stakeholders, including civil society as well as women, adolescents and young people to participate in a meaningful manner; recalls that the framework for such a review must be based on human rights and must have a specific focus on sexual and reproductive rights;
125. Expresses its serious concerns regarding the issue of rape; deplores the extremely high degree of impunity with regard to rape in countries like India and Pakistan;
126. Condemns the extended use of sexual violence and rape as a weapon of war, especially in the Great Lakes region; draws attention to the fact that gender-related crimes and crimes of sexual violence are included in the Rome Statute among war crimes, crimes against humanity or constitutive acts with respect to genocide or torture; welcomes, in this context, UN Security Council Resolution 2106 (2013) on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict, adopted on 24 June 2013, which reaffirms that the ICC plays a key role in the fight against impunity for sexual and gender-based crimes; calls on the EU to support the implementation of these principles in full; reiterates also the EU's commitment to mainstreaming human rights and gender aspects in CSDP missions in line with the landmark UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security;
127. Calls for the EU to prioritise the fight against trafficking in human beings; stresses the need to consider both internal and external aspects when addressing human trafficking; encourages the Member States to implement the EU Directive (2011/36/EU) and Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016;
128. Calls for the universal ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to take action regarding the rights of the child, with a specific focus on violence against children, specifically on the issues of forced child labour, child marriage, enlistment of children in armed groups, their disarmament, rehabilitation and subsequent reintegration, as well as placing the issue of child witchcraft on the agenda of human rights dialogues with the countries concerned; stresses the importance of prioritising children's rights within EU external policy;
129. Stresses the need to step up efforts to implement the Revised Implementation Strategy of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict; encourages the EU to further deepen its cooperation with the UN Special Representative for Children Affected by Armed Conflicts; welcomes the launch in 2012 of a new funding line to support children affected by conflict through humanitarian assistance providing access to education in emergencies;

130. Recalls its earlier recommendations on improving its own procedures in relation to human rights issues and stepping up its efforts to mainstream human rights effectively into its own structures and processes; regrets that no improvements have been made with regard to the plenary debates and resolutions on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and their follow-up; welcomes efforts to improve cooperation on human rights issues with the national parliaments of the Member States;

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131. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative on Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the candidate countries, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the governments of the countries and territories referred to in this resolution.