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Subject: Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2024

Delegations will find attached Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2024, approved by the Council at its 4001st meeting held on 22 January 2024.

Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2024

1. **Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, be they civil, cultural, economic, political or social.** The EU renews its commitment to human rights in the current fraught international environment marked by the rise of armed conflicts, authoritarianism, disinformation, and a pushback against gender equality.
2. In the year of **the Summit of the Future**, the EU will reaffirm its commitment to effective multilateralism, with a further strengthening of the United Nations human rights system, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The EU calls upon all states to respect the independence of the OHCHR and to fully cooperate with the High Commissioner and his Office while ensuring its adequate financing. Human rights and gender equality should be mainstreamed throughout the Pact for the Future, which should build on the interlinkage between human rights, peace and security and sustainable development. Integrating a strong human rights dimension in the Pact for the Future and preparations for the Summit of the Future, and the complementary process of implementing the **Sustainable Development Goals** is a crucial factor in leaving no one behind.

3. The EU will continue working on strengthening respect, protection, and fulfilment of human rights and will continue to cooperate with all regions of the world, organisations and relevant stakeholders in order to fulfil these goals. It will continue calling on all states to fully engage with the **UN human rights system**, including the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, such as the Special Procedures and the Universal Periodic Review, UN-mandated investigative bodies and the Treaty Bodies. The EU will also continue calling on all states to uphold international human rights law and to grant unconditional and unhindered access by the UN and Human Rights monitoring mechanisms to their territories.

4. The EU reaffirms its strong commitment to respect, protect and fulfil all economic, social and cultural rights (**ESCR**), including the right to education, food, health, social security, adequate housing and decent work, and to support relevant initiatives in this regard. It will continue to support universal access to safe, sufficient and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, and emphasise the human rights dimension in those areas. It will actively engage in discussions advancing the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It will continue to promote the right to education, the intersection with the digital agenda, social and digital inclusion, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and non-discrimination. The EU will continue promoting cultural rights and the protection of cultural heritage.

5. The EU will work to prevent and end human rights violations and abuses, including by supporting relevant initiatives in the UNGA Third Committee and the Human Rights Council. It will continue to address **accountability** for human rights violations and abuses wherever they may occur. The EU remains committed to holding all the perpetrators of international crimes accountable. It will reaffirm its unwavering support for the international criminal justice system and in particular the International Criminal Court (ICC), and its commitment to upholding the Rome Statute and preserving the ICC's independence and integrity. Promotion of criminal accountability is vital for fighting impunity for atrocity crimes and to deliver justice for victims. In pursuit of accountability, the EU will call, or support calls by others, for independent investigations into violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including those that may amount to international crimes.

6. The EU will continue to take a leading role on **initiatives** regarding Afghanistan, Belarus, Burundi, DPRK, Eritrea, Myanmar/Burma. The EU will also be prepared to respond to and engage with emerging human rights situations of concern that may arise during 2024. Concerning Ethiopia, the EU will follow the developments regarding the Transitional Justice Policy Framework and its implementation and encourage that future policy meets regional and international human rights standards. It will closely follow initiatives on Cambodia, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia including the human rights situation in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Mali, Nicaragua, the occupied Palestinian territory, the Russian Federation, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Yemen, and will follow and support efforts towards democratic elections and respect for human rights in Venezuela, including the implementation of the agreements signed in Barbados and the liberation of political prisoners. The EU will actively engage in **interactive dialogues** with special procedures mandate holders and in general debates to draw attention to serious human rights violations.

7. The EU will condemn the systematic human rights violations and abuses in **Afghanistan**, particularly gender-based discrimination by the Taliban against women and girls. This includes the denial of the right to education for all, freedom of expression, movement and work, and the severe limitation of their participation in public and social life including the ban on women working for NGOs and the UN. The EU will also call for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities including ethnic and religious minorities, such as the Hazara, as well as LGBTI persons. The EU will support the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) under its comprehensive mandate with a strong human rights component and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, as well as the appointment of the Special Envoy for Afghanistan in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2721 (2023). It will continue to underline the responsibility of the Taliban to ensure respect for, and protection and fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and will stress the importance of accountability. It will call on the Taliban to abide by the obligations under CEDAW and CRC to which Afghanistan is also a party.

8. The EU will call for peaceful reconciliation and reestablishment of a democratic path in **Myanmar/Burma** and will support the United Nations' and ASEAN's efforts in this regard. It will call for greater coherence of positions across the UN system, especially through the streamlining of actions by the various UN mandate holders and agencies on the ground. It will continue to advocate for justice and accountability for all violations and abuses, and call for an end to all acts of violence by the Myanmar military regime across the country, including to stop targeted attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. It will call for the unconditional and immediate release of all those arbitrarily detained, condemn the use of the death penalty, in particular as a consequence of the 2021 military coup and call for the restoration of the democratic process. It will continue to express its support for all the people of Myanmar/Burma, including Rohingya and other minorities. It will call for complete, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need. The EU will continue to advocate for the safe, sustainable, dignified and voluntary return of the Rohingya refugees to their places of origin when conditions allow. The EU will support accountability mechanisms including the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM).

9. The EU will continue to condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of **aggression against Ukraine** and Russia's continuing violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in Ukraine, including arbitrary detentions, torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearances and sexual and gender-based violence. It will reiterate its urgent call on Russia and Belarus to immediately ensure the safe return to Ukraine of all unlawfully deported and transferred Ukrainian children and other civilians. The EU encourages further efforts to ensure accountability for all international crimes and human rights violations stemming from the Russian war of aggression, stressing that accountability in its broadest sense should be ensured, including victims' rights to justice and reparations, as well as guarantees of non-repetition. The EU encourages further efforts, including in the Core Group, to establish a tribunal for the prosecution of the crime of aggression against Ukraine that would enjoy the broadest cross-regional support and legitimacy, and a future compensation mechanism; it reiterates its support for the Council of Europe's Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine, as a first tangible step in this direction. It underlines its support to the investigations by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the renewal of the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine by the Human Rights Council. The EU will demand that Russia cease its aggression, withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine immediately, completely and unconditionally and fully respect Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

10. The EU will call upon the **DPRK** to address the findings of the Commission of Inquiry from 2014 concerning its serious human rights violations and abuses, and to meaningfully engage with the UN human rights system, in view of its upcoming UPR review. The EU will continue calling on the DPRK to accept offers of dialogue and to re-engage with the international community including through the return of diplomatic and humanitarian personnel to the DPRK. It will urge the DPRK to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and resolve the abductions issue immediately.

11. Regarding **Israel and occupied Palestinian territory**, the EU strongly condemns the brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks by Hamas across Israel on October 7th, which included sexual and gender-based violence. The EU recalls Israel's right to defend itself and underlines that it must be exercised in line with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The EU will continue to follow the situation in Gaza closely and call for respect of human rights, underlining the obligation to ensure the protection of all civilians at all times in line with international humanitarian law. We urge all sides to respect international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and note that there must be accountability for violations of international law. Reiterating its gravest concern for the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, the EU will call for continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need through all necessary measures, including through increased capacity at border crossings and through a dedicated maritime route, and also including humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs, whilst ensuring that such aid is not abused by terrorist organisations. The EU will continue to call on Hamas to immediately release all hostages without any precondition, noting that the use of civilians as human shields by Hamas is a particularly deplorable atrocity. The work of UN agencies must be facilitated, and UN and humanitarian staff as must be protected. Journalists must not be attacked. The EU will call for the protection of all civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, schools and UN premises, as well as other infrastructure meant to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The EU firmly condemns settler violence and calls for accountability. Settlements are illegal under international law. Israel must stop settlement expansion, prevent settler violence and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. The EU will call for collaboration with all UN mechanisms. The EU is ready to contribute to reviving a political process on the basis of the two-state solution, including through the Peace Day Effort, and welcomes diplomatic peace and security initiatives and supports the holding of an international peace conference soon.

12. The EU will continue to monitor and condemn the systematic and intensifying internal repressions against civil society and stigmatised groups, including LGBTI persons, in the **Russian Federation**. The EU condemns the effective closure of the civic space, silencing of public dissent, political opposition and independent media, the lack of independence of the judiciary and the guarantees of fair trial, use of torture and ill-treatment, and arbitrary detention. It will continue to urge Russia to cooperate fully with all international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms and with all Special Procedures related to the human rights situation in the Russian Federation. The EU will call on Russia to release all political prisoners.

13. The EU will continue to strongly condemn the human rights violations in **Belarus**, recalling that the High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations continue to be committed in Belarus. According to the High Commissioner, some of these human rights violations could amount to crimes against humanity. The EU will urge the Belarusian authorities to halt their internal repression and to immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate all political prisoners. It will continue to urge the Belarusian authorities to cooperate fully with international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms. The EU will urge the Belarusian authorities to stop their involvement in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and to halt instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes. The EU will work to ensure that the deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus remains high on the HRC's agenda.

14. The EU will call for an end to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses by all parties to the conflict in Syria, in particular by the regime and its allies, and reiterate that all parties responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights including sexual and gender-based violence, must be held accountable. The EU will reiterate that safe, full, unhindered and sustained access for humanitarian organisations is imperative, including to places of confinement or detention. The EU will express its continued support for the Independent International Commission of Inquiry (CoI) and the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) and will reiterate its call to have the situation in Syria referred to the International Criminal Court. The EU welcomes the creation of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic and stands ready to support this new institution. The EU will note that the conditions for the voluntary, safe and dignified return of Syrian refugees, as defined by UNHCR, are currently not in place. The only path to sustainable peace for Syria is a political solution in line with UNSCR 2254.
15. The EU will continue to condemn human rights violations in Iran and urge the **Iranian** authorities to uphold human rights, in particular women's and girls' rights and the rights of persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion or belief, and the right to peaceful assembly. The EU will call upon the Iranian government to stop executions and pursue a consistent policy towards the abolition of capital punishment and to fully cooperate with UN mechanisms for accountability for human rights violations and notably the Independent Fact-Finding Mission established by the Human Rights Council. It will also urge the release of all arbitrarily detained individuals, including foreign and dual nationals, and provide due process to all detainees.

16. The EU will condemn the serious violations and abuses of human rights in Sudan, including the numerous reports of sexual and gender-based violence as well as the violations of the rights of the child. The EU is deeply concerned by the reports of mass violence against civilians and ethnic cleansing especially in West Darfur as well as by the large numbers of people in need of humanitarian assistance and internally displaced persons. The EU will call on all parties to the conflict uphold and respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and to halt attacks on civilian infrastructure and guarantee unrestricted, timely and safe humanitarian access across the country. It will reiterate the need for accountability for all perpetrators of crimes in order to break the cycle of impunity. The EU will support the work of the ICC and the UN, including through the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights the UN's SG's newly-appointed personal envoy for Sudan and call on Sudan to cooperate with the mandates of the designated Independent Expert in Sudan as well as the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on human rights violations and abuses in the country.

17. The EU will continue to reiterate its serious concerns about the human rights situation **in China**, including in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Hong Kong and Xinjiang. The EU will continue to encourage China to effectively cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner, and with all international human rights mechanisms, including towards the implementation of the recommendations included in the assessment report on the human rights concerns in Xinjiang. The EU will continue paying particular attention to the full enjoyment of human rights and the exercise of fundamental freedoms, notably of opinion and expression, association and peaceful assembly, freedom of religion or belief, as well as to protecting women's and girls' rights, to preserving cultural identity and to ending the use of forced labour and re-education camps not least in view of China's Universal Periodic Review. The EU will continue to closely monitor individual cases of human rights defenders including those engaging with UN mechanisms. It will urge China to respect, protect and fulfil human rights for all, including Uyghurs, Tibetans and persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. The EU will urge the Chinese Government and the Hong Kong authorities to restore full respect for the rule of law and human rights, and will reiterate its concerns regarding the honouring of China's previous commitments related to Hong Kong. The EU is open to working with China, where possible and in full respect for universal human rights, for example on issues like economic, social and cultural rights in multilateral fora.
18. The EU will underline its continued support for advancing a sustainable and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on the principles of recognition of sovereignty, the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity. The EU will emphasise the importance of ensuring the rights and security of the **Karabakh Armenians**, as well as to create the conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons to Nagorno-Karabakh, in particular their right to live in their homes in dignity, without intimidation or discrimination. In addition, the cultural heritage and property rights of the local population need to be effectively protected and guaranteed.

19. In addition, Türkiye, as an EU candidate country and long-standing member of the Council of Europe, is expected to adhere to its respective commitments.
20. Regarding **thematic priorities**, the EU will continue to strongly oppose the **death penalty** in all cases and in all circumstances and will promote further ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted 35 years ago. The EU will call on all remaining countries still applying the death penalty to abolish it, or to maintain or introduce a moratorium as a first step towards abolition. The EU will encourage states where a moratorium is in place to abolish the death penalty in law. The EU will engage early with a view to building support for the 10th UNGA resolution on Moratorium on the use of the death penalty, in line with its unequivocal commitment towards abolition.
21. In the context of the 40th anniversary of the Convention against Torture, the EU will continue to condemn the use of **torture** and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment around the world and will speak out against arbitrary arrests and detentions. It will reiterate its call for a broad ratification and effective implementation of the UN Convention against Torture and its Optional Protocol. The EU will continue to promote the Global Alliance for Torture-Free-Trade and will consider further steps to ban trade in goods used for capital punishment and torture.

22. The EU will call on all states around the world to ensure the proper functioning of democratic institutions, respect for the rule of law and the principles of good governance, inclusive societies, the independence of the judiciary, and to prevent and fight impunity and corruption. Corruption undermines the realisation and enjoyment of all human rights, and erodes democracy, trust in institutions and the rule of law.
23. The EU will reaffirm its strong commitment to the promotion and protection of the right to **freedom of religion or belief** for all individuals around the world. The EU will promote and protect the right for everybody to have or not have a religion or belief, to manifest or to change their religion or belief, while condemning the criminalisation of apostasy and the abuse of blasphemy laws. The EU will condemn discrimination, intolerance, violence, and persecution based on grounds of religion or belief, and reject any form of incitement to religious hatred.
24. The EU will reinforce its support to uphold the right to **freedom of opinion and expression** both online and offline. It will remain resolute in its support for media freedom and in condemning harassment, threats and attacks against journalists, bloggers and other media workers. The EU will continue to alert about the increased state control over the online space, and proactively counter foreign information manipulation and will promote information integrity in the fight against disinformation. The EU will keep working to uphold **academic freedom** and protect members of the academic community at risk. The EU will continue to protect and promote the right to **freedom of peaceful assembly and association** and to condemn intimidation, threats and violence against peaceful protesters.

25. The EU will actively promote universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and democratic principles for the development, use, and governance of **digital technologies**, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), the internet and the digital spaces, in line with its human-centric and human rights-based approach to digital technologies and drawing on its work towards fit-for-purpose AI regulation. The EU will promote a responsible, safe, and trustworthy AI design, development, deployment, evaluation and use in line with international human rights law, and will continue to raise attention to the impact of internet shutdowns, online censorship and unlawful online surveillance. The EU will continue to call for the protection of online civic space, to enhance data protection and promote responsible platform governance, including to combat disinformation and cybercrime and technology-facilitated gender-based online harassment and abuse. The EU will promote an open, free, secure and interoperable internet including safeguarding its multi-stakeholder foundation. Ensuring that these principles are duly reflected in the upcoming digital related UN processes, such as the Global Digital Compact and any decisions regarding a future global governance framework for AI will be among the EU's key priorities. To this end, the EU will pay particular attention to the recommendations of the UNSG's High-Level Advisory Board on AI, not least its report ahead of the Summit of the Future in 2024. In parallel, the EU will also continue its digital cooperation within the framework of the Global Gateway, with a view to bridging digital divides and allowing digital technologies, including AI, to serve as accelerators for the achievement of the SDGs.

26. The EU will actively support, promote and empower a diverse and independent civil society, which is a cornerstone of a democratic society. The EU will strongly condemn any form of reprisals against **human rights defenders** (HRD) and civil society organisations, including those who cooperate, seek to cooperate or have cooperated with the UN system, and will continue promote civil society's full and meaningful participation in all UN fora. The EU will pay particular attention to the specific risks faced by certain categories of HRDs who are often subjected to discrimination, violence and harassment, both online and offline, notably women HRDs, youth HRDs, environmental, land and indigenous HRDs, defenders of the rights of LGBTI persons, rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, and those who defend labour rights. The EU will be a leading actor in the promotion of a safe and enabling environment for civil society and HRDs, including those active in exile. It will pay special attention to unlawful online surveillance as well as consider measures to prevent and tackle transnational repression, and encourage actions at the UN to address this increasingly grave global phenomenon. The EU will also oppose legal and administrative measures which reduce civic space, such as barriers to NGO registration, restrictions on access to resources, onerous vetting rules and burdensome reporting requirements. The EU will work closely with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and with Special Procedures to ensure that the voices of civil society and HRDs are heard.

27. The EU will continue to vigorously promote and scale up efforts towards **gender equality**, the advancement and full enjoyment of all human rights by all women and girls and their empowerment, in line with its international commitments, including through mainstreaming gender equality in country and thematic contexts. The EU will continue to promote the integration of a gender perspective in peace and security initiatives, including through the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and subsequent resolutions, through strengthening the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls in conflict prevention and resolution throughout the conflict cycle. The EU will use each and every occasion in all relevant fora to continue delivering on these commitments, including in the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Population and Development and stressing the need for an ambitious and transformative approach to address the root causes and risk factors of gender inequality, discrimination and violence against women and girls. The EU will continue to place the prevention and elimination of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence both online and offline, including domestic and intimate partner violence, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices against women and girls, at the centre of its efforts. It will continue to promote possible synergies with existing processes in the field, such as the UN Women led Generation Equality Forum, in which several EU Member States are involved. The EU will promote whole-of-society efforts to engage men and boys as allies and beneficiaries in efforts to eliminate all gender inequalities, address discriminatory laws, combat discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes, and end sexual and gender-based violence. The EU recalls its commitment to support women's and youth's equal, full, effective and meaningful participation, in all their diversity, including in all spheres of public and political life, as per the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024. On the 45th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 25th anniversary of its optional protocol, the EU will continue to promote the ratification and implementation of these instruments.

28. The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context. Having that in mind, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services.
29. The EU will continue to strongly oppose and step up action to combat all forms of **discrimination**, with a specific attention to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including on grounds of sex, race, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity. The EU reiterates its commitment to equality and non-discrimination, to the entitlement of all persons to enjoy the full range of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to the protection of those who are in disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised situations. The EU will reaffirm its strong commitment to respect, protect and fulfil the full and equal enjoyment of human rights by LGBTI persons and express its concern about the alarming rates of violence, discrimination, and stigmatization against LGBTI persons worldwide. The EU will engage with UN mandates focusing on combating violence and all forms of discrimination and will continue to give strong support to the UN work in this regard.

30. The EU will remain fully committed to the elimination of **racism**, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Its action in this area builds on a solid legal framework, including the EU Anti-racism action plan 2020-2025, which has been developed over the years, in accordance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), which is and should remain the basis of action to counter racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, hate speech and intolerance. The EU will continue its long-standing tradition of engaging actively and constructively with all racism related UN mechanisms, regardless of whether it supported the creation of the concerned mechanism or not, while consistently requesting to rationalise and streamline the existing mechanisms. The EU will continue to emphasize the need to ensure the universal ratification and the full and effective implementation of the ICERD, as well as the need to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme for Action. The EU will furthermore continue to engage meaningfully in the negotiations of a draft UN Declaration on the respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of people of African descent.

31. The EU will continue to champion the **rights of the child**, prioritizing the protection of children from all forms of violence, universal access to quality and inclusive education, with a particular attention to girls' right to education and those in disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised situations including indigenous children and children belonging to minorities, including national and ethnic minorities, as well as children with disabilities. The EU will continue to pay special attention to children affected by armed conflict and the prevention and ending of grave violations against them building on strengthened coordination with UN mechanisms and partners. The EU will continue to take action against female genital mutilation and early, child and forced marriage. The EU will continue to work towards eradicating child poverty and all forms of discrimination against children. The EU will address the rights of the child in the digital space in order to guarantee a safe online experience for all children, free from all forms of violence.
32. The EU will step up action to promote the full enjoyment of all human rights by **older persons**. The EU will remain committed to strengthening human rights of older persons in all spheres of life, especially in long-term care and support the efforts to tackle ageism and age-based discrimination and reinforce intergenerational activities and solidarity. In this respect, the EU will meaningfully engage with the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing and stands ready to cooperate in the process of identifying possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons in order to best address them.

33. The EU will continue to promote the rights of **Indigenous Peoples** as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and international human rights law, and will in this regard engage actively in all relevant fora where the rights of Indigenous Peoples are discussed. The EU will continue to actively engage in all efforts to enhance the full, effective and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant United Nations bodies, including the meetings of the Human Rights Council, on issues affecting them. The EU will stress the importance of protection of Indigenous HRDs including in the context of land and natural resources and the protection of the environment, biodiversity and the climate, and of ensuring that they are able to promote human rights without fear of reprisals. The EU will promote full, effective and meaningful participation and leadership of indigenous women. The EU will underline the importance of providing to indigenous children access to education in their own language and culture.
34. Defending the rights of persons belonging to **minorities** is critical. The EU will continue calling on all states to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of persons belonging to minorities as set out in the Declaration of the rights of persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities. The EU will promote their right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life. The EU will oppose all forms of incitement to violence or hatred, and hate speech, online and offline, while preserving the full articulation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The EU will further continue to address issues of persons belonging to minorities in all relevant fora.

35. The EU will continue to support measures to address the impact of **climate change**, the loss of biodiversity, pollution and environmental degradation on the full enjoyment of all human rights. A human-rights based approach is key in order to successfully fight those phenomena. The EU will promote the important role of environmental and indigenous human rights defenders in this regard. The EU will actively engage in discussions on advancing the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and promote inclusion and non-discrimination, in this context. The EU will engage actively regarding UN resolutions on the human rights, climate and environment nexus, including in light of the outcomes of COP 28.
36. The EU will reaffirm its commitment to full implementation of all three dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. The EU will reiterate its stance that the full realisation of all human rights for all is a pre-condition to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. In this spirit, the EU will continue to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by applying a human rights-based approach to development cooperation, while ensuring that no one is left behind. This approach contributes to the **right to development** as rooted in the universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing nature of all human rights, with individuals as rights-holders and states as duty-bearers. As to the process of elaboration of a legally binding instrument on the right to development, the EU will continue to engage without prejudging its final position, in order to make the draft text fully compliant with international human rights law.

37. The EU will continue cooperating with the OHCHR and the UN Working Group on **Business and Human Rights** to promote the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) globally. It will continue supporting the adoption of National Action Plans in Member States and partner countries, and developing a comprehensive EU Framework for UNGP implementation taking as a reference the UN UNGP Roadmap for the next decade of business and human rights. The EU will strengthen its engagement in the UN fora reflecting legislative and other developments in the EU, especially related to corporate sustainability due diligence, as a basis for engagement in UN negotiations on a consensus-based legally binding instrument on business and human rights, with a view to enhancing the protection of victims and creating a global level playing field.
38. Terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime constitute a serious threat to peace and security. The fight against terrorism must not infringe human rights, fundamental freedoms or international humanitarian law. The EU calls on all states, to ensure that the response to terrorism and organized crime are in full compliance with international law. Investigating and prosecuting **terrorism** cases must take place in accordance with the rule of law and international human rights law, putting the rights of victims at the centre.

39. The EU will step up action to uphold international law in relation to refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, paying particular attention to persons in vulnerable situations. The EU will continue offering opportunities for legal pathways to migration while fully respecting the national competences, and to call on all states to prevent trafficking in and smuggling of human beings, to protect victims and increase awareness among potential victims, maintaining a gender-responsive and child-sensitive approach and to ensure effective prosecution of perpetrators. The EU will continue to strongly condemn state-sponsored hybrid attacks, including instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes by third countries, and work to counter such activities, in full respect to human rights and international law.
40. The EU will invite all partners to **join efforts to uphold and advance human rights** globally and to build stronger partnerships. The EU is convinced that the promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights bring to all stakeholders multiple benefits, including in sustainable development, peace and security and the advancement of equal, diverse, pluralistic and inclusive societies.
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