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From: General Secretariat of the Council

On: 27 January 2025

To: Delegations

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Subject: Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2025

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Delegations will find attached Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2025, approved by the Council at its 4075<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 27 January 2025.

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**Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2025**

1. **Human rights** are universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated, be they civil, cultural, economic, political or social. They are essential for human dignity, equality, democracy, peace and sustainable development. Peace and prosperity, as well as the achievement of the SDGs, go hand in hand with respect for the rule of law, democracy and all human rights. Conflict and violence all too often have their origins in the denial of human rights and history has taught us that we can only really protect our own freedom, if we protect the freedom of others.
2. The European Union reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the universal respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights for everyone, everywhere. In 2025, the EU will continue to strongly uphold, defend and promote human rights as a priority of its external action and use every opportunity in international fora to counter the pushback against human rights.
3. The EU will continue to take a strong stance and act as a leader in upholding and promoting the observance of international law and human rights, building on its unity to foster leverage. At a time of heightened conflict and tension, alongside an alarming trend of disregard for international law, the EU reaffirms its unwavering commitment to effective **multilateralism and to the rules-based international order** with the United Nations at its core, in which laws and norms are stronger than conflict. The EU will play a leading role in promoting reform of the international system and implementing the Pact for the Future and its annexes, which reaffirm the importance of human rights. The EU will resist any attempt to sow division or undermine universal values and international law. The EU will proactively reiterate that its positions are based on universal values and international law, and consistently counter hostile narratives.

4. The EU will continue to **cooperate with all regions of the world**, to listen to the legitimate concerns of its partners, and to enhance cooperation with like-minded countries across regions. It will be particularly important to deepen and broaden cooperation in the area of human rights, including beyond traditional like-minded partners, and act as a bridge-builder. The EU will use its planned Summits in 2025 to foster understanding, joint action and alliances, on human rights in international fora, and continue to support regional human rights mechanisms.
  
5. The EU will continue to call on all States to fully cooperate and constructively engage with the **UN human rights system**, including the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, the Third Committee, the Treaty bodies, as well as UN agencies. The EU reaffirms its unwavering support for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to operate independently and with sufficient resources, and further supports strengthening the UN human rights system. The EU will continue to call on all States to grant the UN and its Human Rights monitoring mechanisms unconditional and unhindered access to their territories, extend invitations to UN Special Procedures and other UN human rights mechanisms and facilitate their country visits. The EU welcomes the work by the Human Rights Council to ensure efficiency of its working methods and recalls that it is up to the Human Rights Council to decide upon them. The EU also welcomes enhanced coordination by the bureaus of the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee to ensure better synergies between these bodies' work and avoid unnecessary duplication. While the two bodies' workload has grown, decisions on working methods should be taken in an inclusive, consensual and carefully considered manner.

6. The EU will continue to use all instruments at its disposal, including the **EU Global Human Rights Sanctions regime**, to bring about change and improve the situation of human rights worldwide.
7. The EU remains committed to ending impunity and ensuring **accountability** for all violations of international law, including human rights law, and international humanitarian law throughout the world. The EU will continue to support efforts towards independent investigations into violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including those that may amount to international crimes. The EU reaffirms its unwavering support for the international criminal justice system, particularly to the International Criminal Court (ICC), as well as its commitment to upholding the Rome Statute and preserving the ICC's independence and integrity. The EU will continue to condemn attacks or threats against the Court, elected officials, personnel and those cooperating with the Court. The EU will also provide its full support and contribution to ensure the protection of the Court and its staff against external pressures or threats.

8. The EU will maintain its strong support for **the equality agenda** through all multilateral fora. The EU will 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. 2025 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 69<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women will offer a unique opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to gender equality, the full enjoyment of all human rights by all women and girls and their empowerment. The EU will approach the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women with a high level of ambition. In a context of an increasing pushback against gender equality, the EU will continue to work with all partners to advance international norms and standards. The EU will stress 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 promote the full 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 by 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 every opportunity in all relevant fora, including the Commission on Population and Development, to continue delivering on these commitments.

9. The EU will place the prevention and elimination of **sexual and gender based violence (SGBV)** both online and offline at the centre of its efforts, including conflict-related SGBV, domestic and intimate partner violence, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices against women and girls. The EU will promote whole-of-society approaches to engage men and boys as allies and beneficiaries in efforts to eliminate all gender inequalities, including by addressing discriminatory laws, and combatting discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes. The EU recalls its commitment to support women's and youth's equal, full, effective and meaningful participation, in all their diversity and in all spheres of public and political life, as per the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020 - 2027.
  
10. The EU will work to end and prevent further human rights violations and abuses, including by supporting relevant initiatives in the UNGA Third Committee and the Human Rights Council. The EU will continue to take a leading role on **country-specific initiatives** on Afghanistan, Belarus, Burundi, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Eritrea and Myanmar. It will closely follow initiatives on the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia including the occupied breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Haiti, Iran, Nicaragua, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The EU will actively engage in interactive dialogues with special procedures mandates holders and debates to draw attention to human rights situations, including Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and Yemen.

11. The EU will continue to condemn in the strongest possible terms the crimes committed in the context of Russia's illegal, 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, illegal deportations, forcible transfers, systematic and widespread torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, sexual and gender based violence, executions of prisoners of war, and deliberate campaign against Ukraine's energy and other civilian infrastructure. The EU will continue to call on Russia to end the unlawful practice of deportation and forcible transfer of Ukrainian children and their illegal adoption. The EU encourages further efforts to ensure accountability for all international crimes and human rights violations and abuses stemming from the Russian war of aggression. The EU supports efforts to establish a tribunal for the prosecution of the crime of aggression against Ukraine that would enjoy the broadest cross-regional support and legitimacy. The EU, as a fully-fledged Participant in the Register of Damage for Ukraine, will continue to work with the Council of Europe to establish an international comprehensive compensation mechanism. It underlines its support for 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 welcomes Ukraine's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as an important step forward towards accountability and calls to ensure its full implementation in Ukraine's domestic legislation. The EU will demand that Russia cease its aggression, withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

12. The EU will continue to monitor and condemn the structural system of human rights violations and the systematic, state-sponsored and intensifying internal repression, including the use of arbitrary detention, torture and other ill treatment. The EU condemns the silencing of dissenting voices, civil society, independent media and stigmatised groups in the **Russian Federation**. The EU will call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Russia and to end the persecution of the political opposition. We will raise awareness about the continued lack of rule of law and call on Russia to abolish its repressive legislation and end political misuse of the judiciary. The EU 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.
  
13. The EU will continue to strongly condemn the gross, systematic and widespread human rights violations in **Belarus**. 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 their instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes, in complicity with Russia. The EU will also urge the Belarusian authorities to abolish the death penalty, and as a first step, to introduce a moratorium. The EU will work to ensure that the deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus remains high on the Human Rights Council's agenda.



14. The EU warmly welcomes the ceasefire agreement in **Gaza, which will allow the phased release of the hostages, end hostilities and ease the humanitarian suffering in Gaza.** The EU welcomes that the hostages, including several EU nationals, will be reunited with their families and that much needed humanitarian aid will reach civilians in Gaza. It is vital that the deal is fully implemented to allow all the hostages to be released, and to ensure a permanent end to the hostilities. The EU will call for full and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid to the Gaza strip and that aid can be effectively distributed to those in need, including by UN agencies and notably UNRWA. The EU will continue to condemn in the strongest possible terms the brutal terrorist attacks conducted by Hamas against **Israel** on 7 October 2023. The EU will continue to stand with the families of the victims and the hostages taken by Hamas. The EU deplores the unacceptable number of civilian casualties, especially children and women, in Gaza and in the West Bank, as well as the catastrophic consequences of the insufficient entry of aid into Gaza, including the risk of famine. The EU urges all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and notes that there must be accountability for violations of international law. The EU will recall the need to fully implement the International Court of Justice orders, which are legally binding. In the West Bank, the EU will continue to strongly condemn ongoing extremist settler violence, and the expansion of illegal settlements, including demolitions. Settlements are illegal under international law. The EU will call for cooperation with all UN mechanisms and respect for all human rights obligations. The EU condemns any human rights violations. The EU will remain committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution. In **Lebanon**, the EU will continue to support the implementation of the ceasefire and call on all parties to fully implement the ceasefire agreement and UN Security Council resolution 1701, so as to ensure the safe return of displaced populations on both sides. The EU will call on all parties to protect and support the mandate of UNIFIL.

15. The EU will firmly condemn the systematic human rights violations and abuses in **Afghanistan**, particularly extreme gender-based discrimination by the Taliban against women and girls, which may amount to gender persecution, which is a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the ICC to which Afghanistan is a State party. This includes gender-based violence, the denial of the right to education for all, freedom of expression, movement and work, and the severe limitation of their participation in all spheres of society and public life, including the ban on women working for NGOs and the UN, the so-called Law on Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice and the recent decision to suspend women and girls' access to education in private and public medical institutions. The EU will stress the need to ensure the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women and girls in all spheres of society and public life. 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 situation of human rights in Afghanistan, as well as the appointment of a UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2721 (2023). The EU will continue to underline the responsibility of the Taliban to ensure respect for, and protection and fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and ensure humanitarian assistance and respect for international humanitarian law. The EU will proactively engage in exploring possible additional accountability mechanisms that could provide clear added value. It will call on the Taliban to abide by the obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Afghanistan is a party.

16. The EU will reiterate its serious concerns about the human rights situation in **China**, including in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Hong Kong and Xinjiang. The EU will encourage China to cooperate effectively with the UN High Commissioner and his Office, 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 pay 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, including the right of religious groups to conduct their basic affairs without interference and freely choose their religious leaders, as well as to protecting women's and girls' rights, to preserving cultural identity, and to ending the use of forced labour. 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 the people of Hong Kong, as well as Uyghurs, Tibetans and persons belonging to ethnic, religious, linguistic and other minorities. The EU will reiterate its concerns regarding China's previous international 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.
17. The EU will call upon the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (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. The EU will continue calling on the DPRK to accept offers of dialogue and to re-engage with the international community, including through the further return of diplomatic and humanitarian personnel to the DPRK. It will urge the DPRK to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, and to implement the recommendations stemming from the 2024 UPR cycle.

18. The EU will continue to condemn human rights violations in **Iran** and urge the Iranian authorities to uphold human rights for all, in particular women and girls and persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities. 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 human rights mechanisms, notably the Independent Fact-Finding Mission and the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran. It will also urge Iran to release all arbitrarily detained individuals, including foreign and dual nationals, to bring detention conditions into line with international standards and to provide due process to all detainees.
19. The EU will call for the end of all violence against civilians by the military, the release of all prisoners arbitrarily detained in particular as a consequence of the 2021 military coup, and for stability and peaceful reconciliation in **Myanmar/Burma**. It will call for the swift establishment of a transparent, inclusive and credible democratic path and will support the United Nations' and ASEAN's efforts in this regard and urge the full implementation of UNSC resolution 2669 (2022). 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 gross human rights violations and abuses, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. It will call for complete, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need. The EU will continue to advocate to de-escalate violence and to reverse the rising militarisation of civilians including Rohingya in Rakhine and refugee camps. The EU will continue to support and call for the enhancement of accountability mechanisms and their use, including the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), to support rapid due legal processes.

20. In **Sudan**, the EU will continue to condemn the serious violations and abuses of human rights, including large-scale sexual and gender-based violence and the violations of the rights of children. The EU will call on all parties to cease hostilities immediately and to uphold and respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and insist on unhindered humanitarian access and the protection of humanitarian workers. The EU will focus on ensuring accountability for atrocity crimes committed throughout the country and elsewhere, including many which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The EU will support the work of the ICC and the UN and call on Sudan to cooperate with the Independent Expert in Sudan and Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Sudan.
21. The fall of Assad's criminal regime marks a historic moment for the **Syrian people**, who have endured immense suffering and demonstrated extraordinary resilience in their pursuit of dignity, freedom, and justice. All must have an opportunity to reunify, stabilize and rebuild their country, restore justice and ensure accountability. Transitional justice and respect for human rights will be key to achieve sustainable peace and reconciliation. All parties responsible for violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) or violations and abuses of human rights must be held accountable. All crimes and violations of human rights law committed by the parties to the civil war in Syria must be investigated in the context of transitional justice. The EU urges all actors to avoid any further violence, to ensure the protection of civilians, and to uphold international law, international humanitarian and human rights law, including women and children's rights. We urge the protection of all civilians without distinction, including persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities. It is imperative that all stakeholders engage in an inclusive, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned dialogue on all key issues to ensure an orderly, peaceful and inclusive transition, supported by the UN and in line with the core principles of UNSC resolution 2254. The EU will express its continued support for the Independent International Commission of Inquiry (CoI), the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) and the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic (IIMP).

22. The EU will work with its partners to ensure a peaceful and inclusive democratic transition in Venezuela, reflecting the will of the **Venezuelan people**. The EU will promote a Venezuelan-led dialogue process that can lead to a peaceful and democratic solution to the multidimensional crisis. The EU will call for an end to arbitrary detentions, including of dual and foreign citizens, and political repression, especially towards human rights defenders, and for the release of all political prisoners and the full respect of fundamental freedoms, such as the freedom of expression, association and assembly. The EU urges Venezuela to engage constructively with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela.
23. The EU will continue to support **Haiti** in addressing its humanitarian crisis, promoting human rights, combating extreme violence by armed criminal groups, and restoring democracy and the rule of law.
24. The EU will strongly condemn the violence against peaceful protesters, politicians and media representatives in **Georgia**. The EU will call on the authorities to uphold the right to freedom of assembly and of expression, and refrain from using force. The EU will support initiatives to investigate all acts of violence and to hold to account those responsible.
25. The EU will closely follow the human rights situation in Azerbaijan, and continue to support a sustainable and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
26. **Türkiye**, as an EU candidate country and long-standing member of the Council of Europe, is expected to adhere to its respective commitments.
27. The EU will work on developing and strengthening the respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights. The EU will engage constructively **on the thematic initiatives** presented in the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. The EU will lead thematic resolutions on Freedom of religion and belief and the Rights of the child.

28. On **digital technologies and artificial intelligence**, strong safeguards are needed to guarantee the protection of human rights, including in multilateral and multi-stakeholder fora. The EU will actively promote universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and democratic principles in the digital space. The EU will continue to champion a human rights-based approach in the digital sphere, including on Artificial Intelligence, and other new and emerging technologies. This includes advocating for an open, free, inclusive, safe, global, interoperable and secure internet for everyone and safeguarding its multi-stakeholder foundation, and for the respect of privacy, and to promote the rights to privacy and data protection. Building on the Global Digital Compact, the EU will call on all States to protect online civic space and prevent internet shutdowns and online censorship, unlawful surveillance, hate speech online, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, information manipulation, disinformation and cybercrime, in full compliance with international human rights law. To do so, the EU will actively broaden and deepen partnerships with like-minded countries and regions, and continue to engage with the private sector, civil society and academia. The EU will work with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other key partners, such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO, ITU and the office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, to implement the Global Digital Compact.
29. 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 the right of journalists and media workers to work under safe conditions, without fear of harassment, threats and violence. The EU will work to counter foreign information manipulation and strengthen information integrity, including the right to access relevant, reliable and accurate information. In the face of increasing restrictions on civic space, the EU will protect and promote the right to **freedom of peaceful assembly and association**.

30. The EU will actively support, promote and empower a diverse and independent **civil society**, championing their meaningful participation in all UN fora. The EU will strongly condemn any form of reprisals against **human rights defenders (HRDs)** and civil society organisations, including those who cooperate with the UN in any form. 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, and will be a leading actor in the promotion of a safe and enabling environment for civil society and all HRDs, including those in exile. The EU will pay special attention to threats against HRDs and civil society actors, including online, and transnational repression. 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.
31. The EU will recall its principled position against the **death penalty in all cases and in all circumstances**, and 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 strongly and unequivocally condemn the application of the death penalty, in particular in cases that violate international minimum standards, and strongly support the resolutions at HRC and UNGA, which highlight the concerning human rights effects of this cruel, inhumane and degrading punishment. The EU will promote further ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
32. The EU will express concern over the increased use of **torture** or ill-treatment as a method to quash political dissent and to restrict civic space. The EU will highlight torture-free trade as a crucial step towards its full elimination, and consider further steps to ban global trade in goods used for this purpose.



33. The EU will continue to strongly oppose and step up action to combat all forms of **discrimination**, with 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 all human rights by LGBTI persons and express its deep concern about the alarming rates of violence, discrimination and stigmatization, and about the criminalization of same-sex relations. 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.
34. The EU remains committed to mainstreaming the **rights of persons with disabilities** across different agenda items and the work of multilateral institutions, and to ensuring that all persons with disabilities enjoy equal rights to full, effective and meaningful participation and inclusion in all aspects of social, cultural, educational, economic, civil and political life.
35. The EU will continue calling on all States to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic **minorities**, including in all relevant fora. 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 rights to freedom of opinion and expression.

36. The EU will step up action to promote the full enjoyment of all human rights by **older persons** and to tackle ageism. The EU will continue to engage with relevant UN bodies to enhance the protection and enjoyment of human rights by older persons.
37. The EU will continue to champion the **rights of the child**, prioritizing the protection of children from all forms of violence, including online, and universal access to quality and inclusive education. The EU will continue to pay special attention to children affected by armed conflict, enhancing coordination with UN mechanisms, in line with the updated EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict. The EU will continue to work towards eradicating all forms of discrimination against children.
38. 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.
39. The EU will continue to engage in a constructive manner on all initiatives related to fighting any form of **racism**, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance worldwide, while keeping in mind its longstanding position on the need to ensure the universal ratification and the full and effective implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as well as the need to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme for Action and to rationalise and streamline where needed, its follow-up mechanisms. The EU will continue to engage meaningfully in the negotiations on a draft UN Declaration on the respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of people of African descent.

40. 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.
41. 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 engage actively in discussions on the human rights economy, including how economic choices and policies prioritize human dignity and equality, ultimately leading to the realization of human rights. 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 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.

42. 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. The EU legislation on corporate sustainability due diligence and the fight against forced labour provide an important basis for strengthened EU engagement at the UN, notably with regard to a consensus-based legally binding instrument on business and human rights, including intersessional thematic consultations. With a view to enhancing the protection of victims and creating a global level playing field, it is important to strive for a wide, cross-regional consensus between UN member states.
43. Recognizing the impact of **climate change**, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation and pollution on the enjoyment of human rights of current and future generations, the EU will continue engaging with partners across the globe to leverage a human rights based approach to strengthen efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The EU will recall the States' obligations as duty bearers in this regard and focus on those rights holders who are most vulnerable to the effects of the triple planetary crisis. The EU will promote the important role of environmental and Indigenous human rights defenders and support measures to protect them. The EU will actively engage in discussions on advancing the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It will advocate for the bold and urgent measures needed as part of the green transition to be just and inclusive.

44. 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.
45. The EU will continue its efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable and inclusive development, in a way that promotes respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights, without discrimination on any ground. The EU will recall its reservations regarding the current draft legally binding instrument on the **right to development**, while continuing to engage constructively on this file, including in any future discussions on a draft legally binding instrument. In this respect, it will continue to promote the principle of universality of human rights, to reject approaches that are not fully compliant with international human rights law or could undermine States human rights obligations by placing the right to development above other human rights, and to advocate for every individual to be always and everywhere recognized as the rights holder, while States have the primary responsibility and obligations for the full realisation of all human rights.

46. The EU will continue stepping up action to uphold international law and human rights in relation to **refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants**, in particular the fundamental right to seek asylum and the principle of non-refoulement, and paying particular attention to persons in vulnerable situations. The EU will continue to offer opportunities for legal pathways to migration while fully respecting the national competences. The EU will call on all States to prevent and combat trafficking in and smuggling of human beings. The EU reaffirms its commitment to countering the instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes, in full respect to human rights and international law. The EU will not allow any country to abuse its values, including the right to seek asylum, and to undermine its democracies.
47. The EU will call on all States to ensure that **the response to terrorism and organized crime**, including investigation and prosecution, is in full compliance with international law.
48. The EU reaffirms its unwavering commitment to make progress on the elimination of **enforced disappearances**, building on the achievements of the First World Congress on Enforced Disappearances.
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