



Brussels, 30 January 2026
(OR. en)

5835/26

**COHOM 27
CONUN 14
COPS 70
COASI 26
COAFR 29
CFSP/PESC 147
DEVGEN 16
MAMA 25**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2026

Delegations will find attached Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2026, approved by the Council at its 4151st meeting held on 29 January 2026.

CONCLUSIONS ON EU PRIORITIES IN UN HUMAN RIGHTS FORA IN 2026

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, rule of law, peace and sustainable development. Peace and prosperity, freedom and security, as well as the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2030, go hand in hand with respect for the rule of law, democracy and all human rights. International law is the foundation of peace, justice, free trade and resolution of disputes.
2. The European Union reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the **universal respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights** for everyone, everywhere. The EU will remain steadfast in the defence of the universality of human rights, democracy and of the rule of law. The active promotion and protection of these universal norms, including in our external action, are in the interest of the European Union, its Member States and its citizens. The EU will be responsive in its principled approach to protecting and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law effectively in a rapidly changing world.
3. As a Union built on international cooperation and shared responsibility, the current broad assault against the rules-based **international order**, human rights, internationally agreed norms, and the institutions we have established to enforce them runs counter the EU's strategic interests. Commonly agreed rules and effective and inclusive **multilateral institutions**, with the United Nations at their core, are the best means to ensure peace, security, human rights, prosperity and sustainable development for all. 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 cross-regional partnerships that strengthen global norms and peace. We will use every opportunity in multilateral fora to counter the pushback against human rights.

4. The EU will continue to **cooperate with all regions of the world** and to enhance partnerships with countries across regions. It remains 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 remain a predictable and reliable partner for countries across the world.
5. The EU will continue to call on all States to fully cooperate and engage constructively with the **UN human rights system**. In this 20th anniversary year of the **UN Human Rights Council**, it is vital to reaffirm its role as a key forum for dialogue, cooperation and action on human rights and to strengthen its standing and its synergies with the work of other UN bodies, notably the UNGA Third Committee.
6. A **robust and effective UN human rights system** requires the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to be able to operate independently and with sufficient resources. 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 standing invitations to UN Special Procedures and other UN human rights mechanisms and facilitate their country visits. The EU will reaffirm its steadfast support for the **Universal Periodic Review**, a cornerstone of the UN human rights system, and will call on all States to continue to participate in it. The EU underscores the essential role, independence and integrity of the UN Special Procedures mandate holders.
7. All **three pillars of the UN** are equally important and mutually reinforcing as they base on which the UN system is built. The UN plays a vital norm-setting role, whereas all UN bodies and entities should integrate a human rights perspective to their activities. The **UN80 initiative** is an opportunity to strengthen the UN and make it fit to deliver across its three pillars, as impact is particularly important in the human rights field. The EU will remain vigilant that the UN80 reform process does not disproportionately affect the human rights pillar, and maintain particular attention to its adequate, predictable, increased and sustainable **funding**, mindful that it is already structurally underfunded, and particularly affected by the liquidity crisis. The EU will continue to call upon all States to fulfil their financial commitments, and to pay their dues in full and on time.

8. The ongoing **rationalisation and efficiency** efforts at the Human Rights Council and UNGA Third Committee present an opportunity to strengthen the focus, effectiveness and impact of these fora and the mandates they create, as well as to strengthen cooperation between the HRC and the Third Committee in order to reduce overlaps and avoid duplications. The EU calls on all States to join these efforts in a spirit of sincere collaboration and in view of upholding their key functions.
9. To respect, protect and fulfil human rights and to ensure sustainable peace and security, efforts must continue to **end impunity and ensure accountability** for all violations and abuses of international law, including **international human rights law** and **international humanitarian law** wherever they take place. Accountability is key to the sustainable resolution of conflicts. Together with partners across the world, the EU will continue to support UN special procedures, mandate holders and other independent investigations into violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including those that may amount to international crimes.
10. The EU will reaffirm 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 recalls that crimes under the Rome Statute, which threaten the peace, security, and well-being of the world, should not go unpunished. To enable the ICC to fulfil its mandate, States Parties shall, in accordance with the provisions of the Rome Statute, cooperate fully with the Court in its investigation, and prosecution of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court. The EU has a long and robust policy of support to the ICC. The EU encourages dialogue between States Parties and Non-States Parties, with full respect for international law and the Rome Statute, to ensure the Court continues to be an effective and independent judicial institution. 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 with the aim of ensuring the protection of the Court and its staff against external pressures or threats, so that the Court can continue to function under any circumstances.

11. A strong, vibrant **civic space** is crucial for democracy, for human rights, and for holding governments accountable. Amid increased funding constraints, there is an alarming increase in harassment, threats and attacks against CSOs and human rights defenders, including transnational repression, as well as increasingly restrictive legislation in many countries. The EU will continue to support and protect a strong and resilient civil society offline and online, including through its EU Strategy for Civil Society, and systematically promote and enable a structured civil society engagement with decision-making authorities and participation in the UN and other multilateral fora.
12. **Shifting dynamics at the UN** generate new challenges and lead to increased attempts to undermine existing commitments and norms. The EU will firmly oppose any attempt to undermine the obligations of States under international law or weaken the universality of human rights. The EU will use the full EU toolbox, including the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions regime, to bring about change and improve the situation of human rights worldwide. The EU will counter false narratives, including on so-called unilateral coercive measures, disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI).

13. The EU will work to end and prevent further human rights violations and abuses, including by leading and supporting **relevant initiatives** in the UNGA Third Committee and at the Human Rights Council. Country-specific initiatives enable attention to be focussed on individual countries' human rights situations in line with universal norms, whether to address specific violations, promote accountability, or to help improve the human rights situation via mandates such as independent mechanisms and special procedures, and the OHCHR. 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, the 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 all country-specific interactive dialogues with special procedures mandates holders and other exchanges to draw attention to other specific human rights situations, and respective regional challenges. The EU will also follow up on the latest HRC Special Sessions. The EU will lead thematic initiatives on the Death penalty, Freedom of religion or belief, and the Rights of the Child.

14. The EU will continue to condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against **Ukraine**. The EU will also continue to condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's continuing violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in Ukraine, such as summary executions of prisoners of war and civilian detainees, arbitrary detention, systematic and widespread use of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, including rape and other conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. The EU is deeply concerned over the increasing number of civilians killed and injured, due to Russia's use of drones and explosive weapons, including with wide area effect in urban areas, and on **other** civilian infrastructure and civilians. The Commission of Inquiry has concluded that Russian authorities have committed crimes against humanity of torture, enforced disappearances, murder and forcible transfer of population, and war crimes, including deliberate and intensified targeting of civilians. The EU will continue to call on Russia and Belarus to immediately end the grave violation of child deportation and forcible transfer which – according to the Commission of Inquiry - constitute war crimes, to stop the illegal adoption of Ukrainian children and to ensure their immediate and safe return to Ukraine. The EU calls on Russia to immediately stop the militarisation and indoctrination of Ukrainian minors and youth as per the latest OHCHR reports on the human rights situation in Ukraine. The EU is firmly committed to ensuring full accountability for all international crimes and human rights violations and abuses stemming from Russia's war of aggression, including investigations by the prosecutor of the ICC, and for the rights of victims to justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition to be upheld. In this context, the EU takes note of the signing of a new convention establishing an International Claims Commission for Ukraine and calls for work to continue. The EU will continue supporting further efforts related to the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine, and the work towards the establishment of a comprehensive compensation mechanism. The EU will support 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 and fully respect Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU remains committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, grounded in the principles of the UN Charter and international law and welcomes all efforts to that end.

15. The EU will continue to monitor and condemn the structural system of human rights violations in **Russia**, which are part of a further intensifying systematic, state-sponsored internal repression, including use of arbitrary detention and widespread and systematic use of torture and ill-treatment. The EU remains deeply concerned about the closed civic space, both online and offline, and will condemn the systematic crackdown on civil society, dissenting voices and independent media in Russia alongside transnational repression. The EU will urge Russia to abolish its repressive legislation and to align its domestic legislation with international human rights law. The EU will call for the immediate and unconditional release and rehabilitation of all those arbitrarily detained, including political prisoners, and call upon Russia to end its political misuse of the judiciary and law enforcement. The EU will continue to urge Russia to cooperate fully with all UN, including special procedures, investigative mechanisms and regional mechanisms related to its human rights situation and to fully implement all outstanding rulings of the European Court of Human Rights.
16. The EU strongly condemns the gross, systematic and widespread human rights violations in **Belarus**. The EU will continue to urge the Belarusian authorities to halt any type of repression. The EU notes the recent release of some political prisoners and will continue to urge Belarus to immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate all political prisoners, ensuring the resolution of judicial processes upon their release and ending all forms of harassment or pressure that may result in their forced departure, deportation or deprivation of consular services. The EU will urge the Belarusian authorities to abolish the death penalty, and, as a first step, to introduce a moratorium. The EU calls on the Belarusian authorities to engage in a genuine and inclusive dialogue with all elements of society. It will also continue to urge the Belarusian authorities to cooperate fully with international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms. The EU remains committed to support all efforts towards accountability and to the victims' rights to reparation, truth, and guarantees of non-recurrence. The EU will demand that the Belarusian authorities stop their involvement in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and halt their instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes, in complicity with Russia. The EU will continue to work to ensure that the deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus remains high on the Human Rights Council's agenda and will support the work of the Special Rapporteur and the Group of Independent Experts on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus.

17. The EU condemns all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the whole **Occupied Palestinian Territory**. The EU welcomes the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2803. The EU remains firmly committed to international law and to a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace based on the two-state solution in accordance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions where two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, live side-by-side in peace within secure and recognised borders, and supports diplomatic efforts in this direction which are anchored in international law. The EU continues to stress the need for rapid, safe and unimpeded delivery and sustained distribution of humanitarian aid at scale into and throughout Gaza. The EU will continue calling on all parties to facilitate full and unimpeded humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip to respond to the urgent needs of the population, and urge for aid to be effectively distributed in accordance with international law, including by UN agencies, notably UNRWA. The EU calls on Israel not to implement the NGO registration law in its current form. The EU will continue to support the Commission of Inquiry and other relevant OHCHR mandates active in the OPT. The EU calls upon all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and underlines that there must be accountability for violations of these norms. The EU will recall the need to fully implement the International Court of Justice orders, which are legally binding and takes note of its advisory opinions. The EU strongly condemns the further escalation, following massive increase in settler violence against Palestinian civilians, and the policies of intimidation and threats of forcible displacement and annexation, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as the terrorist attacks against Israel. The EU calls on the Government of Israel to reverse the expansion of settlements, which are illegal under international law, to refrain from any annexation and to hold the violent settlers accountable. The EU will recall the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the 'New York Declaration' on Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and Implementation of the Two-State Solution. The EU underlines the vital role of civil society in promoting dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians around human rights, peace and a comprehensive and just solution of the conflict. The EU hopes that cooperation with civil society and NGOs will remain unhampered in the future.

18. The human rights situation in **Iran** remains deeply worrying, particularly the continuing rise of executions and the reports of casualties in demonstrations where Iranians voiced their legitimate aspiration for a better life, freedom and dignity. The EU will continue to condemn the use of violence, arbitrary detention, and intimidation tactics by security forces against demonstrators. The EU will call upon the Iranian government to stop executions and pursue a consistent policy towards the abolition of capital punishment. The EU calls on Iran to end all forms of discrimination, in law and in practice, against women and girls as well as persons belonging to ethnic, religious, linguistic or other minorities. The EU remains concerned about the restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression and assembly, offline and online. The free flow of information and access to the internet should be enabled. All individuals arrested for peacefully exercising their rights should be immediately released. The EU is gravely concerned about harassment and reprisals, notably targeting dissidents, persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities and human rights defenders, not least through transnational repression, including on EU soil. The EU expresses its concerns regarding the large-scale return, including forced return, of Afghans from Iran. The EU calls on Iran to provide due process and fair trial guarantees for all detainees. The EU demands the immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained citizens in Iran, including EU citizens and dual nationals, and calls on the Iranian authorities to end the distressing practice of detaining foreign citizens with a view to making political gains. The EU also urges Iran to abide by its obligations under the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

19. The EU strongly condemns the human rights violations and abuses in **Afghanistan**. These violations include gender-based violence, the extreme gender-based discrimination by the Taliban against women and girls, including the denial of the right to education for women and girls above grade 6, and the denial of freedom of expression, movement and work, including the ban on women working for NGOs and the UN. These systematic and systemic violations of women's and girls' rights 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. The EU will uphold pressure to ensure Afghan women's and girls' full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as their empowerment, meaningful and safe participation and leadership in all spheres of society and public life, not least in the framework of the Doha process, as well as ensure their protection from all forms of violence. 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, and persons in vulnerable situations as well as LGBTI persons. The EU underlines that an Afghan-led political process inclusive of all Afghans, with the equal and meaningful participation of women, is required to ensure sustainable peace, stability and prosperity. The EU will support the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) under its comprehensive mandate with a strong human rights component as well as the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan. Following the creation by the Human Rights Council of a new accountability mechanism for Afghanistan, the EU will support the UN in ensuring that the mandate becomes operational as soon as possible and is sufficiently financed.

20. The EU will continue to express its grave concerns regarding the human rights situation in **China**, including in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Hong Kong and Xinjiang. The EU will urge China to engage constructively with the UN High Commissioner and his Office, as well as with all international human rights mechanisms, including towards implementing the recommendations outlined in the assessment report on human rights violations in Xinjiang. The EU will focus on the full enjoyment of human rights and the exercise of fundamental freedoms, notably freedom of opinion and expression, association, and peaceful assembly; freedom of religion or belief, including the right of religious communities to manage their affairs without interference and freely choose their religious leaders; the protection of the rights of women and girls; the preservation of cultural identity; and the eradication of forced labour. The EU will continue to closely monitor the situation of civil society and individual cases involving human rights defenders, including those cooperating with UN mechanisms, as well as those exposed to harassment, intimidation and surveillance, including transnational repression. The EU will reiterate its call on China to respect the principle of non-refoulement and refrain from extraterritorial activities (including coercion) that are not in line with international law. The EU will urge China to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights for all, including Uyghurs, Tibetans, and persons belonging to ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other minorities. Regarding Hong Kong, the EU will reaffirm its concerns regarding the repressive use of national security legislation and urge China to fulfil its international commitments including by restoring Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy under the 'one country, two system' principle. Where possible and in full respect of universal human rights, the EU will remain open to working with China including in multilateral settings.

21. The EU will call on the **DPRK** authorities to take concrete measures to end their gross, systematic and widespread human rights violations as recalled in UNGA resolution 80/220. The EU urges the DPRK to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. We will reiterate the need to ensure accountability for human rights violations, including through consideration of referral to the ICC. The EU will encourage the DPRK to engage in constructive action and dialogue with the international community, including the UN human rights system and the Special Rapporteur.

22. The EU recalls **Georgia**'s obligation to enable the exercise of fundamental freedoms and urges Georgia to repeal or substantially revise recent legislation that runs counter to Georgia's obligations under international human rights law and unduly restricts or violates the freedom of assembly, association or expression, including the freedom and pluralism of media. The EU is concerned over the politically motivated use of the justice system and the criminal investigations against Civil Society Organisations. The EU will continue to strongly condemn arbitrary arrests and the increasing repression/persecution, including the imprisonment of opposition leaders, independent journalists and media workers, and civil society actors, which contributes to the backsliding of democracy and the rule of law in Georgia. The EU will continue to call on the Georgian authorities to immediately and unconditionally free all arbitrarily detained persons. It will recall the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment and stress the importance of ending impunity for violations committed by law enforcement.

23. Regarding **Myanmar/Burma**, the EU will continue to condemn and call for the end of all violence against civilians, the release of all arbitrarily detained persons, notably those detained as a consequence of the 2021 military coup, and for stability and peaceful reconciliation. The EU will demand the swift establishment of a transparent, inclusive and credible democratic path and in this regard will continue to support the United Nations' and ASEAN's efforts, including the full implementation of UNSC resolution 2669 (2022) and ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus. The EU will reject any elections that are neither free nor fair and that aim to legitimise the military without meeting the requirements of a democratic process. The EU will call for greater coherence of positions across the UN system and on the ground. It will continue to advocate for justice and accountability for all human rights violations and abuses, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, repression and indiscriminate targeting of civilians. It will call for complete, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need. The EU will advocate to de-escalate violence and reverse the rising militarisation of civilians, including Rohingya in Rakhine and refugee camps. The EU will continue to support UN mechanisms including the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar as well as accountability mechanisms, notably the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM).

24. The EU is extremely concerned by the widespread violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law across **Sudan** documented in numerous reports, including large-scale sexual and gender-based violence, ethnically motivated killings, starvation as a method of warfare, violations of the rights of the child and large-scale displacement. The EU will continue to unequivocally condemn these atrocities, many of which have been employed systematically and at an alarming scale with a devastating impact on the civilian population, particularly on women and children as well as other persons in vulnerable situations. The EU will continue to call on all parties to the conflict to resume negotiations towards an immediate and lasting ceasefire, respect of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as Sudan's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. The EU will insist on the protection of civilians, civilian infrastructure, humanitarian workers and humanitarian access which must not be contingent on a ceasefire. The EU will focus on ensuring accountability for atrocity crimes committed throughout the country, including many that 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 International Fact-Finding Mission on the Sudan.

25. The EU remains deeply concerned about widespread violations and abuses committed by all parties in **Eastern DRC**. These include extrajudicial killings, summary, or arbitrary executions, sexual and gender-based violence, and the recruitment and use of child soldiers. We must ensure that all perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses, as well as breaches of international humanitarian law, are held accountable. This underscores the urgent need to provide sufficient funding for the Independent Commission of Inquiry on human rights violations in the two Kivu provinces, which was mandated by a resolution of the HRC in 2025.

26. The **Syrian people** continue to chart a historic new course in their pursuit of dignity, freedom, and justice. The EU continues to be committed to an inclusive Syrian-led, Syrian-owned transition free from harmful foreign interference. Accountability, a comprehensive and inclusive transitional justice process and respect for human rights, including those of persons belonging to the religious communities, will be key to achieving sustainable peace and reconciliation. The EU will insist on the importance of inclusivity, improvement of the humanitarian and security situation, and a pluralistic civic space, including free and independent media and the Syrian diaspora community, as key conditions for the success of this transition. The EU urges all actors to refrain from further violence, to ensure the safety and protection of all civilians, and to uphold international law, as well as universal human rights, including women's and children's rights. All those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law or violations and abuses of human rights - past and present - must be held accountable and brought to justice. The EU calls for human rights to be respected, protected and fulfilled for all Syrians without distinction of any kind, including those based on gender, ethnicity, or religion. The EU will continue to support the Commission of Inquiry (CoI), the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), and the Independent Institution on Missing Persons (IIMP). The EU calls on these UN entities to continue to work in close cooperation with relevant national institutions and to complement national efforts. The EU reiterates its call for the renewal of the CoI's mandate, and its call to the Syrian transitional authorities to ensure the IIIM and the IIMP's full access to Syria, without restrictions.

27. The EU will continue to work with its partners, including the United States, and other regional and international partners, to foster a negotiated, peaceful and inclusive democratic transition in **Venezuela**, reflecting the will of the Venezuelan people in full respect of Venezuela's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU will continue to promote an inclusive Venezuelan-led dialogue that can lead to a peaceful and democratic solution to the multidimensional crisis. The EU will continue to call for fair, credible, transparent elections and respect for democratic norms as central to resolving the political crisis. The EU will continue to demand the release of all political prisoners and the end of arbitrary detentions, including of dual and foreign citizens. Political repression, including torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in the detention centres especially of human rights defenders and journalists must end. The EU will continue to advocate for the full respect of fundamental freedoms including the rights of peaceful assembly, association, and free expression. The EU urges Venezuela to engage constructively with all human rights mechanisms, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The EU advocates for the meaningful return of the OHCHR to the country. Under all circumstances international law including the UN Charter must be upheld.
28. 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. The EU will also continue to encourage Haitian Authorities to move forward on the path to fair and free elections.
29. While noting progress made in the sphere of economic and social rights, including in combatting female genital mutilation, the EU remains concerned about the situation in **Eritrea** with regard to a wide range of human rights violations, including, the practice of indefinite national service and arbitrary conscription as well as arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, torture, and inhumane prison conditions, together with widespread impunity. The EU will continue to call on Eritrea to uphold the UN Charter, to fulfil its international obligations, and will encourage Eritrea to strengthen its partnership with the United Nations, including engaging in constructive dialogue on human rights.

30. The EU will closely follow the human rights situation in **Azerbaijan**, and continue to support a sustainable and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
31. **Türkiye**, as an EU candidate country and long-standing member of the Council of Europe, is expected to adhere to its respective commitments and its obligations under international law, including international human rights law.
32. 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. The EU will support 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 to continue delivering on these commitments. The EU will firmly oppose any action or proposal that seeks to undermine the existing international commitments and standards. It is ever more critical that gender equality not be further undermined, and that existing gaps be swiftly addressed. In this respect, the EU will remain vigilant regarding attempts to remove, alter or misconstrue language related to gender equality, women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights and their empowerment, and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The EU will also remain vigilant regarding attempts to remove, alter or misconstrue language related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), as identified in paragraph 34. of the European Consensus on Development (see the following paragraph).

33. 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.
34. The EU will place the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence, including **sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** both online and offline, as well as the protection of victims and survivors and punishment of offenders, at the centre of its efforts to achieve gender equality. 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, combatting gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms, and combatting gender stereotypes. The EU will continue to support **women's and youth' 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. The EU will advocate for political and financial support to and for a safe and enabling environment for civil society organisations as well as to women human rights defenders who, in their personal or professional capacity strive to protect and promote human rights and gender equality or offer protection services to women and girls whose rights have been breached

35. The EU upholds the right to **freedom of opinion and expression** both online and offline.

The EU will continue to champion these rights based on its pioneering initiatives and high-level standards to support a media sector that is pluralistic, independent, and resilient to crises. These include notably the European Media Freedom Act, the Anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) Directive, the Digital Markets and the Digital Services Acts. The EU 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, both online and offline. It is ever more important to take decisive action to ensure the survival of free, independent and pluralistic media around the world, a cornerstone of democracy. The EU will work to strengthen information integrity and societal resilience, including the right to access relevant, reliable and accurate information. In full compliance with international human rights law, the EU will counter disinformation and foreign information manipulation (FIMI) activities. The EU will continue to draw on the full range of tools available to protect, prevent, deter from and respond to disinformation activities, in particular through the support of free, independent media and by focusing on critical media literacy. In light of increasingly disproportionate and violent responses to protests worldwide, the EU will protect and promote the right to **freedom of peaceful assembly and association**. The EU will support **academic freedom** and the autonomy of higher education institutions, where ideas can thrive and be safely challenged.

36. 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 be attentive to the specific risks faced by civil society and HRDs, including certain categories 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 them. The EU will strongly condemn all forms of **transnational repression**, calling on all States to uphold their international human rights obligations by ensuring that individuals originating from other countries who seek protection in their territory are free from cross-border threats and interference. 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.
37. 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 consistently and constructively engage with UN mandates focusing on combating violence and all forms of discrimination and will continue to give strong support to the UN's work. 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, hate speech and stigmatization against them. The EU will continue to strongly condemn discriminatory laws, policies and practices against LGBTI persons. The EU will support the universal decriminalisation of consenting same-sex relations as a priority. The EU will call for a worldwide end to any form of violence against LGBTI persons.

38. On **digital technologies and artificial intelligence**, the EU reaffirms that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online and in the context of digital technologies, and that strong safeguards are needed to guarantee the protection of human rights. 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 and human centric approach in the digital sphere, including on **Artificial Intelligence**, and other new and emerging technologies. The EU will continue to call on all relevant stakeholders to prevent harm caused by those technologies as well as refrain from using them if in breach of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms or in violation of international humanitarian law and the EU will call on all States to protect online civic space, and will advocate for an open, free, inclusive, safe, global, interoperable and secure internet for everyone and safeguarding its multi-stakeholder foundations. The EU will advocate for the respect of privacy and will promote the rights to privacy and data protection.

39. The EU will recall its principled position against the **death penalty in all cases and in all circumstances**. We will call on all countries applying the death penalty to abolish it, or to maintain or introduce a moratorium as a first step towards abolition, and on those considering its reintroduction to refrain from such a step back. The EU will strongly and unequivocally condemn the application of the death penalty, including in cases that violate international minimum standards, strongly support the relevant UN resolutions, and call to ensure the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of life, including extrajudicial executions. The EU will promote further ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

40. The EU will continue to condemn all acts of torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, wherever these occur, and speak out against arbitrary arrests and detention, as well as enforced disappearances. The EU will raise awareness of the increased use of **torture and** ill-treatment as a method to quash political dissent and to restrict civic space. It will reiterate its call for achieving universal 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 global trade in goods that have no practical use other than for the purpose of capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The EU will reaffirm its unwavering commitment to make progress on the elimination of **enforced disappearances**, building on the achievements of the First World Congress on Enforced Disappearances.

41. 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 change their religion or belief, or to manifest it either alone or in community with others and in public or private. 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. The EU will continue promote a culture of religious tolerance, respect for diversity and mutual understanding, and foster interfaith and intercultural dialogue as essential tools for peaceful coexistence.

42. In the wake of the 60th anniversary of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), 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. At the same time, the EU will recall its longstanding position on 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, and to rationalise and streamline 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. The EU reaffirms its commitment to combat racism, including through the EU's Anti-Racism Strategy (2026-2030).

43. The EU reaffirms its commitment to advance and mainstream the **rights of persons with disabilities** across its external action, including through the upcoming initiative on 'Enhancing the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities up to 2030'. We will intensify efforts to ensure that all persons with disabilities can enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others, including in situations of armed conflicts and other humanitarian crises and have full, effective and meaningful participation and inclusion in all aspects of social, cultural, educational, economic, civil and political life, including by promoting their empowerment and leadership. The EU reaffirms its support for the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and supports the UN Secretary General's recommendations regarding its implementation.

44. 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.

45. The EU will continue to champion the **rights of the child**, prioritising, the protection of children from all forms of violence, including in the digital environment, and the promotion of universal access to quality, inclusive and safe education reduction of child poverty and inequalities among children. The EU will continue to pay particular attention to the protection of children affected by armed conflict and living in post-conflict situations, enhancing coordination with UN mechanisms, in line with the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict. The EU will continue working to eradicate all forms of discrimination against children.
46. The EU will continue to promote the full enjoyment of all human rights by **older persons**, ensuring their participation in all spheres of life, and to tackle ageism, age discrimination and all forms of violence. The EU will work to address protection gaps and promote the effective implementation of international standards in this regard while engaging with relevant UN bodies.
47. 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. 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. The EU will continue promoting cultural rights and the protection of cultural heritage.

48. 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. The EU legislation on corporate sustainability due diligence and the fight against forced labour provide an important basis for a constructive EU engagement at the UN, including with regard to 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, it is important to strive for a wide, cross-regional consensus between UN member states. The EU will continue supporting the adoption of National Action Plans in Member States and partner countries, and will work towards a comprehensive EU Framework for UNGP implementation. It will also engage constructively within the UN Working Group on the elaboration of an international regulatory framework on the activities of private military and security companies.

49. 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 to promote a human rights-based approach to strengthen efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The EU will recall obligations of states 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 also in the light of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 2025. It will advocate for the bold and urgent measures needed as part of the green transition to be just and inclusive.

50. 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 engage actively in all efforts to enhance the full, effective and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in all relevant United Nations meetings on issues affecting them. The EU will stress the importance of Indigenous human rights defenders, 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 recall the particular vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples in the context of climate change. The EU will also promote the equal, full, effective and meaningful participation and leadership of Indigenous women. The EU will underline the importance of providing Indigenous children with access to education in their own language and culture.

51. The EU will recall that the **right to development** is rooted in the universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing nature of all human rights, with individuals as the central actors, drivers and beneficiaries of development and States as the duty bearers with the primary responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfil all human rights in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law. The EU will recall its reservation on the draft legally binding instrument on the right to development, or any approaches that could undermine states' human rights obligations by placing the right to development above other human rights or attributing such rights to states. The EU also recalls the obligation of states as primary duty bearers for the full realisation of all human rights. The EU will continue to oppose any premature or unbalanced process, to advocate for a transparent, inclusive and consensus-based approach, and to insist upon full alignment with international human rights law. The EU will continue to engage constructively in international fora on both process and substance without prejudging its final position.

52. The EU will continue stepping up action to uphold international law and promote and protect human rights in relation to all **refugees, asylum seekers, 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 advocate for and implement a human rights-based approach to cooperation on migration. The EU will continue to offer opportunities for legal pathways to migration in line with national competences. The EU will call on all States to prevent and combat **trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants**, including in the framework of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling. The EU reaffirms its commitment to addressing irregular migration and to countering the instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes, in full respect of human rights and international law. The EU will not allow any country to abuse its values, including the right to seek asylum.

53. 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, putting the rights of victims at the centre. The fight against terrorism and violent extremism must not infringe on international law, including human rights and international humanitarian law, nor be instrumentalised to that end.
