

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2022/2049(INI)	Procedure completed
Human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter - annual report 2022		
Subject 6.10.09 Human rights situation in the world		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Foreign Affairs	 WISELER-LIMA Isabel	11/05/2022
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 SANTOS Isabel	
		 AUŠTREVČIUS Petras	
		 STRIK Tineke	
		 MADISON Jaak	
		 KARSKI Karol	
		 URBÁN CRESPO Miguel	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Women's Rights and Gender Equality	 BIEDROŃ Robert	12/08/2022

Key events			
09/06/2022	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
30/11/2022	Vote in committee		
15/12/2022	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0298/2022	Summary
17/01/2023	Debate in Parliament		

18/01/2023	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/01/2023	Decision by Parliament	T9-0011/2023	Summary
18/01/2023	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2022/2049(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Annual report
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/9/09205

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE735.497	22/07/2022	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE736.716	10/10/2022	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE736.718	10/10/2022	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE737.247	10/10/2022	EP	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE735.679	08/11/2022	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0298/2022	15/12/2022	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0011/2023	18/01/2023	EP	Summary

Human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter - annual report 2022

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Isabel WISELER-LIMA (EPP, LU) on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Unions policy on the matter annual report 2022.

Context

Members express deep concerns at the grave threats to human rights and democracy worldwide, noting that the number of democracies has continued to decline, while the number of authoritarian regimes has grown and nearly 75 % of the worlds population have experienced a deterioration in the situation of human rights in their country in the past year.

Global challenges to democracy and human rights

While emphasising the importance of the EU and its Member States consistently acting together, notably in multilateral forums, to address global challenges to human rights and democracy, Members are of the opinion that maintaining the unanimity rule for certain EU foreign policy decisions, including sanctions on human rights offenders, stands in the way of necessary decisive action owing to changing geopolitical circumstances, and should therefore be reconsidered.

The report calls on the EU to take particular care to prevent any violations linked to its own policies, projects and funding, including by the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, in third countries and to create a complaints mechanism for individuals or groups whose rights may have been violated by EU activities in these countries.

War of aggression against Ukraine

Members express their deep grief at the human suffering and condemns the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the Russian armed forces and their proxies in Ukraine. However, they reiterate the need to increase EU diplomatic efforts towards the states that abstained from or voted against the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 2 March 2022 on aggression against Ukraine and the following resolutions on the matter in order to explain the seriousness of Russias aggression and the need for a unanimous response from the international community against this flagrant violation of international law.

Stressing the importance of swiftly gathering and preserving evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity, Members call on the Commission to provide all the necessary assistance in this process, including funding from the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI Global Europe).

The EU should also continue to use all of the instruments at its disposal to support the fight to free Ukraine from its occupiers and to bring aid to people fleeing Ukraine and seeking support in the EU Member States.

Enhanced funding for the host countries is needed in this regard.

Enhancing EU policies, instruments and diplomacy to protect and advance human rights and democracy in the world

Members call for the EU to reflect on how to promote and best apply a human rightsbased approach in all EU instruments and strategies in order to strengthen the EUs human rights foreign policy and to adapt to and shape the evolving geopolitical situation. They underline Parliaments role in the instruments programming process and call on the Commission and the EEAS to improve the sharing of all relevant information in a timely manner in order to enable Parliament to fulfil its role as enshrined in the treaties, in particular during high-level geopolitical dialogues with the Commission.

EU Special Representative for Human Rights

While fully supporting the work of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights in defending and advancing human rights in the world, the report underlines the need for close cooperation between the EUSR for Human Rights and other EUSRs on countries and regions to further improve this consistency. The EUSR for Human Rights is urged to pursue diplomatic efforts to enhance the EUs support for international humanitarian law and international justice.

EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (GHRSR EU Magnitsky Act)

The report welcomes the fact that the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime has been increasingly used as an essential tool that strengthens the EUs role as a global human rights actor through the use of targeted sanctions by the Council. It calls for the restrictive measures that have already been adopted to be implemented effectively, in full and in a coordinated manner, and for the adoption of additional measures if necessary.

Multilateralism and EU work at a multilateral level

The report reaffirms that the effective protection of human rights around the world requires strong international cooperation at a multilateral level. It underlines the particularly important role of the UN and its bodies as the main forum which must be able to effectively advance the efforts for peace and security, sustainable development and respect for human rights and international law.

The EU and the Member States are called on to support the strengthening of regional human rights systems, including through financial assistance and cross-regional experience sharing.

Upholding international humanitarian law

Members noted with concern the increasing disregard for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly in the ongoing conflicts around the world. They call for the systematic creation of humanitarian corridors in regions at war and in combat situations in order to allow civilians at risk to escape the conflict, and strongly condemn any attacks on them.

Human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter - annual report 2022

The European Parliament adopted by 438 votes to 75, with 121 abstentions, a resolution on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Unions policy on the matter annual report 2022.

Members express deep concerns at the grave threats to human rights and democracy worldwide, noting that the number of democracies has continued to decline, while the number of authoritarian regimes has grown and nearly 75 % of the worlds population have experienced a deterioration in the situation of human rights in their country in the past year.

Global challenges to democracy and human rights

Parliament insists that the protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the dignity of every human being must be the cornerstone of the Unions external policy.

While emphasising the importance of the EU and its Member States consistently acting together, notably in multilateral forums, to address global challenges to human rights and democracy, Members are of the opinion that maintaining the unanimity rule for certain EU foreign policy decisions, including sanctions on human rights offenders, stands in the way of necessary decisive action owing to changing geopolitical circumstances, and should therefore be reconsidered.

Parliament calls on the EU and its Member States to thwart unacceptable attempts to weaken democratic institutions and universal human rights and diminish the space for and role of civil society, reaffirming the value of multilateralism as an instrument to achieve this goal. It also stresses the importance of placing human rights matters at the heart of EU parliamentary activity, including by upgrading the Subcommittee on Human Rights to a stand-alone committee.

War of aggression against Ukraine

Parliament condemns the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the Russian armed forces and their proxies in Ukraine. It welcomed the solidarity shown by many countries towards Ukraine, while stressing the need to increase the EU's diplomatic efforts towards those states that abstained or voted against the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 2 March 2022 on the aggression against Ukraine.

Members urge the EU and its Member States to offer the Ukrainian people the help they need to defend their freedom, democracy, human rights and international law and called for the unprecedented sanctions imposed in the context of the war to be implemented in a coordinated

manner.

They also called for all necessary measures to be taken to ensure that perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations in Ukraine are identified and held to account. Stressing the importance of the swift gathering and preservation of evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity, Members called on the Commission to provide all necessary assistance to this process.

Enhancing EU policies, instruments and diplomacy to protect and advance human rights and democracy in the world

Members call for the EU to reflect on how to promote and best apply a human rightsbased approach in all EU instruments and strategies in order to strengthen the EUs human rights foreign policy and to adapt to and shape the evolving geopolitical situation. NDICI Global Europe, including its thematic programme on human rights and democracy, is one of the main tools at the EUs disposal to improve the human rights situation around the world. Members underline Parliaments role in the instruments programming process.

Parliament supported the work of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights in defending and promoting human rights in the world through dialogue with third countries and cooperation with like-minded partners. It called for an assessment of the added value of the mandate of the EU Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the European Union.

The resolution called for:

- making more vigorous use of the EU's global human rights sanctions regime (EU Magnitsky Act) through rigorous, consistent and uniform application of restrictive measures and their monitoring in all Member States;
- work to propose the creation of a set of anti-corruption standards that would be uniformly applicable worldwide;
- the inclusion of robust human rights clauses in agreements between the EU and third countries, with a clear set of criteria and procedures to be followed in case of violations.

Multilateralism and EU work at a multilateral level

Parliament reaffirms that the effective protection of human rights around the world requires strong international cooperation at a multilateral level. It underlines the particularly important role of the UN and its bodies as the main forum which must be able to effectively advance the efforts for peace and security, sustainable development and respect for human rights and international law.

The resolution also stressed the importance of:

- upholding international humanitarian law: Members called for the systematic creation of humanitarian corridors in war zones and combat situations to allow civilians at risk to escape the conflict;
- fighting impunity and strengthening international criminal justice: Members called on the EU to assist the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in investigating and prosecuting alleged perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and possible genocide. The Commission should develop a comprehensive European action plan to combat impunity;
- fighting relentlessly for the total abolition of the death penalty as a major objective of its human rights policy.

Responding to global challenges

Parliament called on the EU and its international partners to:

- redouble their efforts to ensure that women, girls and vulnerable groups enjoy full human rights and equal opportunities for all;
- establish a systematic and consistent approach to the promotion and protection of children's rights in the EU's external policies: Members called for more concerted efforts to protect children's rights in crisis or emergency situations; they condemned the forced recruitment of underage children in war zones.

Parliament strongly condemned intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, nationality, class, disability, caste, religion, belief, age, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, which in many parts of the world are used to justify killings and persecution.

Members called for increased efforts to mitigate the growing risks faced by human rights defenders globally.

Lastly, they reaffirmed the inalienable fundamental rights of migrants, refugees and displaced persons, which must be reflected in the EU's migration and asylum policy and in its cooperation with third countries in this field.

Transparency				
WISELER-LIMA Isabel	Rapporteur	AFET	16/06/2022	Brot für die Welt Christian Solidarity Worldwide Civil Rights Defenders End Female Genital Mutilation - European Network Front Line Defenders Human Rights House Foundation International Dalit Solidarity Network International Federation for Human Rights Protection International World Organisation against Torture Oxfam International EU Office Coalition of the International Criminal Court International Centre for Transitional Justice

