



HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
EUROPEAN UNION FOR  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
SECURITY POLICY

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**JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE  
COUNCIL**

**Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019)  
"Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda"**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of the present Joint Communication by the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is to contribute to the elaboration of a new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the period 2015-2019.

### **Human rights and democracy as EU's guiding principles**

Today's world is unstable and fast changing one, a world in which human rights and democratic values are often questioned and in many places ignored. Human rights violations have increased in volume and intensity, civil society sees its action curtailed, conflicts have become multi-faceted and authoritarian regimes have become bolder. Globalisation entails new challenges which make the protection of human rights even more complex.

In these circumstances, international attention is naturally focused on stability. However, lasting stability cannot be achieved through security and economic prosperity alone. Citizens' loyalty towards their state and their reliance on peaceful means depend on whether they feel that they are protected against arbitrary decisions and that their views can influence political decision making. This can only be achieved in a democratic society, based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in which the government is not corrupt and is accountable, the parliament is able to reflect the variety of views and interests of its population, civil society is vibrant, the media is free and the justice system is independent.

Discussions around the post-2015 sustainable development goals, with their emphasis on human rights and women's rights as self-standing goals reflect this objective.

This is why the Union must keep human rights at the heart of its external action. Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) guides the Union's action externally and reaffirms the EU's role in promoting, inter alia, democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is binding on the EU institutions and on the Member States when they implement Union law. In addition, the EU is a party to some instruments of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The Union's credibility as a global advocate of human rights rests on these pillars.

### **The 2012 Human Rights and Democracy Package**

In 2012 the EU adopted an ambitious programme – the **Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy**<sup>1</sup> – which sets out how it intended to honour its Treaty obligation to advance democracy, the rule of law, as well as the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

Almost three years after its adoption, the Strategic Framework, with its priorities and guiding principles continues to provide the framework for the Union's action.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Document of 25 June 2012, ST 11855/12.

Another milestone in the EU's Human Rights policy was the 2012 decision to establish the post of the **EU Special Representative (EUSR) on Human Rights**. The EUSR has enhanced the visibility and effectiveness of the EU Human Rights policy, elevated the level of interaction with our partners and helped us advance specific priorities. The decision<sup>2</sup> taken by the Council to extend the mandate of the EUSR by another two years recognises this important role.

The third essential element of the Human Rights package adopted in 2012 was the **Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2012-2014)**<sup>3</sup>, which helped to implement the commitments made in the Strategic Framework.

This **Action Plan** contained a set of 97 actions covering a broad range of human rights and democracy issues, to be implemented both by the EU and at the national level by the Member States. It committed all stakeholders to clear objectives within well-defined timeframes.

### **Achievements of the 2012-2014 Action Plan**

The 2012-2014 Action Plan provided an important leverage to secure the engagement of all relevant stakeholders and ensured that they stayed focused on a number of key objectives. The work done under this Action Plan led to a number of important **achievements**.

The Action Plan increased the **mainstreaming of human rights** considerations into the full range of EU external policies and their implementing operations, leading to concrete changes on the ground. The steps taken towards integrating human rights considerations in the impact assessments carried out for legislative and non-legislative proposals, the inclusion of human rights assessments as an overarching element in the deployment of EU aid are only a few examples.

The Action Plan also helped the EU develop the tools and resources needed to formulate and implement **a more coherent policy**. The establishment of a Brussels-based Council Working Group on Human Rights (COHOM), the adoption of a set of detailed EU guidelines on key human rights issues (freedom of religion or belief<sup>4</sup>, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) rights<sup>5</sup>, freedom of expression online and offline<sup>6</sup>), the adoption of a toolbox for a rights-based approach to development, the adoption of local Human Rights Country Strategies based on the cooperative work of EU Delegations and Member States' Embassies, the setting up of human rights focal points in EU Delegations, the improvement of a targeted training programme for EU staff and Member States' diplomats, have all contributed to this goal.

The Action Plan also advanced **effective multilateralism** through the development of annual strategies and priorities of the EU in UN human rights fora, in particular the UN Human Rights Council. In addition it focused EU action on a number of key priorities, including rights of women and girls, children's rights, and LGBTI rights, and called for further work in the area of economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights, in line with the Union's commitment to the indivisibility of human rights.

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<sup>2</sup> Council Document of 12 February 2015, ST 5716/15

<sup>3</sup> Council Document of 25 June 2012, ST 11855/12

<sup>4</sup> Council Document of 24 June 2013, ST 11491/13

<sup>5</sup> Council Document of 24 June 2013, ST 11492/13

<sup>6</sup> Council Document of 12 May 2014, ST 9647/14

Furthermore, the Action Plan devoted attention to disability matters in line with the obligations enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The Action Plan strengthened the EU's cooperation with and support to civil society worldwide. It mainstreamed the practice of consulting Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) ahead of human rights dialogues or in relation to key policy documents, promoted CSOs' involvement in the design of financial assistance, and enhanced EU support to CSOs facing restrictive measures.

Finally, the Action Plan enhanced the Union's **visibility** of action in the field of human rights and democracy and its **accountability** in relation to its partners, especially towards civil society.

The results of the past years provide a solid basis for the EU's continuous commitment to uphold respect for human rights and support democratic transition processes worldwide bilaterally, in partnership with other regional organisations, and at the multilateral level, especially within the United Nations. Many of the actions set out in the 2012-2014 Action Plan are now part and parcel of the Union's daily work – they enjoy the support of all stakeholders, they benefit from the existence of well-established procedures and are covered by an exhaustive set of guidance documents. For these reasons these actions no longer need to be prioritized in the context of the proposed new Action Plan. However, they will continue to feature in the Annual report on Human Rights and Democracy, in order to ensure visibility and accountability also in those areas.

On the other hand, some areas identified in the 2012-2014 Action Plan require **renewed political commitment** and **additional efforts and thus will feature more prominently in the new Action Plan**. This is the case, inter alia, for democracy support, which is going to be mainstreamed across a number of objectives; for Economic, Social and Cultural rights; for addressing violation of human rights and international humanitarian law in crises and conflicts; for fighting discrimination, particularly against women, children, persons with disabilities and LGBTI but also against members of religious minorities; for fighting torture and ill-treatment and for increasing the coherence of EU policies from a Human Rights point of view.

**The new Action Plan should address these continuous challenges.**

### **The way ahead**

In light of the positive experience, the **new Action Plan** should cover the **2015-2019 period**, in order to ensure full alignment with the mandate of the HRVP and of the European Commission.

**The Action Plan** would be subject to a **mid-term implementation review in 2017** in order to allow for an assessment of the progress made and, if required, adjustments in the light of experience and of the emergence of new challenges. The review would coincide with the mid-term review of the external financing instruments and could contribute to greater coherence between EU policies and financial assistance.

The actions proposed under the Action Plan are geographically neutral and should apply to all regions of the world, taking into consideration local needs and specificities. These actions will be translated into country specific priorities through local Human Rights Country Strategies.

As regards **candidate countries and potential candidates**, the EU will continue to monitor their commitment to promoting the values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights - as laid out in Article 49 TEU - and to provide guidance and support to ensure tangible and sustained progress in these key reform areas.

As regards the European Neighbourhood Policy, a strong focus shall be placed on ensuring respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. The EU will continue to support partner countries with the implementation of reforms that foster inclusive dialogue, promote good governance, strengthen the independence of the judiciary and ensure protection of fundamental rights.

## **Principles**

The new Action Plan should not endeavour to cover exhaustively all aspects of the Union's Human Rights/Democracy support policies. It should rather be **strategic and focus on priorities** where **additional political momentum and enhanced commitment** is needed. The Action Plan should guide both bilateral work and EU engagement in multilateral and regional fora, in particular the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

In this spirit, the proposed Action Plan would be guided by the following principles:

1. In an increasingly challenging global environment, the relevance of universal standards is questioned and the EU's endeavour to promote them meets with growing resistance. Promoting values through exogenous action alone is often not effective. Therefore, efforts should be focused on supporting endogenous forces. The EU should **empower interlocutors in third countries** (governmental, parliamentary, and quasi-governmental), reinforce the role of the judiciary, continue to support to **civil society** including social partners and promote enabling environments, strengthen the role and impact of **regional organisations and mechanisms** and reinforce cooperation with the United Nations which, with its universal membership, has greater leverage.
2. The EU must lead by example. It is under severe scrutiny for what are perceived as **discrepancies** in its approach to human rights issues (double standards and internal/external inconsistencies). Thus renewed commitment is required to improve coherence in addressing human rights and integrating human rights considerations in all aspects of EU external action and in the external aspects of internal policies, building on the approach developed by the Commission to ensure the effective implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights by the EU.
3. The EU must focus on the most pressing human rights challenges, which must be tackled both internally and externally. These challenges include in particular combatting discrimination, the respect for freedom of expression and privacy as well as insuring that human rights are upheld in migration, trade or counter-terrorism policies.
4. The EU should **empower itself** - the different instruments, tools and policies at its disposal need to be used more smartly and in a more strategic way, both in bilateral work and in engagement in multilateral fora.

5. Finally the EU should **communicate better** what it does, improve the capacity to **measure impact** and, whenever appropriate, devise **alternative and more efficient approaches**.

In light of the above, the enclosed Action Plan identifies the following five strategic areas of actions:

**(i) Boosting the ownership of local actors:** Human rights and democracy can only fully take root where there is strong local ownership. This chapter of the Action Plan focuses on actions and activities aimed at improving the way in which we interact with all external stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental. Specific emphasis is given to challenges concerning the space for civil society;

**ii) Addressing key human rights challenges:** This chapter focuses on targeted thematic human rights challenges, while maintaining the necessary balance between civil and political rights on the one end and economic, social and cultural rights on the other. This list of actions complements and underpins the objectives pursued under the previous chapter;

**(iii) Ensuring a comprehensive HR approach to conflict and crises:** This chapter proposes a range of actions to promote and support the development of tools and policies at national, regional and international level to prevent, address and redress HR violations, with particular emphasis on the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. The chapter also reflects a clear need for the EU to adjust its existing tools to the changing nature of conflicts;

**(iv) Fostering better coherence and consistency:** This chapter addresses the need for the Commission, together with the HRVP to mainstream further human rights considerations in the external aspects of EU policies, particularly with regard to trade/investment, migration/refugee/asylum and development policies as well as counter-terrorism, in order to ensure better policy coherence;

**(v) Deepening the effectiveness and results culture in Human Rights and democracy:** In the context of increasing challenges and limited resources, better use of existing instruments, activities and policies is the only way to increase the EU impact, on human rights. This chapter proposes actions which will help the EU develop more result-oriented and strategic approaches.

## EU ACTION PLAN ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

The purpose of this Action Plan is to continue implementing the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy, with sufficient flexibility so as to respond to new challenges as they arise. It builds upon the existing body of EU human rights and democracy support policies in the external action<sup>7</sup>, notably EU guidelines, toolkits and other agreed positions, and the various external financing instruments, in particular the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

In order to ensure an effective implementation of the Action Plan, it is important that the European institutions **work together**, while respecting their distinct institutional roles, and that, where appropriate, the Action Plan is implemented at national level by the Member States. Responsibility for carrying out the actions listed resides with the High Representative/Vice President assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS), and with the Commission, the Council and Member States, within their respective fields of competence as defined by the Treaty on European Union<sup>8</sup>. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights shall contribute to implementation of the Action Plan, in accordance with his mandate. The Action Plan covers the period until 31 December 2019 and its implementation will be reviewed in 2017.

### Draft table of the New Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019)

Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>I. BOOSTING OWNERSHIP OF LOCAL ACTORS</b>			
<i>a) Delivering a comprehensive support to public institutions</i>			
<b>1. Supporting the capacity of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)</b>	a. Recognise the crucial role of NHRIs as independent institutions and affirm the EU commitment to support and engage with those institutions which are in line with the Paris Principles. Strengthen the involvement of NHRIs in consultation processes at country level, in particular regarding HR Dialogues and third countries reforms.	Ongoing	<b>Commission Services (COM), EEAS, Member States (MS)</b>

<sup>7</sup> Without prejudice to the specific arrangements for candidate countries and potential candidates under the EU's enlargement policy.

<sup>8</sup> Decisions on specific steps to implement this Action Plan will be taken in accordance with the Treaties. The Action Plan does not affect the division of competence between the EU and its Member States, and will be interpreted in line with Declaration 13 to the Treaties.

	b. Strengthen, in the context of the NHRIs' International Coordinating Committee, the capacities of those with an 'A' status, support the upgrade of those with a 'B' status to the 'A' status and cooperate with their regional and international networks. Work on these issues should feed into the next mid-term programming period of the EU External Financing Instruments.	Ongoing	COM, EEAS, MS
<b>2. Supporting the Election Management Bodies</b>	a. Enhance the role and capacity of Election Management Bodies to independently and effectively deliver credible, inclusive and transparent elections, in particular through enhanced dedicated dialogue and long term support strategy.	Ongoing	COM, EEAS
	b. Encourage participatory and inclusive dialogue throughout the electoral process between Election Management Bodies and key stakeholders, in view of increasing participation of political parties and Civil Society Organisations, including through their access to information and their observation of all stages of the election process.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS
<b>3. Supporting the capacity of Parliamentary institutions</b>	a. Support the development of legislative, budgetary and oversight prerogatives of parliaments, assist parliaments in organising public debates on key reform issues with due account being taken of relevant international HR law obligations.	Ongoing	COM, EEAS, MS
	b. Include parliamentary dimension into EU and EUMS good governance programmes and budget support.	By 2017	COM, EEAS, MS
<b>4. Targeted support to the justice sector</b>	a. Accompany judicial reform (both criminal and civil) with appropriate training of judicial staff to increase awareness of international HR standards and obligations; provide systematic support to professional and well trained advocacy/legal representation and to Lawyers' organisations (e.g. Bars of Advocates).	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS
	b. Monitor at bilateral and multilateral level the compliance by partner countries of their international obligations in terms of access to justice and fair trial, including legal aid; mobilise as appropriate technical cooperation and support.		EEAS, COM, MS
	c. Promote and facilitate access to justice at de-centralised level; engage in dialogue and support law enforcement agencies and detention facilities.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS

<b>5. Providing comprehensive support to public institutions</b>	a. Taking into account best practices, continue to support separation of powers and independence of democratic institutions as well as promote the role of domestic actors in reform processes, in particular constitutional reforms, in order to better reflect the interests of various stakeholders.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	b. Develop specific expertise and promote the establishment of specialised bodies in the field of anti-corruption; strengthen the capacity of public administration and anti-corruption bodies to implement policies with integrity and good management of public resources.	Ongoing	<b>COM, EEAS, MS</b>
<b>6. Strengthening cooperation with regional Human Rights and Democracy mechanisms</b>	a. Strengthen HR aspects in EU cooperation with regional organisations and mechanisms, in particular by pursuing synergies and common initiatives on key thematic issues and at important multilateral events.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	b. Promote peer-to-peer capacity building initiatives between Regional HR and Democracy support mechanisms.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, MS, COM</b>
<b><i>b) Invigorating civil society</i></b>			
<b>7. Promoting stronger partnership with third countries' Civil Society Organisations (CSO), including social partners and between authorities, parliaments and CSO</b>	a. Facilitate national policy dialogues inter alia through sharing best practices on structured exchanges between government/Members of parliament and civil society, including representatives of the social partners.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	b. Further strengthen the capacity of CSOs to hold governments accountable, including through exchanges of best practices among CSOs at regional level.	Ongoing	<b>COM, EEAS, MS</b>
	c. Improve the quality of consultations organised by the EU at local level, in particular with a view to taking into consideration the views of civil society, including social partners and citizens' movements, when designing and implementing policies; encourage tripartite dialogues (authorities, CSOs and EU) as part of the EU Delegations' (EU DELs) roadmaps.	Ongoing	<b>COM, EEAS, MS</b>
	d. Step up EU engagement with political parties and citizen movements with a view to strengthening their role in fostering democratic and accountable institutions and practices.	Ongoing	<b>COM, EEAS, MS</b>
<b>8. Empowering CSOs defending women and girls' rights</b>	Support women's organisations and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in their call for and defence of women's rights, and encourage them to play a stronger role in holding decision-makers to account on gender equality issues.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>

<b>9. Invigorating support to Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), including in international and regional fora</b>	a. Step-up support to HRDs, including those working for economic, social and cultural rights, through a systematic and comprehensive approach, by: raising cases of HRDs at-risk during high-level visits, including sector-specific missions; continuing to support and cooperate with UN and regional mechanisms for the protection of HRDs; enhancing support for multilateral initiatives on HRDs and civil society space, including at UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council and increasing burden sharing and sharing of best practices among MS with regard to HRD protection.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
	b. Ensure more frequent outreach activities in rural areas, and more systematic contact with women's HRDs and marginalised groups.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
<b>10. Addressing threats to NGOs' space</b>	a. Promote and support legislation, policies and mechanisms designed to protect HRDs; in particular, vigorously implement the relevant EU Guidelines and the EU HRD Mechanism launched under the EIDHR, including by specific awareness-raising and training for HQ and EU DEL staff (political and operational sections).	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
	b. Actively monitor the legal (e.g. laws and regulations) and enabling (e.g. arbitrary procedural, financial harassment or restrictions, in particular regarding foreign funding) environment for Civil Society including social partners and proactively identify and report on threats to civil society space, and to take steps to counter such threats.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
	c. Oppose through public and private messaging unjustified restrictions to freedom of association and assembly, confinement of civil society's space and attempts to hinder the work of civil society, including HRDs, ensuring these issues are regularly raised in bilateral meetings, HR dialogues, and UN fora such as the UN Human Rights Council.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
<b>II. ADDRESSING KEY HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES</b>			
<b>11. Promoting freedom of expression and privacy</b>	a. Take active steps to prevent and respond to violence against journalists and other media actors, enabling them to work in safety and security, without fear of	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>

	violence, political pressure, censorship and persecution.		
	b. Ensure that the respect for freedom of expression and media freedom is integrated in the development of policies and programmes relating to counter terrorism, cyber security, the fight against cybercrime, access to information and other EU policies in this regard .such as the legislative framework for audio-visual media services.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS
	c. Ensure that the issues of privacy and data protection in a digital era and the impact of mass surveillance programmes are duly addressed at bilateral and multilateral (Council of Europe, UN, OSCE) levels.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS
<b>12. Cultivating an environment of non-discrimination</b>	a. Develop an “EU Handbook on Anti-discrimination” in third countries, outlining tools for antidiscrimination measures against all forms of discrimination, including multiple/cumulative discrimination.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, Council
	b. Increase awareness and proactive handling by key staff of LGBTI issues in Headquarters, EU Delegations and MS Embassies.	Ongoing	EEAS, MS, COM
	c. Consider a strengthened EU policy on Indigenous peoples in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples and the outcome document of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.	by 2016	EEAS, COM, MS
	d. Ensure and promote equal access and enjoyment of HR by persons with disabilities in compliance with the UNCRPD to which the EU is a party through both mainstreaming disability concerns in HR actions and developing targeted actions to remove barriers to their equal participation; support and strengthen the functioning of the mechanisms to promote, protect and monitor the UNCRPD pursuant to its article 33.2 including their set up in partner countries; take necessary steps for the EU accession to the Optional Protocol to UNCRP; in line with the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, continue to promote the rights of people with disabilities in EU external Action.	Ongoing	COM, EEAS, MS
<b>13. Promoting gender equality, empowerment and participation of women</b>	a. Step up the implementation of obligations and commitments to women’s rights made in CEDAW, under the Beijing Platform for Action, in the Cairo Declaration on Population & Development and in the post-2015 development agenda.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS

<b>and girls</b>	b. Consider an ambitious and robust new EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in International Cooperation and Development 2016-20 (GAP II); through actions targeting (i) their Economic, Social, Cultural Rights and participation (ii) their Civil and Political rights and their exercise (iii) and through activities which help protect women's physical and psychological integrity, with special attention to ending Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Child Early and Forced Marriage and Sexual Violence in Conflict.	By 2016	<b>COM, EEAS</b>
	c. Lead by example: strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment within the EU and increase accountability, by ensuring coherence with the overall EU gender equality policy.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	d. Pursue the implementation of actions outlined in the Communication "Towards the elimination of FGM" <sup>9</sup> .	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
<b>14. Upholding Children's rights</b>	a. Support partner countries' efforts to promote, protect and fulfil children's rights with a particular focus on strengthening child protection systems. b. Support partner countries to promote, protect and fulfil children's rights with a focus on fighting all forms of violence, fighting child labour and promoting survival and development, taking into account economic and social rights such as health and nutrition, education and training and social protection.	By 2017	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
<b>15. Combatting torture, ill-treatment and the death penalty</b>	a. Address torture (prevention, accountability and rehabilitation), ill-treatment and the death penalty (abolition, moratorium and minimum standards) in a comprehensive manner through all political and human rights dialogues, and mainstream safeguards against death penalty, torture and ill-treatment in EU activities, including in counter-terrorism and in crisis management.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, Council, MS</b>
	b. Elaborate a coherent approach addressing the link between extra judiciary killings, enforced disappearances, torture and other forms of ill-treatment.	By 2017	<b>EEAS, COM, Council</b>

<sup>9</sup> 25 November 2013, COM(2013) 833 FINAL [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender\\_based\\_violence/131125\\_fgm\\_communication\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_based_violence/131125_fgm_communication_en.pdf)

	<p>c. Increase awareness and prioritise joint actions and exchange of best practises, in close cooperation with the UN, regional organizations and civil society, including the 10 year global initiative (Convention against torture Initiative, CTI), to achieve global ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Torture (CAT) by 2024 and to promote the ratification and implementation of its Optional Protocol (OPCAT) and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.</p>	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
<b>16. Fostering a comprehensive agenda to promote Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR)</b>	<p>a. Reaffirm the EU commitment to increase its focus on ESCR in EU's external policy, including in its programming of external assistance, while also emphasizing that human rights are indivisible and interlinked, and that the strengthening of the ESCR dimension does not in any way reflect a weakening of existing commitments to Civil and Political Rights; emphasize the clear recognition of the human rights dimension in areas such as social policy, health, education, or standard of living; develop capacity building ensuring that all relevant EU and Member States staff as well as civil society actors, including social partners on the ground are informed of the international treaties related to economic, social and cultural rights, in particular those related to fundamental principles and rights at work (ILO fundamental conventions).</p>	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, Council</b>
	<p>b. Step up efforts to protect Human Rights Defenders including social partners, who are working to uphold Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with a particular focus on issues related to land rights, labour rights, including those of indigenous peoples, in the context of <i>inter alia</i> 'land grabbing' and climate change.</p>	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
<b>17. Advancing on Business and Human Rights</b>	<p>a. Develop capacity and knowledge on the implementation of Business and Human Rights guidelines, in particular as regards the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) and other tools/initiatives that contribute to the implementation of the UNGPs; strengthen the role and expertise of DELs in this context; raise awareness on the UNGPs and corporate social responsibility in external action and policy dialogue and proactively engage with business, civil society, National Human Rights Institutions, partner governments and regional organisations on issues</p>	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>

	related to business and human rights, as regards both civil and political rights and economic, cultural and social rights.		
	b. Develop and implement National Action Plans (NAPs) on the implementation of the UN Guiding principles.	By 2017	MS
<b>III. ENSURING A COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH TO CONFLICTS AND CRISES</b>			
<b>18. Moving from early-warning to preventive action</b>	a. Promote and make best use of the new EU Conflict Early Warning System as a tool for the prevention of serious human rights violations.	Ongoing	EEAS, EU MS
	b. Ensure greater coherence in the fields of human right reporting and early warning/conflict analysis, including by addressing relevant conflict risks in human rights dialogues and consultations.	By 2016	EEAS, EU MS
	c. Support activities to counter incitement that could lead to grave violations of human rights/atrocity crimes. Support activities in the fight against hate speech and calls for violent extremism, through the development of counter-narratives, HR education and peace building initiatives targeting children and youth.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM
	d. Support the establishment of prevention, response and (long-term) reintegration programmes for children affected by armed conflict in cooperation with local communities, affected children and parents (e.g. psycho-social support, socio-economic reintegration, education and life-skills training as well as family tracing and reunification).	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS
<b>19. Enhancing the capacity to address conflicts and crises at multilateral and regional level</b>	a. Enhance co-operation with and support for the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the UN Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, as well as other international and regional actors engaged in preventive action.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS
	b. Support the work of the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and notably support the signature, implementation and monitoring of Action Plans to respond to and further prevent grave violations against children affected by conflict, including by advocacy and programming activities.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS
<b>20. Supporting compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL)</b>	a. Assess the implementation of the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with IHL in the wake of the creation of a possible future IHL compliance mechanism. Produce an evaluation report taking stock of the implementation of the existing	By 2016	EEAS, COM, Council

	policy tools and leading to recommendations, including on how the EU and EU MS could concretely support the possible future compliance mechanism.		
	b. Develop and implement a policy to ensure that EU and EU MS support to military, police, border control and other security forces, including in the context of CSDP missions and operations, is in compliance with/contributes to the promotion, protection and enforcement of international human rights and international humanitarian law, and is consistent with the EU's human rights policies (Human Rights Due Diligence Policy).	By 2017	EEAS, COM, MS
	c. Establish a system for the mandatory reporting of grave violations of international human rights law and IHL that are encountered by staff in EU Delegations, CSDP missions and operations, and other relevant EU staff in line with the EU IHL Guidelines <sup>10</sup> , deployed in third countries. Ensure that reports of grave violations are analysed and followed-up at HQ and shared with MS and other relevant actors.	By 2017	COM, EEAS MS
<b>21. Promoting and supporting accountability and transitional justice (TJ)</b>	a. Assess the implementation of Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP of 21 March 2011 on the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Action Plan on its implementation. Formalise the establishment of an EU/ICC Roundtable, allowing relevant staff to identify common areas of interest, exchange information on relevant activities and create a better understanding between the two organisations. Facilitate the participation, cooperation and access of interested states in the ICC.	By 2016	EEAS, COM, MS
	b. Implement an EU policy on Transitional Justice including through a mapping exercise to identify the EU's experiences, challenges and lessons learned in its support to TJ; provide concrete guidance and training to EU mission staff working on TJ, a network of staff across the Commission services and EEAS and EU MS will be created to exchange best practices and foster coherence and consistency; increase monitoring and reporting (including through the Human Rights Country Strategies) and promote inter-regional dialogue on TJ to improve co-operation between regional organisations.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, Council, MS

<sup>10</sup> EU humanitarian staff is exempted from this reporting requirement, to avoid compromising the perception of their neutrality, impartiality and independence, which could expose relief workers as well as the affected population to attacks from warring parties, and to being denied access to the affected population.

<b>22. Mainstreaming Human Rights into all phases of CSDP planning, review and conduct</b>	a. Develop sector-specific operational guidance for staff in CSDP missions working with the police, military, prison services and the judiciary, to provide practical orientation on the mainstreaming of human rights, IHL, child protection and gender, including UNSCR 1325.	By 2017	<b>EEAS, MS</b>
	b. Implement the new common code of conduct for CSDP civilian missions, once it has been adopted, including through: pre-deployment and induction training for staff, mission-specific training to deployed staff, specialised training for senior staff, awareness-raising in missions and for local populations, and the compilation of statistics on breaches of the code. Take similar steps to ensure greater awareness of standards of conduct among personnel deployed in military operations, and to raise awareness in local communities where missions/operations are deployed.	By 2017	<b>EEAS, MS</b>
	c. Strengthen the implementation of the Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the UNSCR 1325 & 1820 on Women, peace and security and its follow up resolutions by taking into account the Global Review and emerging issues (CT, countering violent extremism, trafficking of human beings), improving the reporting, adopting a strategic plan for addressing the gender imbalance in CSDP missions and operations and improving involvement and coordination with all EU MS, notably through the informal EU task force on UNSCR 1325.	By 2016	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
<b>IV. FOSTERING BETTER COHERENCE AND CONSISTENCY</b>			
<b>23. Migration/trafficking in human beings (THB)/smuggling of migrants/asylum policies</b>	a. In line with the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) and the upcoming European Agenda on Migration, enhance HR safeguards in all migration and mobility dialogues and cooperation frameworks with third countries, including Mobility Partnerships and Common Agendas on Migration and Mobility, as well as in migration-related agreements and programmes, including through the analysis of human rights impacts; ensure the introduction of human rights training elements in capacity-building projects with immigration and border agencies.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>

	<p>b. Building on the steps already taken in the implementation of the EU Anti-Trafficking Strategy, fully integrate human rights and victim protection into discussions on Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) in political, migration and mobility, security and human rights dialogues with the identified priority countries, and in discussions on THB with international organisations and donors operating in those priority countries; EU DELs in the priority countries will make full use of their appointed contact person for THB, and raise human rights-related issues when addressing THB in local EU coordination meetings, as well as in discussions on THB with the host-country authorities; support the ratification and implementation of key international conventions relating to THB, including ILO conventions concerning forced labour and domestic workers.</p>	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	<p>c. Address HR issues associated with people smuggling through political, HR and other dialogues in priority countries; encourage EU DELs in priority countries to make full use of their resources to ensure that people smuggling and its HR dimension are consistently addressed in their cooperation with the host country authorities as well as with civil society, international organisations and other donors.</p>	By 2017	<b>EEAS</b>
	<p>d. Support partner countries to promote and protect the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), including through capacity building.</p>	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	<p>e. Support improved access to justice and health for migrants in countries of transit; promote improved conditions of detention for detained migrants and alternatives to the use of detention for irregular migrants in third countries.</p>	Ongoing	<b>COM</b>
	<p>f. Engage with the diaspora communities both inside the EU and in non-EU destination countries to promote awareness of HR abuses faced by migrants and refugees in countries of transit, as well as of HR issues in their countries of origin.</p>	By 2017	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
	<p>g. Identify countries of origin where HR violations act as a key push factor, and better target political dialogue and other dialogues and programmes so as to address these violations.</p>	By 2016	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
	<p>h. Continue to address the issue of statelessness in relations with priority countries; focus efforts on preventing the emergence of new stateless populations as a result of conflict, displacement and the break-up of states.</p>	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>

<b>24. Trade/investment policy</b>	a. Provide support for and strengthen effective implementation, enforcement and monitoring of GSP+ beneficiaries' commitments (relevant HR treaties and ILO conventions), for instance through projects with key international bodies and civil society, including social partners.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	b. Continue to develop a robust and methodologically sound approach to the analysis of HR impacts of trade and investment agreements, including in ex-post evaluations; explore ways to extend the existing quantitative analysis in assessing the impact of trade and investment initiatives on human rights.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	c. EU MS to strive to include in the Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) that they are negotiating with third countries provisions related to the respect and fulfilment of human rights, including provisions on Corporate Social Responsibility, in line with those inserted in the agreements negotiated at EU level.	Ongoing	<b>MS</b>
	d. Aim at systematically including in EU trade and investment agreements the respect of internationally recognised principles and guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility, such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UN Global Compact, the UN Guiding principles on business and human rights (UNGPs), the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, and ISO 26000.	Ongoing	<b>COM</b>
	e. Regularly revise Regulations on trade in goods that can be used for capital punishment or torture, and on Dual Use goods.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
<b>25. Counter-terrorism (CT)</b>	a. Pursuant to the EU CT Strategy, develop sets of ideas on how to prevent radicalisation and extremist violence among young people in third countries, how to assist EU activities and how to engage with media and community leaders to develop counter-narratives in these countries; promote and support that the human rights are at the centre of all legislation, policies and mechanisms on counter terrorism in third countries, while also ensuring compliance with IHL, and enabling principled humanitarian action.	By 2015	<b>EEAS, COM, Council, MS</b>
	b. Ensure wide dissemination of the EU CT guidance, including by engaging in outreach activities and training practitioners in the field, in particular for activities deployed under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>

<b>26. Pursuing a Rights Based Approach (RBA) to Development</b>	a. Implement the EU commitment to move towards RBA by pursuing its full concrete integration into all EU development activities, using training, capacity support and monitoring with a view to achieving a full integration within the mid-term review; EU MS to adopt and implement a RBA to development cooperation.	By 2016	<b>EEAS, COM, Council, MS</b>
	b. Assess the implementation of the Annex 12 of the 2012 EU Budget Support Policy that set up a Fundamental Values assessment as an essential element for budget support and in particular in this context the full integration of RBA into Sector Reform Contracts.	By 2017	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	c. Explore the possibility to further implement a RBA into non-development related external activities, analyse the consequences of the right to development and assess the results of the post -2015 Development Agenda.	By 2017	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
<b>27. Strengthening the contribution of impact assessments (IAs) to the respect of Human Rights</b>	a. Building on the existing assessment of the impact of EU actions on fundamental rights, continue to improve the incorporation of HR in Commission impact assessments for proposals with external effect and likely significant impacts on HR; this should be done, as necessary, by developing further guidance on the analysis of HR impacts, strengthening the expertise and capacities for this type of analysis and ensuring robust consultations of relevant stakeholder groups exposed to major HR risks.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
	b. Incorporate, where relevant, analysis of HR impacts in Commission ex post evaluations of EU interventions with external effects.	Ongoing	<b>COM, EEAS</b>
	c. Ensure policy coherence between the analysis of human rights impacts undertaken in Impact Assessments and other HR related policy instruments, including HR country strategies, HR dialogues and budget support/programming of financing instruments, with a view to addressing the identified potential negative impacts and maximise positive ones.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM</b>
<b>V. DEEPENING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND RESULTS CULTURE IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY</b>			
<b>28. Increasing the effectiveness of Human</b>	a. Develop, share and build upon the best practices identified for HR dialogues, including follow-up processes.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, Council</b>

<b>Rights Dialogues</b>			
	b. Ensure that HR considerations are factored in the different sectorial dialogues with a partner country and as such part of the overall bilateral strategy.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, Council</b>
	c. Ensure internal-external coordination in the context of HR dialogues, including for annual EU-CSO dialogue; define and address a number of HR priority issues in the context of external HR dialogues on which a better EU response can be provided.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, Council, MS</b>
	d. Mainstream "cooperation at the UN human rights fora" into bilateral HR and political dialogue and cooperation; pursue closer cooperation and identification of joint actions, in particular with strategic partners; develop guidance for the systematic use of reports and recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review, treaty monitoring bodies and Human Rights Council special procedures	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, Council, MS</b>
	e. Establish/Assess priorities, objectives, indicators of progress for EU HR dialogues and consultations, to facilitate their review, recognising that partners' ability and willingness to engage varies and flexibility and pragmatism are paramount.	By 2017	<b>EEAS, Council</b>
<b>29. Improving the visibility and impact of Human Rights Country Strategies (HRCS)</b>	a. Mainstream the human rights countries strategies implementing priorities and democracy analysis in political dialogues, reporting and high level visits.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
	b. Ensure follow up to the HRCS through joint annual implementation reports to be presented to the relevant Council bodies.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, Council, MS</b>
	c. Ensure that EU and MS assistance programmes take into account and facilitate the implementation of the HRCS priorities.	Ongoing	<b>EEAS, COM, MS</b>
<b>30. Focusing on a meaningful implementation of EU Human Rights Guidelines</b>	a. Intensify dissemination of relevant guidance documents and training especially to diplomatic staff in EU DELs and MS Embassies, including at the level of Ambassadors.	Ongoing	<b>COM, EEAS, MS</b>
	b. Systematize reporting on the Guidelines' implementation and introduce logbooks on specific thematic issues, to ensure more systematic follow-up to individual cases and to promote regular exchange of best practice in Guidelines' implementation.	Ongoing	<b>COM, EEAS, MS</b>

<b>31. Maximising the impact of Electoral Observation</b>	a. Consolidate and codify best practices for leveraging of EU EOMS and OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Missions recommendations in EU and EU MS political dialogues and democracy support activities.	By 2016	EEAS, COM, Council
	b. Strengthen long term planning and integrated deployment of all aspects of EU and MS support to the electoral cycle, by exploring innovative aid delivery mechanisms.	By 2019	EEAS, COM, MS
<b>32. Ensuring the effective use and the best interplay of EU policies, tools and financing instruments</b>	a. Consolidate various existing tools and reporting mechanisms used to support democracy and promote HR in order to increase coherence and effectiveness of EU action (e.g. HRCS, democracy analyses and APs, reports from election observation, election assistance and follow-up missions, Enlargement Progress Reports, ENP progress reports and APs, civil society engagement roadmaps, assessments of fundamental values for Good Governance and Development Contracts, risk management frameworks for budget support).	By 2017	EEAS, COM, Council
	b. Globally strengthen democracy analysis on the basis of lessons learned from the pilot exercise of democracy support.	By 2017	EEAS, COM, MS
	c. Further develop working methods to ensure the best articulation between dialogue, targeted support, incentives and restrictive measures.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS
	d. Improve the coherence in the application of HR clauses which are systematically included in all new EU international agreements.	By 2017	EEAS, COM
	e. Support the ongoing development of HR indicators undertaken by the OHCHR with a view to: (i) facilitating measurement of the realisation of HR, including online publication of indicators at global level, and (ii) systematising compilation and use of HR and surveying good practices and lessons learned.	By 2017	EEAS, COM, Council
	f. Engage systematically with the UN and with the regional organisations (e.g. AU, OAS, LAS, CoE, OSCE, ASEAN, SAARC, PIF etc.) on best practices for HR and the strengthening of democracy in all regions.	Ongoing	EEAS, COM, MS