

# Resolution on the EU's priorities for the UN Human Rights Council in 2015

2015/2572(RSP) - 12/03/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the EU's priorities for the UN Human Rights Council in 2015. The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, Greens/EFA, EFDD groups.

Parliament welcomed the EU's priorities for the upcoming 28th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), as set out in the Council conclusions of 9 February 2015. It reiterated its support for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, and for the Special Procedures and the independent status of the mandate holders. Members called for the EU and its Member States to continue to follow up the UPR recommendations in all EU policy dialogues with the countries concerned.

However, Parliament stated that regrettably, some of the current members of the Human Rights Council were acknowledged as being among the **worst human rights offenders** and had bad records in terms of cooperation with the UN Special Procedures and compliance with their reporting requirements vis-à-vis the UN human rights treaty bodies. It considered that the continued harassment and detention of human rights defenders and opposition figures by a number of UNHRC members **undermined the credibility of the UNHRC**, and it reiterated that UNHRC members should be elected from among states which uphold respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy and which had agreed to extend standing invitations to all Special Procedures. Member States to encourage transparent, open and competitive processes for the election of UNHRC members. Parliament continued to oppose 'block voting' within the UNHRC.

It went on to state that it was regrettable that the scope for **interaction between civil society and the UNHRC continued to shrink** and that NGOs were being offered fewer opportunities to speak at these sessions. The EU and the UNHRC must ensure that civil society was allowed to contribute as fully as possible to the 28th session without fear of reprisals upon return to their home country.

**Civil and political rights:** Members strongly condemned the assassination in France in January 2015 of 12 people, including cartoonists at the Charlie Hebdo newspaper. It condemned the use of religion by extremist and jihadist groups in all countries, and particularly in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Nigeria and Central Africa, stating that the fight against terrorism calls for action to address its root causes, which included social exclusion, political marginalisation and inequality.

Parliament supported the work of the **UN Special Rapporteurs** on Torture, on the rights of migrants, on contemporary forms of racism, and it urged the EU and its Member States to implement all recommendations.

It encouraged the UNHRC to continue the debate on the right to privacy and, to that end, to appoint a **UN Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy**, especially in the context of digital communications.

**Social and economic rights:** Parliament underlined the need to address rising and extreme inequalities in order to fight poverty in general and to promote social and economic rights by facilitating access to food, water, education, health care and adequate housing, highlighting the increasing problem of land grabbing. It also felt that corruption, tax evasion, mismanagement of public goods and lack of accountability contributed to the violation of citizens' rights. It reiterated its support for the establishment of a UN Special Rapporteur on financial crime, corruption and human rights.

**Business and human rights:** Members encouraged EU delegations around the world to engage with EU businesses in order to promote respect for human rights, and to ensure that ‘business and human rights’ is included among the focus themes in the local calls for proposals of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. They wanted to see the EU engage in the emerging debate on a **legally binding international instrument on business and human rights** within the UN system.

**Women’s rights and children’s rights:** Parliament observed critically that despite the progress made so far in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, discriminatory laws remain in force in many countries. It also called for the EU to support, in the process of building sustainable reconciliation, the systematic participation of women as a vital component of peace processes, and stressed the continuing need for the EU to work with third countries in eradicating the practice of FGM.

Members moved on to call for adequate EU funding for demobilisation and reintegration programmes for children associated with armed conflicts and for ex-child-soldiers.

**EU human rights mainstreaming:** Parliament called for the EU to:

- promote the universality and indivisibility of human rights, including civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty and the General Provisions on the Union’s External Action;
- mainstream human rights in all external policy areas with third countries and adopt a rights-based approach and to integrate respect for human rights into trade, investment, public services and development cooperation, and into its common security and defence policy.

Lastly, Parliament discussed EU priorities on specific country-related issues on Ukraine, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Iran, Myanmar/Burma, Belarus, Bahrain, Egypt, Mali, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine/Israel.