Basic information

2018/2098(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world 2017 and the European Union's policy on the matter See also 2018/2751(RSP) **Subject** 6.10.09 Human rights situation in the world	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	AUŠTREVIČIUS Petras (ALDE)	20/02/2018
	Shadow rapporteur PREDA Cristian Dan (PPE) RODRIGUES Liliana (S&D) BASHIR Amjad (ECR) VERGIAT Marie-Christine (GUE/NGL) LOCHBIHLER Barbara (Verts/ALE) CORRAO Ignazio (EFDD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	FARIA José Inácio (PPE)	10/07/2018

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
European External Action Service	MOGHERINI Federica

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
14/06/2018	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
12/11/2018	Vote in committee		

21/11/2018	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0373/2018	Summary
11/12/2018	Debate in Parliament		
12/12/2018	Decision by Parliament	T8-0515/2018	Summary
12/12/2018	Results of vote in Parliament		
12/12/2018	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2018/2098(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Annual report
Amendments and repeals	See also 2018/2751(RSP)
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/8/13357

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE623.832	25/06/2018	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE626.987	06/09/2018	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE627.648	06/09/2018	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE627.570	05/11/2018	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0373/2018	21/11/2018	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0515/2018	12/12/2018	Summary

Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world 2017 and the European Union's policy on the matter

2018/2098(INI) - 21/11/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the report by Petras AUŠTREVIČIUS (ADLE, LT) on the Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world 2017 and the European Union's policy on the matter.

Members expressed profound concern at the **pushback against democracy, human rights and the rule of law worldwide in 2017**, and urged the EU to:

- pursue unconditionally the **mainstreaming of the European and international standards** regarding human rights, the rule of law, democracy and the rights of minorities to which they are bound;

- ensure **increased coherence between the EU's internal and external human rights policies** and greater coordination between the external policies of the Member States, in fields such as migration, counter-terrorism, development women's rights and gender equality, enlargement and trade, in particular through the implementation of human rights conditionality;
- strive to be the **leading global actor in the universal promotion and protection of human rights**, including on the level of multilateral cooperation, in particular through an active and constructive role in diverse UN bodies and in compliance with the UN Charter, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international law, as well as the obligations in the area of human rights and of the commitments assumed under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Specific challenges: Members expressed grave concern at the gradual shrinking of civil society space in 2017, and deplored the fact that human rights defenders, journalists and NGOs are too often the targets of harassment, intimidation and violence, including killings. They regretted the fact that the increasing global phenomenon of shrinking civil society space might also occur in established democracies and middle- and high-income countries. The European Union and its Member States should allocate more financial resources to promoting and strengthening the participation of civil society in the protection and support of human rights defenders at risk.

The EU was also asked, *inter alia*, to:

- pay special attention to the independence of the judiciary and the transparency the absolute transparency of a system for the administration of justice in the context of its diplomatic relations with non-EU countries;
- develop a stronger positive narrative on human rights, to stand firm in the face of governments sponsoring disinformation or challenging the universality and indivisibility of human rights, and to increase its efforts to support free and independent media worldwide;
- step up its action to improve respect for freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and to encourage intercultural and inter-religious dialogue when it cooperates with third countries and to eradicate torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and the death penalty;
- encourage all UN member states to ratify and implement the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC);
- urgently develop a legally binding framework for the use of armed drones and work towards an international ban on weapon systems that lack human control over the use of force;
- develop programs covering both human rights and the fight against corruption, in particular projects aimed at improving transparency, combating impunity, strengthening anti-corruption agencies and improving the transparency and traceability of the use of European funds;
- fight all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence; Member States that have not yet done so are invited to ratify the Istanbul Convention as soon as possible;
- continue to include support for women in Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) operations, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction;
- cooperate with third countries to end early marriages, child marriages and forced marriages by setting the legal minimum age for marriage at 18 and to develop an action plan to stop children being detained as a result of their migratory status;
- strengthen efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and radicalisation, including EU-wide initiatives and networks such as the Radicalisation Awareness Network;
- integrate climate diplomacy into EU policies for conflict prevention.

Members recalled that the **EU action plan** on human rights and democracy 2015-2019 and its midterm review in 2017 should serve as a guide for any action on human rights. The current action plan contains 34 types of actions, which correspond to the following broader objectives: boosting ownership of local actors, addressing human rights challenges, ensuring a comprehensive human rights approach to conflict and crises, fostering better coherence and consistency and a more effective EU human rights and democracy support policy.

Members stressed in this respect the need to **provide sufficient resources** and expertise to properly implement key Union priorities. They underlined the importance of **parliamentary scrutiny** in order to exercise oversight over the other institutions, to ensure the proper use of the EU budget and to ensure the correct application of EU law.

Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world 2017 and the European Union's policy on the matter

2018/2098(INI) - 12/12/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 369 votes to 115 with 119 abstentions a resolution on the annual report on human rights and democracy in the world 2017 and the European Union's policy on the matter.

It expressed profound concern at the pushback against democracy, human rights and the rule of law worldwide in 2017, and urged the Council to adopt the sanctions provided for in EU legislation when they are deemed necessary to achieving the objectives of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP).

Parliament urged the EU to:

- ensure **increased coherence between the EU's internal and external human rights policies** and greater coordination between the external policies of the Member States, in fields such as migration, counter-terrorism, enlargement and trade, in particular through the implementation of human rights conditionality;

- strive to be the **leading global actor in the universal promotion and protection of human rights**, including on the level of multilateral cooperation.

Specific challenges: Members expressed grave concern at the **gradual shrinking of civil society space in 2017**, and deplored the fact that human rights defenders, journalists and NGOs are too often the targets of harassment, intimidation and violence, including killings. They regretted the fact that the

increasing global phenomenon of shrinking civil society space might also occur in established democracies and middle- and high-income countries. The European Union and its Member States should allocate more financial resources to promoting the participation of civil society in the protection and support of human rights defenders at risk.

Parliament went on to welcome the EU's signature of the Istanbul Convention and called on the Member States that have not yet done so to ratify and implement this Convention as soon as possible. Stressing the importance of reliable statistics on the prevalence, causes and consequences of all types of violence against women, it called for the EU to help countries to improve data collection in this area and meet international legal obligations. The EU was asked to work with other countries to step up funding and programming to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence worldwide. Parliament stressed that **proper and affordable healthcare and access to sexual and reproductive rights** and education should be guaranteed for all women and that they should be able to make free and responsible decisions about their health, body and sexual and reproductive rights.

The EU was also asked, *inter alia*, to:

- pay special attention to the independence of the judiciary and the need for transparency in the administration of justice in the context of its diplomatic relations with non-EU countries;

- stand firm in the face of governments sponsoring disinformation and to increase its efforts to support free and independent media worldwide;

- step up its action to improve respect for freedom of thought, and to eradicate torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and the death penalty;

- encourage all UN member states to ratify and implement the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC);

- urgently develop a legally binding framework for the use of armed drones and work towards an international ban on weapon systems that lack human control over the use of force;

- develop programs covering both human rights and the fight against corruption and improving the transparency and traceability of the use of European funds;

- develop an action plan to stop children being detained as a result of their migratory status;

- strengthen efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and radicalisation, including EU-wide initiatives and networks such as the Radicalisation Awareness Network;

- integrate climate diplomacy into EU policies for conflict prevention.

Parliament emphasised the possibility of separating development cooperation from cooperation on readmission and migration management, and was concerned about the possible instrumentalisation of EU foreign policy as 'migration management'. It stressed the urgent need to tackle the root causes of migration flows and therefore to address the external dimension of the phenomenon of migration, including by finding sustainable solutions to conflicts and economic underdevelopment, in the EU's neighbourhood and worldwide. Members called on the Commission to continue to treat the protection and promotion of the rights of migrants and refugees as a priority in its policies. They stressed the need for safe and legal migration routes and humanitarian visas. They called for Parliament to have oversight of migration agreements. Member States were asked to engage in a serious dialogue to establish a common understanding, shared responsibilities and a unity of purpose with regard to migration.

Parliament recalled that the **EU action plan** on human rights and democracy 2015-2019 and its midterm review in 2017 should serve as a guide for any action on human rights. It stressed the need to **provide sufficient resources** and expertise to properly implement key Union priorities, and the importance of **parliamentary scrutiny** in order to exercise oversight over the other institutions, to ensure the proper use of the EU budget and to ensure the correct application of EU law.