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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Sittings of 13 to 16 January 2020

The Minutes of this session have been published in OJ C 239, 18.6.2021.

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Key to symbols used

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure: first reading
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure: second reading
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure: third reading

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

Amendments by Parliament:

New text is highlighted in ***bold italics***. Deletions are indicated using either the **■** symbol or strikeout. Replacements are indicated by highlighting the new text in ***bold italics*** and by deleting or striking out the text that has been replaced.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2019-2020 SESSION

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TEXTS ADOPTED

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I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

P9_TA(2020)0005

The European Green Deal

European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal (2019/2956(RSP))

(2021/C 270/01)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on ‘The European Green Deal’ (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 28 November 2018 entitled ‘A Clean Planet for all — A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy’ (COM(2018)0773) and to the in-depth analysis in support of that communication,
- having regard to the EU’s Environment Action Programme to 2020 and its vision for 2050,
- having regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to the Kyoto Protocol thereto and to the Paris Agreement,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),
- having regard to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- having regard to the European Environment Agency (EEA) report of 4 December 2019 entitled ‘The European environment — state and outlook 2020’,
- having regard to the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) entitled ‘Global Warming of 1,5 °C’, its fifth assessment report (AR5) and the synthesis report thereon, its special report on climate change and land, and its special report on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate,
- having regard to the UN Environment Programme’s Emissions Gap Report 2019, published on 26 November 2019, and to its first synthesis report on fossil fuel production of December 2019 (Production Gap Report 2019),
- having regard to the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) of 31 May 2019,

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- having regard to the Global Resources Outlook 2019 by the International Resource Panel of the UN Environment Programme,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO),
- having regard to the revised European Social Charter of the Council of Europe,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights,
- having regard to the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC to be held in November 2020 and the fact that all Parties to the UNFCCC need to increase their nationally determined contributions in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement,
- having regard to the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), to be held in Kunming, China, in October 2020, when Parties need to decide on the post-2020 global framework to halt biodiversity loss,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2019 entitled ‘Climate change — a European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy in accordance with the Paris Agreement’ ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the 2019 UN Climate Change Conference in Madrid, Spain (COP25) ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 12 December 2019,
- having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas this resolution constitutes Parliament’s initial general reaction to the Commission communication on the European Green Deal; whereas Parliament will, as work on the Green Deal progresses, return with more detailed positions on specific measures and policy actions and will use its full legislative powers to review and amend any proposals from the Commission to ensure that they support all the objectives of the Green Deal;

1. Underlines the urgent need for ambitious action to tackle climate change and environmental challenges, to limit global warming to 1,5 C, and to avoid massive loss of biodiversity; therefore welcomes the Commission’s communication on ‘The European Green Deal’; shares the Commission’s commitment to transforming the EU into a healthier, sustainable, fair, just and prosperous society with net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs); calls for the necessary transition to a climate-neutral society by 2050 at the latest and for this to be made into a European success story;

2. Stresses that all people living in Europe should be granted the fundamental right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment and to a stable climate, without discrimination, and that this right must be delivered through ambitious policies and must be fully enforceable through the justice system at national and EU level;

3. Strongly believes that the European Green Deal should foster an integrated and science-based approach and bring all sectors together in order to put them on the same track towards the same goal; considers that the integration of different policies towards a holistic vision is the real added value of the European Green Deal and should therefore be strengthened; sees the Green Deal as a catalyst for an inclusive and non-discriminatory societal transition with climate neutrality, protection of the environment, sustainable resource use and the health and quality of life of citizens within planetary boundaries as key objectives;

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0217.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0078.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0079.

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4. Underlines that the Green Deal should be at the heart of Europe's strategy for new sustainable growth, while respecting the earth's planetary boundaries, and for creating economic opportunities, driving investment and providing quality jobs; believes that this will benefit European citizens and companies and will bring about a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where economic growth is decoupled from the EU's global GHG emissions, resource use and waste generation; emphasises that the Green Deal must lead to social progress, by improving the well-being of all and reducing social inequalities, economic imbalances between Member States, and disparities between gender and generations; believes that a just transition should leave no person and no place behind and address social and economic inequalities;

5. Believes that the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be at the centre of the EU's process of drafting and implementing policies so that the EU promotes a model for human development compatible with a healthy planet; underlines, in this regard, the fact that the European Green Deal must combine social rights, environmental integrity, regional cohesion, sustainability and future-proof industries that are globally competitive, to the benefit of all;

6. Underlines that the Green Deal must aim for a prosperous, fair, sustainable and competitive economy that works for all, across all regions in Europe; believes that the Green Deal should create economic opportunities and fairness between generations; stresses the importance of respecting and strengthening social dialogue at all levels and sectors in order to ensure a just transition; emphasises the need for a gender perspective on actions and goals in the Green Deal, including gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive actions; reiterates that the transition to a climate-neutral economy and a sustainable society must be carried out in conjunction with the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and insists that all initiatives taken under the European Green Deal must be fully compatible with the European Pillar of Social Rights;

7. Underlines that in order for the Union to reach the goals of the Green Deal, substantial public and private investments will need to be mobilised, and sees this as a precondition for the success of the Green Deal; believes that the EU must provide long-term investor certainty and regulatory predictability as well as an adequate financial framework, resources, and market and fiscal incentives for a successful green transition for positive and sustainable social, industrial and economic change; reiterates that the Green Deal should put Europe on the path of long-term sustainable growth, prosperity and wellbeing, ensuring that our environmental, economic and social policies are developed to ensure a just transition;

8. Underlines that the global challenges of climate change and environmental degradation require a global response; stresses the need for the EU to show ambition and the need to mobilise other regions of the world to work in the same direction; underlines the EU's role as a global leader on environment and climate action;

9. Proposes that all actions under the Green Deal should have a science-based approach and be based on holistic impact assessments;

10. Recognises its institutional responsibility to reduce its carbon footprint; proposes to adopt its own measures to reduce emissions, including replacing its fleet vehicles with zero-emission vehicles, and urgently calls on all the Member States to agree to a single seat for the European Parliament;

Increasing the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050

11. Believes that a legally binding EU commitment to climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest will be a powerful tool to mobilise the necessary societal, political, economic and technological forces for the transition; strongly underlines that the transition is a shared effort of all Member States, and that every Member State must contribute to implementing climate neutrality in the EU by 2050 at the latest; calls on the Commission to present a proposal for a European Climate Law by March 2020;

12. Calls for an ambitious Climate Law with a legally binding domestic and economy-wide target for reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest, and intermediate EU targets for 2030 and 2040 to be finalised as part of that law by, at the latest, the time of its adoption by the co-legislators, based on impact assessments as well as a strong governance framework; underlines that the Climate Law must reflect the best available science, with the aim of limiting

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global warming to 1,5 C, and that it should be kept up to date, reflecting developments in the EU legal framework and the review cycle of the Paris Agreement; believes that the Climate Law must also include specific adaptation components, namely by requiring all Member States to adopt adaptation action plans;

13. Calls for an increase of the EU's domestic GHG emissions reduction target for 2030 to 55 % compared to 1990 levels; urges the Commission to bring forward a proposal to this end as soon as possible in order to allow the EU to adopt this target as its updated nationally determined contribution (NDC) well in advance of COP26; calls, furthermore, for this target to be subsequently integrated into the European Climate Law;

14. Believes that the EU must play an active role and show strong leadership in the preparations for COP26, where Parties should raise the collective climate commitments, reflecting the highest possible level of ambition; with this in mind, believes that the EU should adopt an enhanced NDC as early as possible in 2020 in order to encourage other non-EU countries, in particular major emitters, to do the same; underlines, in this context, the need to agree on an enhanced NDC well ahead of the planned EU-China summit in September, as well as the EU-Africa summit;

15. Recognises that Member States may have different trajectories to reach climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest in a fair and cost-effective way, recognising that countries have different starting points and resources, and that some are moving faster than others, but that the green transition should be turned into an economic and social opportunity for all regions of Europe;

16. Emphasises that net emissions will have to be reduced to close to zero in all sectors of the economy in order to jointly contribute to the objective of reaching climate neutrality; calls on the Commission to present, where necessary, proposals based on impact assessments, with a view to revising EU legislative measures in the field of climate and energy by June 2021 in order to deliver on the increased medium- and long-term climate ambition; calls on the Commission to also use the additional potential of other existing EU legislation to contribute to climate action, such as the Ecodesign Directive, EU waste legislation, circular economy-related measures and the F-Gas Regulation; underlines, furthermore, that nature-based solutions can help the Member States to reach their GHG emission reductions and biodiversity objectives, but insists that they should be additional to GHG emission reductions at source;

17. Believes that new and increased GHG targets require the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) to be fit for purpose; calls on the Commission to rapidly review the ETS Directive, including by addressing the linear reduction factor, the rules for the allocation of free allowances and the potential need for a carbon floor price;

18. Given the persisting global differences in climate ambition, supports the Commission's intention to work on a WTO-compatible carbon border adjustment mechanism; sees the development of such a mechanism as part of a broader strategy for a competitive decarbonised EU economy that upholds the EU's climate ambition while securing a level playing field; notes the Commission's view that the mechanism would be an alternative to existing measures on carbon leakage under the EU ETS; stresses that current measures to address carbon leakage should not be repealed until a new system is in place and asks the Commission, before making any proposals, to undertake an in-depth analysis of the different forms that the carbon border adjustment mechanism might take before the review of climate legislation that is expected to take place in June 2021; believes that a future carbon border adjustment mechanism should maintain economic incentives for a successful green transition, as well as for climate frontrunners, support a market for low-carbon goods within the EU, and ensure an effective price on carbon in the EU while promoting carbon pricing in other parts of the world; believes that it must take into account the specificities of each sector, and that it could be introduced gradually in selected sectors, while avoiding any undue additional administrative costs, especially for European SMEs;

19. Welcomes the planned proposal to revise the Energy Taxation Directive with respect to environmental issues in order to apply the polluter pays principle, while taking into account national fiscal policies and avoiding any widening of inequalities;

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20. Calls for a new and more ambitious EU strategy on adaptation to climate change; recalls that more effort on climate-proofing, resilience-building, prevention and preparedness is needed in the EU and its Member States; highlights the need to mobilise public and private investments in adaptation and calls for genuine policy coherence in EU spending so that adaptation and climate resilience are assessed as key criteria in all relevant EU funding; at the same time believes that disaster prevention, preparedness and response need to form a strong solidarity instrument with sufficient resources; calls for a consistent and sufficient allocation of funds in the EU budget and pooled resources for the EU civil protection mechanism;

21. Welcomes the announcement that the Commission will launch a European Climate Pact; underlines that the European Climate Pact must bring together citizens, regions, local communities, civil society, businesses (including SMEs) and trade unions as active participants in the transition to climate neutrality, based on genuine dialogue and transparent and participatory processes, including in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies; considers it important to cooperate with stakeholders from energy-intensive sectors and the relevant social partners, especially employers, workers, NGOs and academia, in order to contribute to finding sustainable solutions in the transition to carbon-neutral economies;

Supplying clean, affordable and secure energy

22. Highlights the central role of energy in the transition to a net-zero GHG emissions economy and welcomes the Commission's aim to continue decarbonising the energy system so that the EU can reach net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest; calls for the Renewable Energy Directive to be revised in line with this ambition, with designated binding national targets for each Member State; welcomes, furthermore, the priority given to energy efficiency; in this context, calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement the 'energy efficiency first' principle in all sectors and policies, which is fundamental to reducing the EU's energy dependency and emissions from energy production, while also providing local jobs in renovations and reducing citizens' energy bills; calls for the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) and Energy Efficiency of Buildings Directive (EEBD) to be revised in line with the EU's increased climate ambition, and for their implementation to be reinforced, through binding national targets, paying special attention to vulnerable citizens while also taking into account the need for economic predictability for the sectors concerned;

23. Stresses that in order to reach the Paris Agreement objectives, enforcement at national and EU level is crucial; calls on the Member States and the Commission to ensure that the national energy and climate plans are fully in line with the EU's targets; recalls the competence of the Member States to decide on their energy mix within the EU climate and energy framework;

24. Underlines the fact that in order to meet the EU's climate and sustainability goals, all sectors must increase their use of renewable energy and phase out fossil fuels; calls for a revision of the trans-European energy (TEN-E) guidelines before the adoption of the next list of projects of common interest (PCI) in order to align the legislative framework with the priority of smart grid deployment and to prevent the lock-in of carbon-intensive investments; underlines the need to pursue a strategic approach towards EU energy clusters with the aim of utilising the most effective investments in renewable sources of energy; welcomes, therefore, the announcement on an offshore wind strategy; considers that the EU's policies should specifically enhance innovation and the deployment of sustainable energy storage and green hydrogen; stresses the need to ensure that the use of energy sources such as natural gas is only of a transitional nature, considering the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest;

25. Underlines that it is crucial to ensure a well-functioning, fully integrated, consumer-centred and competitive energy market in Europe; underlines the importance of cross-border interconnections for a fully integrated energy market; welcomes the announcement that the Commission will propose measures on smart integration by mid-2020, and underlines that further integration of the EU energy market will play an important part in enhancing security of energy supply and achieving a net-zero GHG economy; highlights that an adequately funded Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators is needed to strengthen and increase regional cooperation between the Member States;

26. Insists on a rapid phase-out of direct and indirect fossil fuel subsidies by 2020 in the EU and in each Member State;

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27. Welcomes the announced renovation wave of public and private buildings and encourages a focus on the renovation of schools and hospitals as well as social housing and rented housing in order to help low-income households; underlines the need for the existing building stock to be renovated into nearly-zero-energy buildings in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest; underlines that the buildings sector has a high energy-saving potential and potential for on-site production of renewable energy, which can boost employment and help SMEs expand; considers that a smart and forward-looking legislative framework is essential; welcomes, therefore, the proposals to reduce national regulatory obstacles for renovation and the revision of the Construction Products Regulation; calls for rigorous enforcement of the Member States' obligations to renovate public buildings in line with the EED; encourages the promotion of timber construction and ecological building materials;

28. Highlights that the energy transition must be socially sustainable and not exacerbate energy poverty and welcomes the Commission's commitment in this regard; believes that communities fighting energy poverty must be equipped with the necessary tools to participate in the green transition through education and advisory services and by stimulating long-term investments; calls for targeted actions in close cooperation with Member States and the exchange of best practices with the aim of reducing energy poverty while supporting equal access to financing tools for energy efficiency renovations; believes that the costs of energy efficiency renovations should not be borne by low-income households; highlights, furthermore, the role of district heating in providing affordable energy;

29. Supports in general the idea of market-based measures as one of the tools to achieve climate objectives; expresses reservations, however, about the potential inclusion of building emissions in the EU ETS, as it could take the responsibility away from public action and lead to higher energy bills for tenants and homeowners; considers that any such measure would require further analysis;

Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy

30. Sees the transition to a modern, climate-neutral, highly resource-efficient and competitive industrial base in the EU by 2050 at the latest as a key challenge and opportunity, and welcomes the announcement that the Commission will come forward with a new industrial strategy, as well as an SME strategy, in March 2020; stresses that industrial competitiveness and climate policy are mutually reinforcing and that innovative and climate-neutral reindustrialisation will create local jobs and ensure the competitiveness of the European economy;

31. Stresses that the industrial strategy should focus on incentivising value chains for economically viable and sustainable products, processes and business models aimed at achieving climate neutrality, resource efficiency, circularity and a non-toxic environment, while maintaining and developing international competitiveness and avoiding the delocalisation of European industries; agrees with the Commission that energy-intensive industries such as steel, chemical and cement are crucial for the European economy, and that the modernisation and decarbonisation of these industries is crucial;

32. Calls on the Commission to ensure the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the transitions, paying particular attention to the most disadvantaged regions, areas affected by industrial transition (principally coal-mining regions and areas dependent on carbon-intensive industries such as steel manufacturing), sparsely populated areas and environmentally vulnerable territories;

33. Underlines that the industrial and SME strategies must set out clear roadmaps for providing a comprehensive set of incentives and funding opportunities for innovation, for the deployment of breakthrough technologies and for new sustainable business models, as well as the removal of unnecessary regulatory hurdles; calls for EU support for climate and resource frontrunners, by means of a technologically neutral approach that is consistent with the best available science and the EU's long term climate and environment objectives; underlines the role of environmentally safe carbon capture and storage in making heavy industry climate neutral where no direct emission reduction options are available;

34. Recalls the fundamental role of digital technologies in supporting the green transition, for instance by improving resource and energy efficiency and through improved environmental monitoring, and through the climate benefits of a full digitalisation of transmission and distribution and of smart applications; considers that the industrial strategy should

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integrate, as proposed, the green and digital transformations and should identify the key objectives and hurdles impeding the full exploitation of the potential of digital technologies; calls on the Commission to develop strategies and funding for the deployment of innovative digital technologies; at the same time, stresses the importance of improving the energy efficiency and circular economy performance of the digital sector itself and welcomes the Commission's commitments in this regard; asks the Commission to establish a methodology for monitoring and quantifying the increasing environmental impact of digital technologies, without creating unnecessary administrative burdens;

35. Underlines that the industrial strategy must include due consideration for the impacts on the workforce, as well as training, re-skilling and up-skilling of workers; calls on the Commission to closely look at the regional dimension of this strategy, ensuring that no one and no region is left behind; insists that the strategy must include a social dialogue in which workers are fully involved;

36. Calls for an ambitious new circular economy action plan, which must aim to reduce the total environmental and resource footprint of EU production and consumption while providing strong incentives for innovation, sustainable businesses and markets for climate-neutral and non-toxic circular products, with resource efficiency, zero pollution and waste prevention as key priorities; highlights the strong synergies between climate action and the circular economy, in particular in energy- and carbon-intensive industries; calls for the establishment of an EU-level target for resource efficiency;

37. Calls on the Commission to propose targets for separate collection, waste reduction, reuse and recycling, as well as other specific actions such as extended producer responsibility, in priority sectors such as commercial waste, textiles, plastics, electronics, construction and food; urges the Commission to develop measures to support the market for recycled materials in Europe, including common quality standards, as well as mandatory targets for the use of recovered materials in priority sectors where feasible; underlines the importance of developing non-toxic material cycles, stepping up the substitution of substances of very high concern, and promoting research and innovation to develop non-toxic products; calls on the Commission to consider measures to address imported products containing substances or components that are banned within the EU, and considers that these should not be reintroduced on the EU market in consumer products through recycling activities;

38. Supports policy measures for sustainable products, including an expansion of the scope of ecodesign with legislation making products more durable, repairable, reusable and recyclable, and a strong ecodesign and eco-labelling work programme from 2020 onwards that also includes smartphones and other new IT equipment; calls for legislative proposals on the right to repair, the elimination of planned obsolescence, and common chargers for mobile IT equipment; endorses the Commission's plans for legislative proposals to ensure a safe, circular and sustainable battery value chain for all batteries, and expects this proposal to include at the very least measures on ecodesign, targets for reuse and recycling, and sustainable, as well as socially responsible, sourcing; underlines the need to create a strong and sustainable battery and storage cluster in Europe; stresses the need to promote local consumption and production based on the principles of refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle and repair, to stop planned obsolescence business strategies where products are designed to have a short life span and need to be replaced, and to adapt consumption to the limits of the planet; believes that the right to repair and continued support for IT services are imperative to achieve sustainable consumption; calls for these rights to be enshrined in EU law;

39. Urges the Commission to further step up EU measures against plastic pollution, in particular in the marine environment, and calls for wider restrictions on and the substitution of single-use plastic items; supports the development of legislation to address over-packaging and to ensure that all packaging that is not reusable or recyclable in an economically viable manner is not allowed on the EU market by 2030 at the latest, while ensuring food safety; calls for measures for cross-border coordination of deposit return systems; urges the Commission to tackle microplastics in a comprehensive way, including by adopting a comprehensive phase-out of intentionally added microplastics and through new measures, including regulatory measures, against the unintentional release of plastics for example from textiles, tyres and plastic pellets; notes that the Commission intends to develop a regulatory framework for biodegradable and bio-based plastics; highlights the need for a fully circular plastics economy;

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40. Calls for a green EU single market to boost the demand for sustainable products with specific provisions such as the expansion of the use of green public procurement; welcomes, in this respect, the commitments of the Commission to propose further legislation and guidance on green public procurement; calls for procurement by EU institutions to lead by example; underlines the need, moreover, to review and revise EU public procurement rules in order to ensure a truly level playing field for EU companies, especially those producing sustainable products or services, such as in the field of public transport;

41. Stresses the importance of empowered and well-informed consumers; calls for measures to ensure that consumers are provided with transparent, comparable and harmonised product information, including the labelling of products, based on solid data and consumer research, to help them make healthier and more sustainable choices, and to be informed about the durability and reparability of products and their environmental footprint; underlines the necessity of equipping consumers with effective, easily understandable and enforceable remedies which take sustainability aspects into account and which prioritise reuse or repair over the discarding of products that do not perform correctly;

42. Believes that sustainably-sourced renewable materials will play an important role in the transition to a climate-neutral economy, and highlights the need to stimulate investments in the development of a sustainable bioeconomy where fossil-intensive materials are replaced with renewable and bio-based materials in, for example, buildings, textiles, chemical products, packaging, shipbuilding and, where sustainability can be assured, energy production; stresses that this will have to be done in a way that is sustainable and respects ecological limits; highlights the potential of the bioeconomy to create new green jobs, including in rural parts of the EU, and to stimulate innovation; calls for support for research and innovation in sustainable bioeconomy solutions that should take into account the need to protect unique biodiversity and ecosystems; calls for the efficient implementation of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy as part of the European Green Deal;

Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility

43. Welcomes the upcoming strategy for sustainable and smart mobility and agrees with the Commission that all modes of transport (road, rail, aviation and waterborne transport) will have to contribute to the decarbonisation of the transport sector in line with the objective of reaching a climate-neutral economy, while recognising that this will be both a challenge and an opportunity; supports the application of the polluter pays principle; calls for a long-term holistic strategy for a just transition which also takes into account the contribution of the transport sector to the EU economy and the need to ensure a high level of affordable and accessible transport connectivity, as well as social aspects and the protection of workers' rights;

44. Welcomes the proposal by the Commission to boost multimodal transport to increase efficiency and reduce emissions; believes, however, that multimodality can best be achieved only through concrete legislative proposals; welcomes the Commission's intention to propose measures to increase interconnectivity between road, rail and inland waterways leading to a genuine modal shift; calls for investments in connectivity of the EU railway networks to be enhanced and supported in order to enable EU-wide equal access to public railway transport and to make passenger transport by rail more attractive; stresses that the Single European Railway Area is a prerequisite for the modal shift, and calls on the Commission to come forward with a strategy by the end of 2020, followed by concrete legislative proposals, to end fragmentation of the internal market;

45. Underlines that zero-emissions waterway transport is key to developing sustainable multimodal transport; urges the Commission to develop a coordinated European framework of rules for inland waterways; asks the Commission to actively support intermodality involving inland waterways, especially the cross-border networking of national waterway systems, which must be improved;

46. Reiterates that the Single European Sky (SES) is capable of reducing aviation emissions without major costs, but will not in itself bring about significant reductions in aviation emissions in line with the EU's long-term goal; calls for a clear regulatory roadmap for the decarbonisation of aviation, based on technological solutions, infrastructure, requirements for sustainable alternative fuels and efficient operations, in combination with incentives for a modal shift;

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47. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to review the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive and the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation with a view to accelerating the deployment of zero- and low-emission vehicles and vessels; welcomes the focus on increasing charging infrastructure for electric vehicles; calls nevertheless for a more comprehensive urban mobility plan to reduce congestion and improve liveability in towns and cities, for instance through support for zero-emissions public transport and cycling and walking infrastructure, especially in urban areas;

48. Considers that it is crucial to ensure sufficient investments in developing appropriate infrastructure for zero-emissions mobility, and that all relevant EU funds (Connecting Europe Facility, InvestEU, etc.) as well as European Investment Bank (EIB) transport lending must be tailored to this; calls on the Member States to commit to proper funding and step up the pace for the deployment of innovative strategies, charging infrastructure and alternative fuels; considers that revenues from taxes or fees on transport should be earmarked to support the transition to make these costs more socially acceptable; welcomes the proposal by the Commission to develop smart systems for traffic management and 'Mobility as a Service' solutions, especially in urban areas; calls on the Commission to support the development of innovative applications, new technologies, new business models and new emerging and innovative mobility systems across Europe; urges the Commission to involve cities, with their practical experience and know-how, in the discussion on the implementation of future mobility policies at EU level;

49. Welcomes the Commission's intention to include the maritime sector in the ETS; stresses that the EU should defend a high level of ambition for GHG reductions in the maritime sector both at international and EU level, while any new EU measures should not undermine the international competitiveness of EU-flagged ships; believes that EU and international measures should go hand in hand in order to avoid creating double regulations for the industry and that any action, or lack of action, taken at global level should not hinder the EU's ability to take more ambitious action within the Union; furthermore, underlines the need for measures to move away from the use of heavy fuel oil and the need for urgent investments in research into new technologies to decarbonise the shipping sector, and in the development of zero-emission and green ships;

50. Supports the proposed measures to reduce emissions in the aviation sector and the strengthening of the ETS in line with the EU's climate ambition, and the phase-out of the free allocation of allowances for intra-EU flights to airlines; at the same time, calls on the Commission and the Member States to do their utmost to strengthen the carbon offsetting and reduction scheme for international aviation (CORSIA) and to support the adoption by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) of a long-term goal to reduce in-sector emissions, while safeguarding the EU's legislative autonomy in implementing the ETS Directive; underlines that, as co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council are the only institutions that can decide on any future amendment to the ETS Directive; stresses that any amendment of the ETS Directive should only be undertaken if it is consistent with the EU's economy-wide GHG emission reduction commitment;

51. Underlines the importance of ensuring a level playing field between different modes of transport; calls on the Commission therefore to make proposals for coordinated measures to close tax exemptions for aviation and maritime fuels in the Member States in the context of revising the Energy Taxation Directive, while avoiding unintended negative environmental, economic or social consequences;

52. Looks forward to the upcoming Commission proposals for more stringent air pollutant emissions standards for combustion engine vehicles (Euro 7), and for revised CO₂ emissions performance standards for cars and vans, as well as for trucks, ensuring a pathway from 2025 onwards towards zero-emission mobility; calls on the Commission to develop life cycle assessment methodologies; recalls the result of the in-depth analysis accompanying the Commission communication entitled 'A Clean Planet for all: A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy' that all new cars placed on the EU market will have to be zero-emission from 2040 onwards in the scenarios for reaching climate neutrality in 2050, and calls for a coherent policy framework and transition schemes to support this development; notes that a revision of the current rules will be needed to allow frontrunner countries to apply more stringent measures at national level when so decided by Member States;

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53. Welcomes the Commission's plans to address air pollution from maritime transport and aviation, including regulating access by the most polluting ships to EU ports, and regulatory action to tackle the pollution from docked ships in ports; emphasises the importance of fostering the development of zero-emission ports using renewable energy; underlines that the deployment of new emission control areas, as provided for under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), and the reduction of speed for shipping, are relevant solutions to reduce emissions, which can be easily implemented;

54. Takes note of the Commission's plans to consider extending European emissions trading to emissions from road transport; rejects a direct inclusion in the EU ETS scheme and the setting up of any kind of parallel schemes; strongly underlines that no pricing system should replace or weaken existing or future CO₂ standards for cars and lorries and place any extra burden directly on consumers;

From 'Farm to Fork': designing a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system

55. Welcomes the proposal from the Commission to present a Farm to Fork Strategy in 2020 to deliver a more sustainable food policy by bringing together efforts to tackle climate change, protect the environment and preserve and restore biodiversity with the ambition to ensure that Europeans get affordable, high-quality and sustainable food, while ensuring a decent living for farmers, fisherwomen and fishermen and the competitiveness of the agriculture sector; considers that the common agricultural policy (CAP) should be fully in line with the EU's increased climate and biodiversity ambition; welcomes the Commission's commitment in ensuring that European food should become a global standard for sustainability; calls on the Commission to use the Farm to Fork Strategy to build a truly long-term vision for sustainable and competitive food systems while promoting the reciprocity of EU production standards in trade agreements;

56. Highlights that sustainable agriculture and farmers will play an important role in tackling the challenges of the European Green Deal; emphasises the importance of European agriculture and its potential to contribute to climate action, the circular economy and enhanced biodiversity and to promote the sustainable use of renewable raw materials; stresses that EU farmers must be given the necessary tools to fight and adapt to climate change, such as investing in the transition to more sustainable agricultural systems; stresses that the Farm to Fork Strategy should aim at an ambitious reduction in agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and land degradation;

57. Underlines that farmers' position in the agri-food supply chain must be strengthened; highlights that the impact of EU competition law on the sustainability of the food supply chain should be addressed, for instance by combating unfair trading practices and rewarding producers supplying high-quality food for delivering public goods such as higher environmental and animal welfare standards, benefits which are not currently sufficiently reflected in off-farm prices;

58. Calls for a sustainable CAP which actively supports farmers and encourages them, through its measures, to deliver more environmental and climate benefits and to manage volatility and crises in a better way; asks the Commission to analyse the contribution of the current CAP reform proposal to the EU's environmental, climate, and biodiversity protection commitments in order to fully align it to the goals set in the European Green Deal, taking into account the need to maintain a level playing field in Europe and to enable strong, resilient and sustainable agricultural production; stresses that CAP strategic plans must fully reflect the ambition of the European Green Deal, and calls on the Commission to be firm on this point in its assessment of the strategic plans, and especially to verify the ambition and effectiveness of the Member States' eco-schemes and closely monitor the results of their implementation; stresses the importance within the New Delivery Model of a results-based and targeted approach with greater simplification and transparency about concrete deliverables and added value objectives; considers it necessary to help farmers make the transition towards more sustainable agriculture and, to that end, supports providing the CAP with a budget that allows it to achieve all its objectives, including fulfilling the environmental ambition of the EU;

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59. Reiterates that reducing pesticide dependency is one of the priority targets for sustainable agriculture; welcomes in this regard the Commission's commitment to tackle the pressure from pesticides on the environment and health, and to significantly reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides, as well as the use of fertilisers and antibiotics, including through legislative measures; stresses that the Farm to Fork Strategy should include binding reduction targets for hazardous pesticides; calls for an EU strategy for facilitating market access for scientifically substantiated sustainable alternatives; calls on the Commission to act on the calls made in Parliament's resolution of 16 January 2019 on the Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides ⁽⁴⁾;

60. Notes with concern that agriculture, fishery and food production are still the biggest driver of terrestrial and marine biodiversity loss; believes that the loss of pollinators, including bees, is of particular concern from a food security point of view as pollinator-dependent crops play an important role in our diets; calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure the full adoption of the 2013 European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) bee guidance as a matter of urgency, and urges Member States to align their assessments of pesticides accordingly;

61. Stresses that smart agriculture techniques and production methods are needed in order to ensure sufficient nutritious food for a growing population and to reduce food loss and waste; urges the Commission and the Member States to step up action to reduce food waste and fight food fraud; calls for an enforceable EU-wide food waste reduction target of 50 % by 2030, based on a common methodology; underlines the positive effects that short food supply chains can have for reducing food waste;

62. Stresses that legislation on food contact materials and maximum residue levels of pesticides should be revised and be based on the latest scientific findings; urges the Commission to ban food additives that are harmful to human health; recalls the crucial role of healthy food in the reduction of cardiovascular diseases, as well as cancers; stresses the importance of setting up a legal framework, including enforcement mechanisms, for imported food products to comply with European environmental standards;

63. Notes that EU citizens consider that 'providing safe, healthy and good quality food' for all consumers should be the top priority for the CAP and common fisheries policy (CFP); believes that digital means of providing information can supplement but not replace on-label information; therefore welcomes the Commission's intention to explore new ways to give consumers better information; calls on the Commission to consider improved food labelling for instance in terms of nutrition labelling, country-of-origin labelling of certain foods and environment and animal welfare labelling, with the objective of avoiding fragmentation of the single market and providing objective, transparent and consumer-friendly information;

64. Highlights that agriculture has the potential to help the EU reduce its emissions through sustainable practices, such as precision agriculture, organic farming, agro-ecology, agro-forestry, increased animal welfare and prevention of human and animal diseases, including sustainable forest management, carbon capture, and improved nutrient management to help deliver the objectives of the European Green Deal; stresses the importance of incentivising farmers to transition towards methods which will bring increased climate, environmental and biodiversity benefits in a fair, timely and economically viable manner; welcomes the fact that the Farm to Fork Strategy will also address the benefits of new technologies, including digitalisation, and improve efficiency, resource use and environmental sustainability while bringing economic benefits to the sector; reiterates its call for the implementation of a major strategic European vegetable protein production and supply plan based on the sustainable development of all crops grown throughout the EU;

65. Calls on the Commission to integrate fisheries and aquaculture products in its Farm to Fork Strategy with a view to reinforcing the sustainable value chain in the fisheries sector (from fishing to consumption); recognises the potential of the fisheries sector in contributing to the objectives of the European Green Deal; strongly underlines the need for the sector to be in line with the EU's environmental, climate and sustainability objectives and with science; emphasises the importance of ensuring adequate support for European fishermen and fisherwomen in their transition to sustainable fishing activities; calls on the Commission to put forward a proposal to improve the traceability of all seafood products, including origin labelling for canned fish products and the rejection of products that harm or deplete the marine environment;

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0023.

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66. Considers it important to raise existing animal welfare standards, and to develop new ones where relevant, based on new scientific findings, and to start infringement procedures against systemic non-compliance in Member States in the implementation and enforcement of existing animal welfare legislation; calls on the Commission to present, without undue delay, a new Animal Welfare Strategy that paves the way for an Animal Welfare Framework Law and to ensure that animal sentience is taken into consideration in all relevant policies;

Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity

67. Deeply regrets that Europe and the world continue to lose biodiversity at an alarming rate and that is failing to achieve its current targets, including the Aichi targets to halt biodiversity loss; stresses the need to preserve and restore biodiversity, and welcomes the Commission's commitment to present a Biodiversity Strategy by March 2020, ahead of the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity; stresses that the EU should push for an ambitious and binding global agreement on the post-2020 framework on biodiversity with clear goals and binding targets on protected areas both in the EU overall and globally; considers it crucial to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030 both within the EU and globally, including specific actions for European overseas entities;

68. Underlines that the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy must include both ambitious and enforceable legal measures and binding targets to step up the protection and restoration of vulnerable ecosystems, as well as comprehensive measures to address the drivers of biodiversity loss; emphasises the importance of increasing the effectiveness and size of protected area networks in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to allow biodiversity to recover; calls on the Commission to include in the Biodiversity Strategy a target to phase out hazardous chemicals and to link it with the Non-Toxic Environment Strategy; takes note of the Commission's plans to identify measures to improve and restore damaged ecosystems and to propose a nature restoration plan; believes that biodiversity-rich areas of urban green infrastructure help to address air pollution, noise, climate change impacts, heat waves, floods and public health problems; welcomes the fact that the Commission will make proposals to green European cities and increase biodiversity in urban spaces;

69. Stresses that policy coherence both at EU and national level is key for a successful policy to protect nature and biodiversity; as regards implementation, considers it important to exchange best practices and experiences among Member States; calls on the Commission to launch infringement procedures against Member States who do not respect nature protection legislation; calls on the Commission to strengthen the Environmental Liability Directive in line with the recommendations of the European Parliament in its resolution adopted on 26 October 2017;

70. Considers that the drivers of biodiversity loss are global and are not confined to national borders; supports therefore the Commission's proposal for a global binding target to protect and restore biodiversity to be set at the UN Biodiversity Conference in October 2020; calls on the Commission and the Member States to join efforts to agree on an ambitious global protected areas target for marine and terrestrial areas;

71. Recalls that forests are indispensable to our planet and biodiversity; welcomes the intention of the Commission to tackle global deforestation and asks it to step up its actions; calls on the Commission to present, without delay, a proposal for a European legal framework based on due diligence to ensure sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains for products placed on the EU market, with a particular focus on tackling the main drivers of imported deforestation and instead encouraging imports that do not create deforestation abroad;

72. Calls on the Commission to present a new, ambitious EU Forest Strategy to give appropriate recognition to the important, multifunctional and cross-cutting role that European forests, the sector and sustainable forest management have in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss, also taking social, economic and environmental aspects into account; recalls the need for action to combat illegal logging in Europe; stresses that afforestation, reforestation and restoration efforts should aim at enhancing biodiversity as well as carbon storage;

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73. Stresses that wildlife trafficking and illegal wildlife trade are major drivers of biodiversity loss; underlines that the 2016 action plan against wildlife trafficking ends in 2020; urges the Commission to renew and strengthen its provisions, to fully integrate these into the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and to ensure adequate funding; calls on the Commission to make cooperation with partner countries a key element of the fight against wildlife crime and biodiversity decline;

74. Recognises the role of the blue economy in tackling climate change; underlines that the blue economy, including renewable energy, tourism and industry, must be truly sustainable as the use of marine resources directly or indirectly depends on the long-term quality and resilience of the oceans; believes that oceans should be put high on the agenda of the European Green Deal; urges the Commission to give the Green Deal a 'blue' dimension and to fully include the ocean dimension as a key element of the Green Deal, fully recognising the ecosystem services oceans provide by developing an 'Oceans and Aquaculture Action Plan', including concrete actions bringing together an integrated strategic vision towards maritime policy issues such as transport, innovation and knowledge, biodiversity, the blue economy, emissions, waste and governance;

75. Believes that the CFP should aim at ending overfishing and rebuilding stocks beyond maximum sustainable yields, at developing sustainable sea and fresh water aquaculture systems, and at establishing an effective and integrated ecosystem-based management system that takes into account all the factors impacting fish stocks and the marine ecosystem, including climate change and pollution; calls on the Commission to put forward a proposal for a revision of the CFP in this regard;

76. Stresses the need for ocean and coastal conservation efforts, both mitigating and adapting to climate change, to protect and restore marine and coastal ecosystems, and calls for a proposal for setting a binding target to expand the network of marine protected areas to at least 30 % at EU level in the biodiversity strategy for 2030, in order to enhance the protection of the ocean; highlights the need for an enhancement of financial and capacity resources to improve marine knowledge in relation to biodiversity, climate and pollution, in order to better understand the impacts of activities on marine ecosystems and the state of fish stocks, and to set up appropriate adaptation and mitigation action plans;

77. Highlights the importance of fostering the role of the EU as a global leader in ocean governance, including the trade dimension, by promoting the adoption of an international mechanism under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to protect biodiversity and marine ecosystems beyond areas of national jurisdiction and a zero-tolerance policy against illegal fishing, including a common strategy with neighbouring countries for preventing and reducing pollution; points out the need to strengthen the role of the EU in the contribution to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in order to better engage in ocean science and contribute to achieving the SDGs;

A zero-pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment

78. Welcomes the Commission's plans to present a zero-pollution action plan for air, water and soil, which should also address pollution from land to water, should include enhanced monitoring and should focus its actions on pollution prevention; considers it regrettable that the presentation of the Non-toxic Environment Strategy has been delayed, and calls on the Commission to put forward an ambitious cross-sectoral Non-toxic Environment Strategy as soon as possible in 2020 to ensure that all Europeans are properly protected against harmful substances, including consumers, workers and vulnerable populations;

79. Considers that the Non-toxic Environment Strategy should close all regulatory gaps in EU chemicals legislation and effectively contribute to the rapid substitution of substances of very high concern and other hazardous chemicals, including endocrine disruptors, very persistent chemicals, neurotoxicants and immuno-toxicants, as well as tackling the combination effects of chemicals, nano-forms of substances and exposure to hazardous chemicals from products; reiterates that any ban of these chemicals should take all aspects of sustainability into account; underlines the need for a clear commitment to securing funds for improved research into safer alternatives and to promoting substitution of harmful chemicals, clean production and sustainable innovation; underlines the need to reduce animal testing in risk assessments and calls for increased efforts and funds to this end;

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80. Calls for an ambitious legislative proposal by June 2020 to tackle endocrine disruptors, especially in cosmetics, toys and food contact materials, and an action plan that provides a comprehensive framework with targets and deadlines to minimise citizens' exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs); points out that the new comprehensive framework on EDCs must ensure that the mixture effects and combined exposures are taken into account;

81. Calls on the Commission to take clear legislative action on tackling pharmaceuticals in the environment, both as a result of the manufacturing process and of the use and disposal of pharmaceuticals; notes with concern the role that pharmaceuticals play in contributing to antimicrobial resistance when released into the environment via the discharge of animal manure;

82. Points out that the Zero-Pollution Action Plan for air, water and soil must be a comprehensive and cross-cutting strategy to protect citizens' health from environmental degradation and pollution; calls on the Commission to raise the level of protection of the quality of our air, in line with latest scientific findings and the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines; urges better monitoring of air pollution in Member States through the implementation of robust and harmonised measurement methods, and easy access to the information for European citizens; calls for comprehensive action against all relevant pollutants to restore the natural functions of ground and surface water; underlines that the revision of the Industrial Emissions Directive should put emphasis on preventing pollution, coherence with policies on the circular economy and decarbonisation; furthermore, calls for a review of the Seveso Directive;

Financing the European Green Deal and ensuring a just transition

83. Welcomes the recognition of the considerable financing needs to achieve the goals set out in the European Green Deal; further welcomes the recognition in the communication that sustainability should be further embedded into all sectors; considers that the Commission should come forward with a comprehensive financing plan based on a coherent set of proposals that should aim to boost public and private investments at every level; believes that such a plan is necessary in order to meet the considerable financing needs and additional investment required for the implementation of the objectives of the European Green Deal, which will exceed the conservative figure of EUR 260 billion stated by the Commission, which does not consider for instance the investment needs for climate adaptation and for other environmental challenges such as biodiversity, or the public investment needed to address social costs; stresses that the costs of deep decarbonisation are now far lower than the costs incurred from the effects of climate change;

84. Supports the plans for a Sustainable Investment Plan to help close the investment gap, help finance the transition to a carbon-neutral economy and ensure a just transition across all EU regions; underlines that the plan should take account of the experiences of previous programmes (the 'Juncker Plan') and place a special emphasis on truly additional investments of European added value; calls for coordinated actions to tackle the investment gap across the EU, including through the EU budget, financing from the EIB and other financial institutions and EU programmes, for example through InvestEU;

85. Welcomes the new energy lending policy and the new strategy for climate action and environmental sustainability adopted by the EIB on 14 November 2019 as a positive contribution towards the achievement of the European Green Deal; welcomes the fact that the EIB is to be transformed into the EU's new Climate Bank, with 50 % of its operations to be dedicated to climate action and environmental sustainability by 2025, with an end to its support for fossil fuel projects by 2021, and with all its financing activities aligned with the principles and goals of the Paris Agreement by 2020; encourages the EIB to play an active role in supporting projects that support a just transition, such as research, innovation and digitalisation, SMEs' access to finance, and social investment and skills; calls for the EIB investment policy to provide targeted financing for European Green Deal initiatives as a matter of priority, while taking into account the additionality that EIB financing can provide in combination with other sources; stresses that coordination with other financing instruments is crucial given that the EIB alone cannot finance all of the European Green Deal initiatives; welcomes the recent statements by the newly appointed President of the European Central Bank (ECB) that the institution, in both its monetary and its banking supervisory roles, should contribute to the fight against climate change; urges the Commission to work with the ECB in this regard to ensure the coherent action promised in the European Green Deal communication, without prejudice to the mandate of the ECB under the Treaties;

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86. Highlights that the current market imbalance between low supply and high demand of sustainable financial products must be addressed; reiterates the role of sustainable finance and considers it essential that the major international financial institutions swiftly adopt and develop sustainable finance in order to ensure full transparency of the degree of sustainability of the EU financial system and bring about a successful decarbonisation of the global economy; insists on the need to build on the successes of the sustainable finance strategy and underlines the need to rapidly implement the EU's Action Plan on Sustainable Finance, including a green label for financial products, the green bond standard and the integration of environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors in the prudential framework for banks, and welcomes the establishment of the International Platform on Sustainable Finance;

87. Highlights the need for support for a just transition and welcomes the Commission's commitments in this regard; believes that a well-designed Just Transition Mechanism, including a Just Transition Fund, will be an important tool to facilitate the transition and reach ambitious climate targets while addressing social impacts; stresses that robust financing of this instrument, including additional budgetary resources, will be a key element for the successful implementation of the European Green Deal; believes that the just transition is about more than just a fund, but is a whole-policy approach underpinned by investment which must ensure that no one is left behind, and highlights the role of the social policies of the Member States in this context; believes that the Mechanism should not simply be a net transfer to national governments or companies, nor should it be used to pay for corporate liabilities, but that it should concretely help workers of all sectors and communities in the EU most affected by decarbonisation, such as coal mining and carbon-intensive regions, to make the transition to the clean economy of the future, while not having a discouraging effect on proactive projects and initiatives; believes that the fund should inter alia promote upskilling and reskilling in order to prepare and adapt workers to new employment perspectives, requirements and competences and support the creation of high-quality and sustainable jobs; strongly emphasises that just transition funding must be conditional on progress on concrete and binding decarbonisation plans in line with the Paris Agreement, especially the phase-out of coal and the transformation of carbon-intensive economic regions; deems it important to ensure an appropriate monitoring framework in order to follow up on how funds are used in the Member States; stresses, however, that funds alone cannot ensure the transition and that a comprehensive EU strategy based on a genuine dialogue and partnership with the people and communities concerned, including trade unions, is needed;

88. Stresses the instrumental role of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the delivery of the European Green Deal and the urgent need for another quantum leap in political and financial efforts, including new budgetary appropriations, in order to achieve its objectives, as well as a just transition towards a carbon-neutral economy based on the highest social justice criteria so that no one and nowhere is left behind; expects the budgetary means over the next financial programming period to be commensurate with this ambition, while stressing that a reduced MFF would obviously represent a step backwards;

89. Calls for the establishment of a mechanism ensuring good coordination, coherence and consistency between all available EU policies, funding instruments and investments, including the EIB, with a view to avoiding overlaps and enhancing the synergies, complementarities and additionality of their funding, and to leverage sustainable private and public investment, thereby better optimising and mainstreaming financial support for the European Green Deal; highlights, in this regard, its support for the principle of mainstreaming targets in the MFF in order to achieve policy coherence; considers that the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion, aggressive tax planning and money laundering has an important role to play in reaching the objectives of the European Green Deal and shaping a fair society and a strong economy;

90. Calls for the establishment of ambitious and binding biodiversity spending and climate mainstreaming targets which go beyond the levels of targeted spending shares as set out in Parliament's interim report on the MFF, including a stringent and comprehensive methodology for defining and tracking relevant climate and biodiversity expenditure; demands that the Commission ensure that no EU public funding, from any EU policies, goes against the goal of the Paris Agreement and the EU's other environmental objectives and international commitments and obligations;

91. Supports the introduction of a basket of well-targeted new green own resources that correspond to the objectives of the European Green Deal and promote and facilitate a green and socially fair transition, including the fight against climate change and the protection of the environment; sees the Commission's proposals as a starting point in this regard;

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92. Believes that the planned revision of State aid guidelines should reflect the policy objectives of the European Green Deal and aim at reinforcing and simplifying investment in sustainable solutions, ensuring a rapid phase-out of direct and indirect subsidies for coal and fossil fuel in the EU and providing guidelines fully consistent with GHG reduction and environmental objectives for national, regional and local authorities, whose role will be instrumental in an effective and innovative implementation of the European Green Deal; considers that the revision should allow for national support for structural changes due to coal phase-out following the same conditionality as the Just Transition Fund; stresses that such a revision should not weaken the EU's strong set of competition rules;

93. Highlights that a substantial amount of the financing required by the Green Deal will have to come from Member States' budgets; welcomes the Commission's intention to work with Member States on the greening of national budgets; is concerned that without sustainable fiscal policy and a credible financial situation in the Member States any future Green Deal financing model may be jeopardised; calls, therefore, for the introduction of an enabling framework for public sustainable investments to achieve the goals set out in the European Green Deal, but stresses that whatever financing model is chosen must not undermine the sustainability of public finance in the EU; underlines, however, that sustainable investments under the European Green Deal should be truly additional and should not result in a crowding-out of market financing; points out, in this regard, the possibilities of private and public investments to benefit from the prevailing low-interest environment;

94. Calls for the transformative agenda of the European Green Deal to be reflected in a greener European Semester; underlines that the European Semester as it currently functions should not be watered down; believes that the UN SDGs should be integrated, in order to make the process a driver of change towards a sustainable wellbeing for all in Europe; supports, therefore, a further integration of social and environmental indicators and targets into the semester whereby Member States are required to present national plans to attain them; calls further on the Commission to provide assessments of the consistency of Member States' budgets with the EU's updated climate objectives;

Mobilising research and fostering innovation

95. Highlights that world-leading research and innovation are fundamental to Europe's future and essential for achieving our environmental and climate goals, ensuring a science-based strategy for achieving a carbon-neutral Europe by 2050 at the latest and the clean transition of society, while at the same time ensuring economic competitiveness and prosperity; welcomes the Commission's emphasis on the need to work across sectors and disciplines; stresses the need for a systemic climate mainstreaming and climate proofing for all programmes in the EU's research and innovation agenda; notes the role of new technologies in providing additional benefits in the transition to a sustainable economy; urges the Commission and Member States to promote research on adaptation technologies;

96. Underlines the importance of the 2021-2027 mission-oriented Horizon Europe programme, which provides an opportunity to engage a wide range of actors, including European citizens, in tackling the pressing global challenge of climate change and to move towards more collaborative research and innovation practices for delivering on the European Green Deal; stresses the need to maintain an ambitious budget for Horizon Europe of EUR 120 billion in current prices in order to address the significant innovation challenges for the transition to climate neutrality, taking into account that at least 35 % of the Horizon Europe budget should contribute to climate objectives; stresses that other EU funds should earmark a greater budget share for research and innovation in the field of clean technologies; requests that the Commission maximise opportunities arising from the broader innovation environment given that many new key enabling technologies will be crucial in achieving climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest;

97. Stresses that the EU must maintain and further develop its flagship civilian space programmes Copernicus and Galileo, and the EU Agency for the Space Programme, which provide valuable contributions to environmental monitoring and data collection; stresses that Copernicus's climate change services should become fully operational as soon as possible, thereby providing the continuous flow of data necessary for effective climate change mitigation and adaptation actions;

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98. Underlines the importance of strengthening technology transfer and the sharing of knowledge in the areas of climate change mitigation, adaptation, protection and restoration of biodiversity, resource efficiency and circularity, and low-carbon and zero-emission technologies, including in the collection of data to support the delivery of the objectives of the European Green Deal; insists on the importance of supporting market deployment, which is a key driver in transforming the EU's substantial knowledge assets into innovations; takes the view that the European Green Deal is also an opportunity to establish links between the different sectors involved, which should have symbiotic benefits; believes, in this connection, that the bioeconomy provides the opportunity to create such symbiotic benefits across different sectors and complement the circular economy;

99. Reiterates that EU policies should support scientific excellence and participatory science, strengthen collaboration between academia and industry, and promote innovation and evidence-based policymaking while fostering international cooperation in the field, including the facilitation of exchanges of good practices in order to strengthen skills linked to the ecological transition in the new professions also associated with it, for workers, teachers and young people; welcomes the Commission's intention to update the New Skills Agenda and the Youth Guarantee to enhance employability in the green economy and encourages Member States to invest in education and training systems, including activities related to vocational training; considers it a matter of coherence with the objectives of the communication to promote 'green mobility' in the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme;

'Do no harm' — mainstreaming sustainability in all EU policies

100. Welcomes the concept of the 'do no harm' principle and the commitment by the Commission to ensure that all EU actions should help the EU achieve a sustainable future and a just transition, including the use of green budgeting tools, and to update the better regulation guidelines accordingly; insists on a coherent approach to the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in both internal and external policies; urges the Commission to assist the Member States in the full and correct implementation of current and upcoming environmental and climate legislation in the Member States and to ensure that there are consequences in cases of non-compliance;

101. Underlines the essential role of the precautionary principle in guiding EU actions in all policy spheres, together with the 'do no harm' principle, with the utmost regard for the principle of policy coherence; believes that the precautionary principle should underpin all actions taken in the context of the European Green Deal in order to help safeguard health and the environment; insists that the EU must apply the polluter pays principle when presenting proposals for fair and coordinated measures for tackling climate and environmental challenges;

102. Stresses the need to base all future legislative proposals on comprehensive impact assessments identifying the socio-economic, environmental and health effects of different options, including the total climate and environmental impacts and the cost of non-action, as well as the effects on the international competitiveness of EU businesses, including SMEs, and the need to avoid carbon leakage, the effects on different Member States, regions and sectors, the effects on employment, and the effects on long-term investment certainty; underlines the need to demonstrate to the public the benefits of each proposal while ensuring policy coherence with GHG reduction targets and with that of limiting global warming to 1,5 °C, and ensuring that they are not contributing to biodiversity loss; welcomes the fact that explanatory memorandums accompanying all legislative proposals and delegated acts will include a specific section explaining how each initiative upholds the principle of 'do no harm'; calls for this to be extended to include implementing acts and regulatory procedure with scrutiny (RPS) measures;

103. Reiterates that it is essential to guarantee EU citizens the genuine access to justice and documents enshrined in the Aarhus Convention; calls on the Commission, therefore, to ensure that the EU is complying with the Convention and welcomes the Commission's consideration of the revision of the Aarhus Regulation;

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104. Asks the Commission to fulfil Scenario 1 of the Reflection Paper entitled 'Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030', as demanded by Parliament in its resolution of 14 March 2019 entitled 'Annual strategic report on the implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' ⁽⁵⁾, requiring, inter alia, that a 'sustainability first' principle be integrated into the Better Regulation Agendas of the EU and its Member States;

105. Emphasises that the 8th Environmental Action Programme must reflect the ambition presented in the European Green Deal and be fully aligned with and drive forward the implementation of the SDGs;

106. Highlights the large climate and environmental footprint of EU consumption in countries outside the EU; calls on the Commission to develop a target to reduce the global footprint of EU consumption and production with respect for the Earth's planetary boundaries; welcomes, in this regard, the Commission's intention of promoting sustainable supply chains in order to increase the benefits of the circular economy domestically and globally;

The EU as a global leader

107. Underlines that as the world's largest single market, the EU can set standards that apply across global value chains, and believes that the EU should strengthen its political outreach on the basis of 'Green Deal diplomacy' as well as 'climate diplomacy'; believes that the EU should stimulate the debate in other countries in order to raise their climate ambitions, and should step up its ambition in setting new standards for sustainable growth and use its economic weight to shape international standards that are at a minimum in line with EU environmental and climate ambitions; stresses that the EU has a role to play in ensuring a just and orderly transition in all parts of the world, especially in regions that are heavily dependent on fossil fuel;

108. Welcomes the global climate movements, such as the Fridays for Future movement, which are bringing the climate crisis to the forefront of public debate and consciousness;

109. Sees the European Green Deal as an opportunity to reinvigorate European public debate; underlines the importance of involving citizens, national and regional parliaments, civil society and stakeholders such as NGOs, trade unions and businesses in the elaboration and implementation of the European Green Deal;

110. Highlights that trade can be an important tool to promote sustainable development and to help fight climate change; believes that the European Green Deal should ensure that all international trade and investment agreements include strong, binding and enforceable sustainable development chapters, including on the climate and the environment, that fully respect international commitments, in particular the Paris Agreement, and are compliant with WTO rules; welcomes the Commission's intention to make the Paris Agreement an essential element of all future trade and investment agreements and to ensure that all chemicals, materials, food and other products placed on the European market fully comply with relevant EU regulations and standards;

111. Believes that the failure of COP25 in Madrid to reach a consensus on a greater global level of climate ambition, as well as the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement, underlines the growing need for EU leadership on the world stage, and will require the EU to enhance its climate and environmental diplomacy and step up bilateral engagements with partner countries, especially ahead of COP26 in Glasgow and COP15 in Kunming, China; considers COP26 to be a crucial moment that will either undermine or reinforce the integrity of the Paris Agreement;

112. Welcomes the emphasis put on climate diplomacy and insists that in order to bring about results the EU must speak with one voice, ensuring consistency and coherence between all its policies and across the policy cycle, in accordance with the principle of policy coherence for development, and must approach EU climate and environmental diplomacy in a holistic manner by creating links between climate change, the protection of biodiversity, sustainable development, agriculture, conflict resolution and security, migration, human rights, and humanitarian and gender concerns; stresses that all of the EU's external activities should undergo 'green screening';

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0220.

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113. Calls on the Commission in its efforts to promote the EU as leader of international climate and biodiversity negotiations to design a concrete action plan to deliver on the commitments of the renewed five-year Gender Action Plan agreed at COP25 (Enhanced Lima work programme), to promote gender equality in the UNFCCC process, and to appoint a permanent EU gender and climate change focal point, with sufficient budget resources, to implement and monitor gender-responsible climate action in the EU and globally;

114. Recalls that climate change undermines progress in development and poverty reduction and could force millions of people into extreme poverty by 2030; insists, therefore, that the European Green Deal and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda should be closely interrelated;

115. Reiterates the need to address the dramatic consequences climate change has on the long-term economic development of developing countries, in particular least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS); believes that states that emit large quantities of CO₂, such as the Member States of the EU, have a moral duty to help developing countries to adapt to climate change; considers that the EU's cooperation with developing countries should integrate climate strategies as an essential part, in a tailor-made and needs-based approach, should ensure the involvement of local and regional stakeholders, including governments, the private sector and civil society, and should align with partner countries' national plans and climate strategies;

116. Stresses that the EU should provide additional financial and technical assistance to help developing countries with the green transition; calls, in particular, for the EU to step up its climate funding to developing countries, in particular LDCs, SIDS and fragile countries, and to prioritise investment in resilience-building, innovation, adaptation and low-carbon technologies and climate-friendly and resilient infrastructure, in order to respond to the intensification of natural disasters; believes that more efforts are needed in terms of knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries;

117. Stresses that the Comprehensive Strategy for Africa and the future ACP-EU partnership agreement provide unique opportunities to realise the external aspects of the European Green Deal, review the EU's partnership with developing countries in terms of the climate and the environment, and align the EU's policies with its most recent international commitments;

118. Supports the Commission's ambition to end EU exports of waste resources and enhance the circular economy worldwide; calls for the introduction of a global ban on single-use plastic;

119. Calls on the Commission to take the initiative for an international agreement to combat the spread of antimicrobial resistance and the growing emergence of infectious diseases; calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the risk of medicine shortages appropriately;

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120. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

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P9_TA(2020)0006

Implementing and monitoring the provisions on citizens' rights in the Withdrawal Agreement

European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on implementing and monitoring the provisions on citizens' rights in the Withdrawal Agreement (2020/2505(RSP))

(2021/C 270/02)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 7 December 2000 ('the Charter'), which was proclaimed on 12 December 2007 in Strasbourg and entered into force with the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009,
- having regard to its resolutions of 5 April 2017 on negotiations with the United Kingdom following its notification that it intends to withdraw from the European Union ⁽¹⁾, of 3 October 2017 on the state of play of negotiations with the United Kingdom ⁽²⁾, of 13 December 2017 on the state of play of negotiations with the United Kingdom ⁽³⁾, of 14 March 2018 on the framework of the future EU-UK relationship ⁽⁴⁾, and of 18 September 2019 on the state of play of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the European Council (Art. 50) guidelines of 29 April 2017 following the United Kingdom's notification under Article 50 TEU and to the Annex to the Council Decision of 22 May 2017 which lays down the directives for the negotiation of an agreement with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal from the European Union,
- having regard to the European Council (Art. 50) guidelines of 15 December 2017 and to the Annex to the Council Decision of 29 January 2018 supplementing the Council Decision of 22 May 2017 authorising the opening of negotiations with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for an agreement setting out arrangements for its withdrawal from the European Union,
- having regard to the Joint Report of 8 December 2017 from the negotiators of the European Union and the United Kingdom Government on progress during phase 1 of negotiations under Article 50 TEU on the United Kingdom's orderly withdrawal from the European Union,
- having regard to the draft agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, as endorsed by the European Council on 25 November 2018, and the statements entered in the minutes of the meeting of the European Council of that date,
- having regard to the draft agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, as endorsed by the European Council on 17 October 2019 ('the Withdrawal Agreement') ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to the Withdrawal Agreement Bill laid before the UK Parliament on 19 December 2019,
- having regard to the political declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 298, 23.8.2018, p. 24.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 346, 27.9.2018, p. 2.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 369, 11.10.2018, p. 32.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 162, 10.5.2019, p. 40.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0016.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 384 I, 12.11.2019, p. 1.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 384 I, 12.11.2019, p. 178.

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- A. whereas the European Parliament represents all European Union (EU) citizens and will act, both before and after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the EU, to protect their interests;
- B. whereas there are currently around 3,2 million citizens from the remaining 27 Member States (EU-27) resident in the UK, and 1,2 million citizens of the UK (UK citizens) resident in the EU-27; whereas those citizens took up residence in another Member State on the basis of rights they enjoy under EU law and on the understanding that they would continue to enjoy those rights throughout their lives;
- C. whereas, in addition, there are 1,8 million citizens born in Northern Ireland who, by virtue of the Good Friday Agreement, are entitled to Irish citizenship, and are thereby entitled to EU citizenship and to EU citizenship rights where they reside;
- D. whereas the EU and the UK have agreed, under Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement, to a comprehensive and reciprocal approach to protecting the rights of EU-27 citizens living in the UK and of UK citizens living in the EU-27;
- E. whereas the UK has anticipated application of the Withdrawal Agreement's provisions on the issuance of residence documents by means of its EU Settlement Scheme;
- F. whereas a number of the EU-27 Member States still have to legislate on how they propose to implement Article 18 of the Withdrawal Agreement on the issuance of residence documents;
- G. whereas, at the end of the transition period provided for in the Withdrawal Agreement, UK citizens will no longer enjoy the rights they enjoyed pursuant to Article 20 of the TFEU, in particular the right to free movement, unless the EU and the UK agree otherwise in any agreement on the future relationship between them;
- H. whereas pursuant to Article 132 of the Withdrawal Agreement the transition period may only be extended by a single decision of the Joint Committee before 1 July 2020;

Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement

- 1. Believes that Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement is fair and balanced;
- 2. Notes that Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement provides the following:
 - that all EU-27 citizens legally residing in the UK and UK citizens legally residing in an EU-27 Member State, and their respective family members at the time of withdrawal, will enjoy the full set of rights set out in the Withdrawal Agreement as established in EU law and interpreted by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU),
 - that citizens' core family members and persons with whom they are in a durable relationship and who currently reside outside the host State will be protected by the Withdrawal Agreement, and that this will also be the case for children born to them in the future and outside the host State,
 - that all social security rights under EU law will be maintained, including the export of all exportable benefits,
 - that the continuation of citizens' rights will be guaranteed throughout citizens' lifetimes,
 - that administrative procedures implementing Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement will be transparent, smooth and streamlined, and that forms will be short, simple and user-friendly,
 - that the citizens' rights provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement will be incorporated into UK law and that those rights have direct effect;

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Citizens' rights during the transition period

3. Notes that, during the transition period due to end on 31 December 2020, it will be for the Commission, by virtue of Article 131 of the Withdrawal Agreement, to monitor implementation of Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement, including application schemes set up pursuant to Article 19 thereof, both in the UK and in the EU-27 Member States;
4. Notes that, during the transition period, EU-27 citizens will continue to enjoy rights to free movement, as derived from Article 20 of the TFEU and relevant EU law, in respect of the UK, as will UK citizens in respect of the EU-27;
5. Recalls that, during the transition period, the Commission will be responsible for ensuring that free movement rights are respected both in the UK and the EU-27, and asks the Commission to allocate enough resources to investigate and redress any cases of non-respect of those rights, in particular cases of discrimination against EU-27 citizens or UK citizens;
6. Highlights that the transition period is shorter than anticipated; calls, therefore, for the EU and the UK to operationalise those aspects of Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement relating to citizens and their rights as a matter of priority;

Implementing Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement

7. Stresses that its decision on consent to the Withdrawal Agreement will take into account experience gained and assurances given in relation to the implementation of key provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement, especially as regards the UK's EU Settlement Scheme;
8. Notes the high proportion of applicants to the EU Settlement Scheme who have only been accorded pre-settled status; recalls that this can be avoided if the UK opts for an administrative procedure which is declaratory in nature, as Article 18 (4) of the Withdrawal Agreement permits; urges the UK, therefore, to review its approach and further urges the EU-27 Member States also to opt for a declaratory procedure as provided for in Article 18(4);
9. Expresses its grave concern at recent and conflicting announcements in relation to EU-27 citizens in the UK who fail to meet the deadline for applying to the EU Settlement Scheme of 30 June 2021; notes that these announcements have generated unhelpful uncertainty and anxiety for the citizens concerned; urges the UK Government to be clear about how it will apply point (d) of the second subparagraph of Article 18(1) of the Withdrawal Agreement, in particular as regards what it considers as 'reasonable grounds for the failure to respect the deadline';
10. Points out that greater certainty and a greater sense of security would be generated for EU-27 citizens in the UK if they were issued with a physical document as proof of their right to reside in the UK after the end of the transition period; reiterates that the lack of such physical proof will further increase the risk of discrimination against EU-27 citizens by prospective employers or landlords who may want to avoid the extra administrative burden of online verification, or erroneously fear that they might place themselves in an unlawful situation;
11. Remains concerned at the limited number of EU Settlement Scheme ID scanning services, at the limited geographical spread of the assistance provided throughout the UK, and at the level of assistance to be provided to older and vulnerable citizens, including those who may have difficulty using digital applications;
12. Expresses its concern about the proposed set-up of the UK's independent authority provided for in Article 159 of the Withdrawal Agreement; expects the UK to ensure that the authority will be genuinely independent; recalls in that regard that the authority should be operational as of the first day following the end of the transition period;

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13. Expects clarity from the UK Government on the issue of the applicability of the UK's EU Settlement Scheme in relation to EU-27 citizens in Northern Ireland who have not sought UK citizenship under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement;

14. Reiterates its commitment to monitoring closely how the EU-27 Member States implement Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement, in particular Article 18(1) and (4), concerning the rights of UK citizens living on their territory;

15. Encourages the EU-27 to adopt measures that provide legal certainty for UK citizens resident in the EU-27; recalls its position that the EU-27 should pursue a consistent and generous approach in protecting the rights of UK citizens resident in the EU-27;

16. Calls on the UK and the EU-27 Member States to increase efforts to raise awareness among citizens on the effects of the UK's withdrawal from the EU and to initiate or step up targeted information campaigns to inform all citizens covered by the Withdrawal Agreement of their rights and any possible changes to their status;

Citizens' rights under the future EU-UK relationship

17. Welcomes the commitment in the political declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the EU and the UK that it 'should be a relationship that will work in the interests of citizens of the Union and the United Kingdom, now and in the future';

18. Regrets, in this context, that the UK has announced that the principle of the free movement of persons between the Union and the UK will no longer apply; considers that any agreement on the future relationship between the EU and the UK should include ambitious provisions concerning the movement of persons; reiterates that those rights should be commensurate with the degree of future cooperation in other areas; recalls that free movement rights are also directly linked to the three other freedoms integral to the internal market, and have particular relevance to services and professional qualifications;

19. Urges that future free movement rights across the whole EU for UK citizens covered by the Withdrawal Agreement be guaranteed, as well as a lifelong right for citizens covered by the Withdrawal Agreement to return to the UK or the EU; calls on the EU-27 Member States to ensure that voting rights in the local elections of the country of residence are provided for all citizens covered by the Withdrawal Agreement;

20. Recalls that many UK citizens, both those resident in the UK and those resident in the EU-27, have expressed strong opposition to losing the rights they currently enjoy pursuant to Article 20 of the TFEU; proposes that the EU-27 examine how to mitigate this within the limits of EU primary law while fully respecting the principles of reciprocity, equity, symmetry and non-discrimination;

21. Recalls that the Joint Committee referred to in Article 164 is to be responsible for the implementation and application of the Withdrawal Agreement;

22. Believes that joint European Parliament-UK Parliament scrutiny of the implementation and application of the Withdrawal Agreement would be beneficial, and would welcome it if joint structures to this end could be established;

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23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the parliaments of the Member States and the Government of the United Kingdom.

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P9_TA(2020)0007

Annual report 2018 on the human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter**European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter — annual report 2018 (2019/2125(INI))**

(2021/C 270/03)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN human rights treaties and instruments,
- having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to Articles 2, 3, 8, 21 and 23 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to Articles 17 and 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, presented on 28 June 2016,
- having regard to the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019, adopted by the Council on 20 July 2015, and to its Mid-Term Review of June 2017,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, adopted on 24 June 2013,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, adopted on 24 June 2013,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on the death penalty, on freedom of expression online and offline, and on human rights defenders,
- having regard to the revised EU Guidelines to EU policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, adopted on 16 September 2019,
- having regard to the EU Human Rights Guidelines on safe drinking water and sanitation, adopted on 17 June 2019,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (hereinafter 'the Istanbul Convention') of 11 May 2011, which not all Member States have ratified,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Conventions on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No 197) and on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No 201),
- having regard to the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,

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- having regard to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- having regard to the EU Gender Action Plan II (GAP II) 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020' of 21 September 2015,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 30 March 2007,
- having regard to the UN Declarations on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
- having regard to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples to the UN Human Rights Council of 8 August 2017 ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights of 16 June 2011,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted on 9 December 1998,
- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and to the outcomes of their review conferences,
- having regard to the Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in New York, of 15 October 2019,
- having regard to the Yogyakarta Principles (on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity), adopted in November 2006, and the 10 complementary principles ('plus 10'), adopted on 10 November 2017,
- having regard to the decision of the UN General Assembly of 28 May 2019 designating 22 August as the UN's International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief,
- having regard to the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO),
- having regard to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 and 11 December 2018,
- having regard to the Global Compact on Refugees, affirmed by the UN General Assembly on 17 December 2018,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Protocol of 10 October 2018 amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data,

⁽¹⁾ <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/36/46/Add.2>

⁽²⁾ OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1.

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- having regard to the Council conclusions of 25 June 2018 on EU priorities at the United Nations and at the 73rd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 17 July 2018 on the International Criminal Court on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 26 April 2016 entitled 'Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance' (COM(2016)0234) and the subsequent Council conclusions of 12 May 2016 on the EU approach to forced displacement and development,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on democracy, adopted on 14 October 2019,
- having regard to the joint declaration from the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and Ministers of Foreign Affairs or Representatives of 13 UN participating member states of 27 September 2018 on the Good Human Rights Stories initiative,
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2018,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 December 2018 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2017 and the European Union's policy on the matter ⁽³⁾, and to its previous resolutions on earlier annual reports,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 November 2016 on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties ⁽⁴⁾ and its recommendation of 13 March 2019 to the Council and the VP/HR concerning taking stock of the follow-up taken by the European External Action Service (EEAS) two years after the EP report on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2019 on EU Guidelines and the mandate of the EU Special Envoy on the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 3 July 2018 on violation of the rights of indigenous peoples in the world, including land grabbing ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 February 2019 on the future of the LGBTI List of Actions (2019-2024) ⁽⁸⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2019 on experiencing a backlash in women's rights and gender equality in the EU ⁽⁹⁾,
- having regard to all its resolutions adopted in 2018 on breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (known as urgency resolutions) in accordance with Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to its Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, which in 2018 was awarded to Oleg Sentsov, a Ukrainian film director and political prisoner held in Russia,

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0515.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 224, 27.6.2018, p. 58.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0187.

⁽⁶⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0013.

⁽⁷⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0279.

⁽⁸⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0129.

⁽⁹⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0111.

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- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the letter from the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0051/2019),
- A. whereas throughout the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 2018, the EU stressed the political significance of building up a global order based on respect for human rights and reaffirmed its deep and firm commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide; whereas the European Parliament hosted its first ever Human Rights Week in November 2018, highlighting the milestones achieved since the UDHR was adopted, as well as current human rights challenges;
- B. whereas respect for and the promotion, indivisibility and safeguarding of the universality of human rights, as well as the promotion of democratic principles and values including the rule of law, respect for human dignity and the principles of equality and solidarity, are the cornerstones of the EU's ethical and legal *acquis* and its common foreign and security policy (CFSP), as well as of all its external action; whereas the EU should continue to strive to be the leading global actor in the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including at 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 the commitments entered into under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs;
- C. whereas the UDHR, as a set of universal values, principles and norms guiding UN member states, places the protection of human rights at the heart of good governance; whereas in the spirit of the UDHR and Article 21 of the TEU, the EU is at the forefront of pursuing human rights-based policies and engages continuously in addressing human rights abuses;
- D. whereas the EU, through actions at bilateral and multilateral level, has continued to support the advancement of human rights in 2018, in particular by strengthening political dialogue with non-EU countries, including those which seek European integration, and other regional institutions such as the African Union, and by establishing new international agreements including trade and economic partnerships; whereas ambitious commitment requires the EU to be consistent and lead by example;
- E. whereas EU policies must ensure the protection of the human rights of the most vulnerable groups such as ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities, the LGBTI community, women, children, asylum seekers and migrants; whereas throughout the celebration of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), the EU acknowledged the crucial role HRDs play in enhancing democracy and the rule of law; whereas the HRDs 2018 World Summit yielded an Action Plan with priorities for the defence of human rights; whereas in 2018, a large number of HRDs were targeted and killed and subjected to attacks, threats and persecution; whereas some private military and security companies have been implicated in a number of human rights violations, which must be properly investigated with those responsible brought to justice;
- F. whereas even in the present decade, we are witnessing visible limitations on and offensives against gender equality and women's rights at an international level; whereas sexual and reproductive health and rights are grounded in basic human rights and are essential aspects of human dignity; whereas violence against women and girls is one of the world's most widespread human rights violations which affects all levels of society and constitutes a major barrier to attaining gender equality; whereas a comprehensive and binding EU strategy for gender equality, exactly as Parliament has demanded, must provide for the gender mainstreaming of all EU policies and reinforce the impact of the upcoming EU Gender Action Plan III;
- G. whereas promoting international peace and security is part of the EU's *raison d'être*; whereas the EU is committed to acting on the international scene in the name of the principles that inspired its creation, and in compliance with and support of the principles of the UN Charter and international law;
- H. whereas environmental emergencies, including global warming and deforestation, are the result of human actions and give rise to human rights violations against the people directly affected, through the loss of their homes and habitats, but also humanity as a whole; whereas it is important to recognise the link between human rights, health and environmental protection; whereas ensuring access to water is vital when it comes to preventing tensions in certain regions;

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- I. whereas increased coherence between the EU's internal and external policies, as well as between the EU's external policies, represents an indispensable requirement for a successful and effective EU human rights policy; whereas policies in support of human rights and democracy should be mainstreamed across all other EU policies with an external dimension, such as development, migration, security, counter-terrorism, women's rights and gender equality, enlargement and trade, in particular through the implementation of human rights clauses in agreements between the EU and non-EU countries; whereas greater consistency should enable the EU to respond quicker during the early stages of human rights violations and to be a more active and credible human rights actor at a global level;
- J. whereas democratic transition and the establishment or consolidation of the rule of law in many countries are long and arduous processes, for which external support over a prolonged period, including from the EU, is essential to their success;

Human rights and democracy: general trends and key challenges

1. Expresses its deep concern at the attacks on democracy and the rule of law worldwide in 2018, which reflect the rise of authoritarianism as a political project, embodying disregard for human rights, repression of dissent, politicised justice, predetermined election results, shrinking space for civil society to operate in, and limitations on freedom of assembly and freedom of expression; underlines the importance of civil society allowing for flexible, timely and effective responses to regimes that violate international law, human rights and democratic principles;

2. Is of the opinion that countries falling into authoritarian regimes become more prone to instability, conflict, corruption, violent extremism and involvement in foreign military conflicts; expresses its concerns that there are still regimes that deny the very existence of universal human rights enshrined in international law; welcomes the fact, nonetheless, that a number of countries have launched peace and democratisation processes, implemented constitutional and judicial reforms, and engaged with civil society in open and public debates with the objective of promoting fundamental freedoms and human rights, including the abolition of the death penalty; regrets the fact that in spite of the growing trend towards the abolition of the death penalty worldwide, a number of countries are yet to put in place a moratorium;

3. Maintains that all states that adhere to internationally recognised fundamental freedoms as the cornerstones of democracy must be at the forefront of spreading democratic governance practices based on human rights and the rule of law around the world, and of strengthening international legislative instruments for protecting human rights; underlines the challenges posed by the use of harmful influences that undermine democratic governance and the values intrinsic to human rights, thereby thwarting the positive endeavours of democratic states; is deeply concerned about the links between authoritarian regimes and populist nationalist parties and governments; believes that such links undermine the credibility of the EU's efforts to promote the fundamental values;

4. Recalls that there can be no hierarchy of human rights; stresses the need to ensure full respect for, and adherence to, the principle that human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated; stresses that attempts to use the rights of certain groups to justify the marginalisation of others are wholly unacceptable;

5. Highlights the scourge of armed conflicts and military attacks aiming, inter alia, at ethnic cleansing, which continues to claim civilian lives and causes mass displacement, with states and non-state actors abdicating their responsibility to abide by international humanitarian law and international human rights law; stresses that regions at war or in conflict situations face grave human rights violations that are exceptional in nature and aimed at denying human dignity, which are both devastating for victims and degrading for perpetrators; highlights, by way of example, the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, enforced disappearance, extra-judicial killings, violence and deliberate starvation as weapons of war designed to destroy, destabilise and demoralise individuals, families, communities and societies, especially children; highlights the particular vulnerability of women from ethnic and religious minorities to sexual violence, especially converts; strongly condemns the deadly attacks on hospitals, schools and other civilian targets that took place around the world in armed conflicts in 2018; recalls that the right to life is an important human right, and that illegal acts of war must thus always be condemned unanimously and addressed effectively;

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6. Denounces the pushback against multilateralism and the rules-based international order, which is posing a serious challenge to human rights worldwide; strongly believes in approaches and decisions taken in cooperation within a multilateral framework, particularly within UN bodies and existing agreed negotiating formats within regional organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as the most effective means of serving the interests of humanity, finding sustainable solutions to conflicts based on the norms and principles of international law, the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, and fostering progress in the field of human rights; is extremely concerned by the fact that seats on various UN human rights-related bodies, including the UN Human Rights Council, are occupied by countries with a proven track record of grave human rights violations;

7. Is seriously concerned at the increase in the number of murders of, and both physical and defamatory attacks and the use of death penalty, persecution, imprisonment, harassment and intimidation against people standing up for human rights throughout the world, in particular journalists, scholars, lawyers, politicians and civil society activists, including women's rights activists, environmental and land defenders and defenders of religious minorities, mainly in countries with high levels of corruption and a poor record of upholding the rule of law and judicial oversight; is particularly concerned at increasingly brazen attacks committed on foreign soil, in some cases in violation of the laws and customs relating to diplomatic privileges and immunities; demands justice and accountability at the highest level of decision-making for those attacks; notes that all human rights defenders, notably women, face specific risks and need adequate protection; denounces the fact that some governments have adopted legislation that restricts the activities of civil society or social movement, including the closure of NGOs or the freezing of their assets; is deeply concerned about the use of repressive cybersecurity and counter-terrorism legislation to crack down on human rights defenders;

8. Stresses the importance of advancing gender equality and women's and girls' rights worldwide; emphasises that in spite of progress, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence; stresses that most societies still struggle to provide women and girls with equal rights under the law and equal access to education, healthcare, decent work, equal pay, and political and economic representation; expresses concern over the widespread ongoing attacks on women's rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the legislation that in many parts of the world restricts these rights; highlights that female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage are among the most widespread of human rights violations; expresses concerns that women expressing a faith or belief are doubly vulnerable to persecution; welcomes the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative on ending violence against women and girls and calls for it to be reinforced;

9. Stresses that respecting and promoting the rights of the child, fighting all kinds of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, trafficking and exploitation of children, including forced marriages and the recruitment or use of child soldiers in armed conflict, and providing children with care and education are crucial issues for the future of humanity; supports, in this respect, the monitoring and reporting mechanism established with UN Security Council Resolution 1612 on children and armed conflict;

10. Stresses the importance of fully considering the specific needs of persons with disabilities; calls for the EU to incorporate the fight against disability discrimination into its external action and development aid policies, along with the fight for equal access to the labour market and access to education and training, as well as to promote solutions that make it easier for persons with disabilities to operate within society;

11. Draws attention to instances of persecution and discrimination related to ethnicity, nationality, social class, caste, religion, belief, language, age, sex, sexuality and gender identity, which remain rife in many countries and societies; is seriously concerned at the increasingly intolerant and hate-filled responses targeting people who are the victims of these human rights violations; calls for the persons responsible for those violations to be held to account;

12. Notes that the number of people forcibly displaced in 2018 exceeded 70 million, including 26 million refugees, 41 million internally displaced persons and 3,5 million asylum seekers⁽¹⁰⁾; notes, in addition, that there are some 12 million stateless people worldwide; takes the view that wars, conflicts, terrorism, violence, political oppression, persecution on account of religion or belief, poverty, and water and food insecurity fuel the risks of new conflicts and the further displacement of populations; recognises that the environmental consequences of climate change, such as more limited access to safe drinking water, may exacerbate the displacement of populations;

⁽¹⁰⁾ UNHCR — Global Trends 2018 report (19 June 2019).

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13. Stresses that the climate emergency and mass biodiversity loss constitute major threats to population; recalls that the fundamental human rights to life, health, food and safe water are at risk without a healthy environment; draws attention to the impact on human rights of environmental devastation, both for the populations concerned, and in respect of the right to the environment, for all of humanity; underlines the essential obligations and responsibilities of states and other decision-makers to comply with the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement to combat climate change, counter its effects, forestall its negative impact on human rights and promote appropriate policies in compliance with human rights obligations; recalls the obligations incumbent on states to protect biodiversity and provide access to effective remedies in cases of biodiversity loss and degradation; expresses its support for nascent legislative efforts at international level in relation to environmental crimes;

14. Stresses that freedom of speech and expression and media pluralism both online and offline are at the heart of resilient, democratic societies; condemns the misuse of legitimate aims such as counter-terrorism, state security and law enforcement for the purposes of limiting freedom of expression; condemns media propaganda and misinformation against minorities; calls for the establishment of the best possible safeguards against hate speech and radicalisation, disinformation campaigns and hostile propaganda, particularly those originating from authoritarian states and non-state actors such as terrorist groups, by developing a legal framework at both EU and international level for tackling hybrid threats, including cyber and information warfare, while not compromising on fundamental rights; recalls that the media should reflect a plurality of diverse opinions and support and obey the principle of non-discrimination; stresses, in this regard, that persons belonging to minorities should have indiscriminate access to broadcast media, including in their own language;

Making the EU's human rights foreign policy more effective

15. Recalls the EU's commitment to placing human rights and democracy at the centre of its relations with non-EU countries; stresses, therefore, that the objective of advancing human rights and democracy around the world requires it to be mainstreamed in all EU policies which have an external dimension; calls for the EU to fulfil these commitments and to ensure that its engagement does not inadvertently reinforce authoritarian regimes;

16. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt a new, ambitious, comprehensive and binding Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the next five years; insists that all human rights challenges, including digital rights, environmental rights, the rights of the elderly, sports and human rights, and the rights of migrants be adequately addressed in the future Action Plan; calls for the creation of a strong monitoring mechanism to assess the implementation and impact of the Action Plan; calls on the Member States to take greater ownership of the Action Plan and to report back on its implementation;

17. Notes the importance of its resolutions on breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and of the work of its Subcommittee on Human Rights; strongly recommends that the Commission and the EEAS enhance their engagement with Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights so as to enable it to participate in the future Action Plan and to monitor its implementation; calls on the EEAS to provide Parliament with regular reports on the follow-up actions it has taken on all urgency resolutions and/or the recommendations thereon;

18. Highlights the fact that trade, the EU's policies in this area and human rights can and should reinforce one another, and that the business community has an important role to play in offering positive incentives for promoting human rights, democracy and corporate responsibility; urges the Commission and the EEAS to make effective use of human rights clauses in international agreements, not only via political dialogue, regular progress assessments and recourse to consultation procedures upon request, but also by creating an effective mechanism for monitoring serious human rights violations which might occur through business activities; calls for human rights clauses to be duly enforced and monitored accordingly, including through measurable benchmarks, with the involvement of Parliament, civil society and the relevant international organisations; calls for the establishment of an effective and independent complaints mechanism for groups of citizens and stakeholders who are affected by human rights violations; stresses that the EU and its Member States must prevent any kind of corporate human rights abuses and the negative impact of business activities;

19. Supports human rights dialogues with non-EU countries as an essential tool for bilateral engagement in the promotion and protection of human rights; recalls that the EU Guidelines on human rights dialogues with third countries outline a number of criteria for opening a dialogue, including 'the extent to which the government is willing to improve the

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situation, the degree of commitment shown by the government in respect of international human rights conventions, the government's readiness to cooperate with United Nations human rights procedures and mechanisms as well as the government's attitude towards civil society'; calls for the EEAS to carry out a regular assessment of each dialogue, as envisaged by the aforementioned guidelines, and to ensure that if tangible progress has not been made, the EU should adjust its aims and reconsider its approach; calls on the Commission and the EEAS, with stronger involvement of civil society groups and relevant international organisations, to join forces to address human rights and related obligations in dialogues or negotiations in any political and economic areas, with the governments of non-EU countries, in order to reinforce the impact of human rights dialogues; recommends that the concerns being voiced about the human rights situation in those countries be heeded and that appropriate action be taken, including by raising individual cases in the context of human rights dialogues; calls for a more active involvement of Parliament, when drawing up the agendas of the human rights dialogues; stresses that country strategies on human rights (HRCSS) and their annual implementation reports constitute an essential tool for ensuring policy consistency, identify key strategic priorities, define long- and short-term objectives, and set out concrete actions to advance human rights; reiterates its call for MEPs to be given access to the content of HRCSS; welcomes civil society seminars preceding human rights dialogues and urges that their conclusions be followed up on, with the dedicated involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs);

20. Issues a strong call for the EU to consistently address discrimination by making best use of the EU human rights toolbox, including through dialogue, by issuing condemnations and by supporting civil society and joint initiatives at UN level, in line with the EU's newly adopted guidelines on non-discrimination in external action and the UN Guidance Tool on descent-based discrimination, published in 2017;

21. Strongly supports the work and efforts of the EU Special Representative for Human Rights (EUSR) in protecting and promoting human rights around the world; underlines the important objective in the EUSR's mandate to enhance the EU's effectiveness in this area; calls on the EUSR to act upon his mandate to serve to enhance the EU's endeavours to strengthen democracy; insists on its request for the EUSR's mandate to be reviewed so as to make the EUSR permanent and more accountable, and for it to be endowed with own-initiative powers, adequate resources and the ability to speak publicly in order to report on the achievements of visits to third countries and communicate the EU's positions on human rights topics; reiterates its call for greater transparency on the activities and missions of the EUSR and insists that his regular reports to the Council are also shared with Parliament; welcomes the expansion of the EUSR's mandate to include promoting support for international criminal justice and expects the EUSR to be particularly active in this field;

22. Welcomes the efforts by the EEAS and the Commission to continuously strengthen EU officials' awareness on human rights; welcomes the fact that human rights focal points and liaison officers on HRDs are now present in all EU Delegations; calls on the EEAS to issue Parliament with a detailed report on the completion of this network of focal points in order to evaluate it and ensure it is implemented consistently across all EU Delegations; calls on all EU Delegations and their respective focal points on human rights to consistently abide by their obligation to meet with HRDs, visit detained activists, monitor their trials and advocate for their protection on the ground;

23. Recognises the progress made in terms of the procedure and format of the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2018, but expects the Council and the VP/HR to take even greater account of the positions expressed by Parliament in its relevant resolutions and/or recommendations in order to ensure deeper and more effective interaction between the EU institutions on human rights issues; asks the Council to continue its efforts to finalise these annual reports earlier in the year; encourages the Council to ensure that the adoption of the next annual report is based on an adequate consultation process;

Developing solutions to promote and protect human rights and democracy

Democratic governance and enabling space for civil society

24. Calls for the EU and the Member States to continue to closely monitor developments that negatively affect governance and civil society space worldwide, without exception, and to systematically respond, using all appropriate means, to policies and legislative changes led by authoritarian governments that are aimed at undermining governance

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based on fundamental democratic principles and at shrinking civil society space; is of the opinion that there should be greater synergies between the Commission, the EEAS and Parliament on this matter; welcomes the invaluable assistance provided to civil society organisations worldwide under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which remains the EU's flagship tool for implementing its external human rights policy; calls for funding to civil society and human rights under the successor to the EIDHR to be further enhanced; stresses that in 2018, hundreds of peaceful civil society demonstrators were arrested, subjected to ill treatment and arbitrary detention, and forced to pay fines as a result of their trials;

EU approach to conflicts and accountability for human rights violations

25. Stresses the link between the rise in human rights violations and widespread impunity and the lack of accountability in those regions and countries devastated by conflicts or characterised by politically motivated intimidation, discrimination, harassment and assault, abduction, violent policing, arbitrary arrests, cases of torture, and killings; calls on the international community to support actions aimed at combating impunity and promoting accountability, especially in those regions and countries where the dynamics of impunity reward those who bear the greatest responsibility and disempower victims; stresses, moreover, that minorities and marginalised groups are often particularly impacted by conflicts;

26. Recalls its resolutions denouncing specific responsibilities for conflicts that in 2018 caused hundreds of child casualties in the course of deliberate attacks against civilian populations and humanitarian infrastructures; calls on all EU Member States to strictly comply with the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and, in particular, to stop all transfers of arms or surveillance and intelligence equipment that can be used by governments to suppress human rights, especially in the context of armed conflicts; insists on the need for full transparency and regular reporting by EU Member States on their arms transfers; recalls its resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed drones⁽¹⁾; expresses its grave concern over the use of armed drones outside the international legal framework; calls further on the Commission to keep Parliament properly informed about the use of EU funds for all research and development projects associated with the construction of drones; urges the VP/HR to ban the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons, which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention;

27. Strongly condemns all heinous crimes and human rights violations committed by state and non-state actors, including against citizens peacefully exercising their human rights; calls for the EU and its Member States to use all their political weight to prevent any act that could be considered a genocide, a war crime or a crime against humanity from taking place, to respond in an efficient and coordinated manner in cases where such crimes occur, to mobilise all necessary resources to bring to justice all those responsible, to assist the victims and to support stabilisation and reconciliation processes; calls on the international community to develop instruments to minimise the warning-response gap in order to prevent the emergence, re-emergence or escalation of violent conflicts, such as the EU's early warning system; calls on the EEAS and the Commission to include an ambitious strategy on the fight against impunity in the third EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy; highly recommends the establishment of a European observatory on prevention, accountability, and combating impunity; reiterates its call for the VP/HR to appoint an EU Special Representative on International Humanitarian Law and International Justice with a mandate to promote, mainstream and represent the EU's commitment to the fight against impunity;

28. Welcomes the EU's efforts to promote the universality of the Rome Statute in 2018, when the 20th anniversary of its adoption was celebrated, and reaffirms its unwavering support for the International Criminal Court (ICC); notes that international law is currently under serious pressure; is concerned that, because of the ICC's broad jurisdiction, of the 193 UN member states, only 122 are members of the ICC and only 38 have ratified the Kampala Amendment, which gives the ICC powers to prosecute the crime of aggression; calls for the EU and its Member States to encourage all UN member states to ratify and implement the Rome Statute, and is dismayed at the withdrawals from the Statute and the threats to do so; calls also on all the signatories of the Rome Statute to coordinate and cooperate with the ICC; calls for the EU and its Member States to systematically support the ICC's examinations, investigations and decisions, and to take the necessary measures to prevent cases of non-cooperation with the ICC; calls for financial support for organisations that collect, keep and protect evidence — digital or in other formats — of the crimes committed by any parties to conflicts, in order to facilitate their

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 285, 29.8.2017, p. 110.

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prosecution at an international level; calls on the EU Member States and the EU Genocide Network to support the UN investigative team in collecting, preserving and storing evidence of crimes currently being committed or very recently perpetrated so that they are not lost; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to explore ways and present new tools to help the victims of violations of international human rights law and of international humanitarian law to access international justice and obtain remedy and reparation, including through building the capacity of non-EU countries to apply the principle of universal jurisdiction in their domestic legal systems;

29. Welcomes the initial exploratory discussions, and calls for their continuation, within the Council regarding the establishment of a global EU human rights sanctions mechanism, the so-called 'Magnitsky List', allowing for targeted sanctions against individuals complicit in serious human rights violations, as called for by Parliament on many occasions, in particular in March 2019; calls on the Council to speed up its discussions in order to adopt the necessary legislation, set up this mechanism, and adequately fund it as soon as possible; stresses the importance for this system to comply with the EU judicial review mechanism; also stresses, as an example to follow, the enactment by some EU Member States of laws that provide for sanctions to be imposed on individuals deemed responsible for human rights abuses;

30. Calls on the VP/HR and the Council to pay special attention to the human rights situation in illegally occupied territories; reiterates that illegal occupation of a territory or part of it is an ongoing violation of international law; underlines the responsibility of the occupying power towards the civilian population under international humanitarian law; regrets the reinstatement of representatives from a country occupying the territory of another state to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;

Human rights defenders (HRDs)

31. Stresses the invaluable and essential role that HRDs play at the risk of their own lives, in particular women's human rights defenders; underlines the need for strong EU coordination on engagement with third-country authorities regarding HRDs; highlights that 2018 marked the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders; recommends strengthening cooperation between the EU institutions and the Member States, enabling them to provide continuous support and protection to HRDs; values the 'protectdefenders.eu' mechanism, which was established to protect HRDs at grave risk, and calls for it to be strengthened;

32. Underlines the need for a strategic, visible, and impact-oriented EU approach to protecting HRDs; calls on the Council to issue annual Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on EU action to promote and protect HRDs in the EU's foreign policy; calls on the Council and the Commission to establish a coordinated procedure for granting visas to HRDs, and where appropriate, facilitating temporary shelter; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure sufficient funding for the protection of HRDs in the relevant thematic programmes of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), and to ensure it is accessible and reaches those most in need, who are most marginalised; calls on the Commission to make full use of this instrument in the future and insists that EU Delegations and Member States should increase their funding and capacity for emergency protection and support for HRDs at risk; condemns the continued imposition of travel bans on human rights activists who wish to attend sessions of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and other international institutions; calls on the governments concerned to lift them;

Women's rights and gender equality

33. Strongly supports the EU's strategic engagement for gender equality and its ongoing efforts to improve the human rights situation of women and girls, in line with the 2030 SDGs; emphasises that gender equality should be a key priority in all working relations, policies and external actions of the EU, as it is a principle for the EU and its Member States itself according to the Treaties; calls for the EU to adopt a comprehensive Gender Equality Strategy once the strategic engagement expires; calls on the Commission to prepare and adopt a communication to renew the Gender Action Plan after 2020, as an important EU tool to contribute to women's and girls' rights worldwide; calls on Member States to endorse the Gender Action Plan III in Council conclusions; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to further contribute to gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment by working closely with international organisations, non-EU countries and civil society, in order to develop and implement new legal frameworks regarding gender equality;

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34. Stresses the alarming increase of violence against women and girls; condemns all forms of gender-based, physical, sexual and psychological violence; expresses grave concerns over the escalated use of torture in the form of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war; stresses that sexual crimes and gender-based violence are considered by the Rome Statute as war crimes, crimes against humanity or constitutive elements of genocide or torture; urges countries to step up their legislation in order to tackle these issues; reiterates its call on the EU Member States and members of the Council of Europe that have not done so, to ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention as soon as possible; calls for further action to eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices targeting women and girls, such as forced or early marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual violence as well as forced religious conversion; supports the continuation of the joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative; calls on the EU Delegations to ensure data collection on violence against women, to draw up country-specific recommendations, and to promote protective mechanisms and support structures for victims;

35. Affirms that access to health is a human right, that sexual and reproductive health and rights are grounded in basic human rights, and are essential elements of human dignity; points out that inadequate access to vital goods and social services (for example water, nutrition, health, education and sanitation), as well as difficulties in gaining access to sexual and reproductive health represent an unacceptable violation of human rights; condemns the violations of women's sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR), including the denial of access to relevant services; emphasises that proper and affordable healthcare, including mental healthcare such as psychological support, and universal respect for and access to SRHR and education should be guaranteed for all women, and that they should be able to make free and responsible decisions about their health, including sexual and reproductive health; notes that these services are important in saving women's lives and reducing infant and child mortality; finds it unacceptable that women's and girls' SRHR remain a battleground, including in multilateral settings; stresses that women and girl victims of armed conflicts have the right to receive the necessary medical care; emphasises the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, in peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and post-conflict reconstruction operations and in the promotion of human rights and democratic reforms;

36. Calls for the EU to work with other countries to step up their actions in the fields of education, healthcare and social services, data collection, funding and programming, to better prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence worldwide; points out that education is an essential tool for combating discrimination and violence against women and children; calls for measures to facilitate the access of women and girls to education and the labour market, and for particular attention to be paid to the gender balance in filling managerial positions by companies; also calls for the inclusion of girls' education in EU agreements with developing countries;

Rights of the child

37. Underlines the fact that minors are often exposed to specific forms of abuse, such as child forced marriage, child prostitution, use of child soldiers, genital mutilation, child labour and child trafficking, especially in humanitarian crises and armed conflicts, and therefore require enhanced protection; draws particular attention to stateless children, migrant and refugee children; calls for the EU to cooperate with non-EU countries to end early, child and forced marriages by making 18 the legal minimum age for marriage, requiring the verification of the age of both spouses and of their full and free consent, introducing compulsory marriage records, and ensuring compliance with those rules; calls for new EU initiatives to promote and protect the rights of the child, including to prevent and combat child abuse in the world, to rehabilitate and reintegrate children affected by conflict, especially those who are victims of extremist groups, and children that suffer from multiple and intersectional discrimination, and to provide them with a sheltered, family- and community-based environment as the natural context for their lives, in which care and education are fundamental; calls for the EU to initiate an international movement to advocate the rights of the child, inter alia by organising an international conference on the protection of children in fragile environments; reaffirms the urgent need for universal ratification and effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Child and its Optional Protocols;

Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons

38. Condemns the arbitrary detention, torture, persecution and killings of LGBTI persons; notes that in a number of countries around the world, LGBTI persons continue to face persecution and violence based on their sexual orientation; regrets the fact that many countries still criminalise homosexuality, including some which provide for the death penalty for

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homosexuality; believes that practices and acts of violence against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation should not go unpunished, and must be eradicated; calls for the implementation of EU Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons;

Rights of persons with disabilities

39. Welcomes the ratifications of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; reiterates the importance of effective implementation by both the EU Member States and the EU institutions; stresses the importance of non-discrimination and the need to credibly mainstream the principle of universal accessibility, and to ensure all the rights of persons with disabilities throughout all the relevant EU policies, including development policy; calls for the creation of a global centre of excellence for future-proof and entrepreneurial skills for people with disabilities;

The fight against caste discrimination

40. Notes with great concern the scale and consequences of caste hierarchies, caste-based discrimination and the perpetuation of caste-based human rights violations, including the denial of access to the legal system or employment, continued segregation, poverty and stigmatisation, and caste-related barriers to the exercise of basic human rights and facilitation of human development; reiterates its call for the development of an EU policy on caste discrimination, and calls for the EU to act on its own grave concerns over caste discrimination; calls for the adoption of an EU instrument for the prevention and elimination of caste-based discrimination; reiterates its call for the EU and its Member States to intensify efforts and support initiatives at the UN and delegation levels to eliminate caste discrimination; notes that such initiatives should include promotion of specific indicators, disaggregated data and special measures to tackle caste discrimination in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and observance of the new UN Guidance Tool on descent-based discrimination and support to states;

Indigenous Peoples

41. Is deeply concerned that Indigenous Peoples face widespread and systematic discrimination and persecution worldwide, including arbitrary arrests and killings of human rights defenders, forced displacement, land grabbing and the violation of their rights by corporations; notes that most Indigenous Peoples live below the poverty threshold; calls on all states to include Indigenous Peoples in the decision-making process on strategies for tackling climate change; calls on countries to ratify the provisions of ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples;

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief (FoRB)

42. Stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief (more commonly known as freedom of religion or belief — FoRB), which includes the rights not to believe, to espouse theistic, non-theistic, agnostic or atheistic views and the right to apostasy and not to profess any religion must be guaranteed all over the world and preserved unconditionally; urges the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to step up advocacy in relation to FoRB, and to initiate dialogue with states and representatives of civil society and faith, non-confessional, humanistic and philosophical groups and churches, religious associations and communities in order to prevent acts of violence, persecution, intolerance and discrimination against persons on the grounds of thought, conscience, philosophical opinions, and religion or belief; deplores anti-conversion and blasphemy laws, which effectively limit and even deprive religious minorities and atheists of their freedom of religion or belief; also urges the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to fully implement the EU Guidelines on FoRB;

43. Calls for the EU and its Member States to continue to forge alliances and enhance cooperation with a broad range of countries and regional organisations, in order to deliver positive change on freedom of religion or belief, especially in conflict areas where faith groups, such as the Christians in the Middle East, are most vulnerable; fully supports the EU practice of taking the lead on thematic resolutions in the UN Human Rights Council, and on FoRB in the UN General Assembly;

44. Supports the work and efforts of the Special Envoy for the promotion of FoRB outside the EU; reiterates its calls on the Council and Commission to carry out a transparent and comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness and added value of the position of the Special Envoy in the process of the renewal and reinforcement of their mandate and position by the Commission; insists that their work be adequately resourced to enhance the EU's effectiveness in this area; reminds the

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Council and Commission of the need to adequately support, in permanent consultation with religious and philosophical organisations, the institutional mandate, capacity and duties of the Special Envoy for the promotion of FoRB outside the EU, by exploring the possibility of a multi-year term subject to annual review, and by developing working networks within all relevant EU institutions, in line with its resolution of 15 January 2019 on the EU Guidelines and the mandate of the EU Special Envoy on the promotion of FoRB outside the EU;

Freedom of expression, media freedom and the right to information

45. Strongly denounces and condemns the killing, kidnapping, imprisonment and intimidation of and attacks against, including by physical and judicial means, many journalists, bloggers and whistle-blowers, and the threats that they faced in 2018; calls for the EU to make every effort to protect them in the future; recalls that freedom of expression and freedom of the media foster a culture of pluralism, and are essential components of the foundations of a democratic society; recalls that journalists should be free to exercise their profession without fear of prosecution or imprisonment; emphasises that any restriction on the exercise of freedom of expression and media freedom, such as the removal of online content, must be exceptional, with special attention to the principles of necessity and proportionality, and must be prescribed by law and judged in a court of law;

46. Calls for the EU, its Member States, and its EUSR in particular, to pay particular attention to the protection of freedom of expression and the freedom, independence and pluralism of the media worldwide, to better monitor all forms of restrictions — online or offline — on freedom of expression and the media, to systematically condemn such restrictions, and to use all diplomatic means and tools available to put an end to them; stresses the importance of condemning and combating hate speech and incitement to violence online and offline as a direct threat to the rule of law and the values embodied in human rights; supports initiatives that help draw a distinction between fake news or propagandistic misinformation and information gathered as a part of genuine and independent journalism work; emphasises the importance of ensuring effective and systematic implementation of the EU Guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline, and of regularly monitoring their impact;

Death penalty, torture and other forms of ill-treatment

47. Condemns the use of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and the death penalty, which continue to be applied in many countries all over the world; is concerned about the number of convictions and executions for reasons that do not fit the definition of serious crimes, which is contrary to international law; calls on countries that have not already done so to establish an immediate moratorium on the death penalty as a step towards its abolition; calls for the EU to intensify its efforts to eradicate torture and the death penalty; calls for the EU and its Member States to be particularly vigilant with regard to the states threatening to restore the death penalty in law or in fact; calls for a stop to the global trade in goods used for torture and capital punishment;

48. Considers it essential to combat all forms of torture and ill-treatment, including psychological abuse, of persons in prison or other places of detention, to step up efforts to ensure compliance with relevant international law in this area, and to ensure compensations for victims; expresses its grave concern at the state of prisons and detention conditions in a number of countries, including access to care and medicines, particularly for diseases such as hepatitis or HIV; recalls that the refusal to allow prisoners access to healthcare constitutes ill-treatment or even torture, and may be failure to assist a person in danger; welcomes the EU's revised policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment; calls on the Member States to mainstream safeguards against torture and other ill-treatment in all their actions and policies;

49. Welcomes the establishment of the EU Anti-Torture Coordination Group in 2017; welcomes, in this regard, the updates to EU legislation called for in its legislative resolution of 29 November 2018 on trade in certain goods which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel treatment or punishment⁽¹²⁾; highlights the importance of further strengthening cooperation with UN mechanisms, regional bodies and relevant actors, such as the ICC, CSOs and HRDs, in the fight against torture and other ill-treatment;

⁽¹²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0467.

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Business and human rights

50. Reaffirms that the activities of all companies, whether operating domestically or across borders, must be in full compliance with international human rights standards; reaffirms moreover, the importance of promoting corporate social responsibility; underlines the importance of European enterprises playing a leading role in promoting international standards on business and human rights; recalls the responsibility of businesses in ensuring that their operations and supply chains are not implicated in human rights abuses, such as forced and child labour, violation of indigenous peoples' rights, land grabbing, threats and attacks on human rights defenders, and environmental degradation;

51. Stresses the need to establish an international binding instrument to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other companies; calls for a legislative proposal on corporate human rights and due diligence to prevent abuses in the global operations of companies, and to enhance access to judicial remedy for victims of corporate misconduct; stresses the importance for all countries to fully implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and calls on those EU Member States that have not yet adopted national action plans on business rights to do so as soon as possible; encourages the EU and its Member States to participate constructively in the work of the UN Intergovernmental Working Group on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights; considers this to be a necessary step forward in the promotion and protection of human rights;

52. Urges the Commission to ensure that the projects supported by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) are in line with EU policy and commitments on human rights and that there are accountability mechanisms for individuals to make public violations related to the activities of the EIB and EBRD; considers that an EU interinstitutional task force on business and human rights would be a useful additional tool; calls on the private sector, in particular financial, insurance and transport companies, to provide their services to humanitarian actors carrying out relief activities, in full compliance with humanitarian exemptions and exemptions provided for in EU legislation; welcomes the establishment of the Independent Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise;

53. Takes positive note of the GSP+ preference system as a means of stimulating the effective implementation of the 27 core international conventions on human rights and labour standards; acknowledges that global value chains contribute to enhancing core international labour, environmental and social standards, and represent an opportunity in terms of sustainable progress, particularly in developing countries, and in countries at greater risk due to climate change; stresses that non-EU countries benefiting from the GSP+ preference system should show progress on all aspects of human rights; notes that enhanced and effective monitoring mechanisms could reinforce the leverage potential of trade preference schemes in response to human rights violations; supports the introduction and the implementation of human rights conditionality clauses in international agreements between the EU and non-EU countries, including in trade and investment; calls on the Commission to systematically monitor the implementation of these clauses to ensure that they are respected by the beneficiary countries, and to report regularly to Parliament on the respect of human rights by the partner countries;

New technologies and human rights

54. Stresses the importance of elaborating an EU strategy to put new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, at the service of people, and to address the potential threat of new technologies to human rights, including disinformation, mass surveillance, fake news, hate speech, state-sponsored restrictions and the abuse of artificial intelligence; further stresses the specific threat that these technologies might pose in controlling, restricting and undermining legitimate activities; underlines the importance of striking the right balance between human rights, in particular the right to privacy and other legitimate considerations such as security or the fight against crime, terrorism and extremism; expresses its concern at the increasing employment of certain dual-use cyber-surveillance technologies against human rights activists, journalists, political opponents and lawyers;

55. Calls for the EU and the Member States to engage with third country governments to end repressive cybersecurity and counter-terrorism legislation practices and legislation; recalls the obligation to annually update Annex I to Council Regulation (EC) No 428/2009⁽¹³⁾, which lists dual-use items for which authorisation is required; stresses the need for effective digital cooperation between governments, the private sector, civil society, academic and technical communities, the

⁽¹³⁾ OJ L 134, 29.5.2009, p. 1.

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social partners and other stakeholders to ensure a secure and inclusive digital future for all, in line with international human rights legislation;

Migrants and refugees

56. Stresses the urgent need to tackle the root causes of migration flows such as wars, conflicts, authoritarian regimes, persecution, irregular migration networks, human trafficking, smuggling, poverty, economic inequality and climate change, and to find long-term solutions based on respect for human rights and dignity; underlines the necessity of creating legal channels and paths for migration, and of facilitating voluntary returns, where possible, including in line with the principle of non-refoulement;

57. Calls for the external dimension of the refugee crisis to be addressed, including by finding sustainable solutions to conflicts through building cooperation and partnerships with the third countries concerned; believes that compliance with international refugee and human rights law is an important building block for cooperation with third countries; stresses the need to take genuine steps, in line with the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees, to enhance refugee self-sufficiency, to expand access to third country solutions, to improve human rights conditions in migration management, especially of countries of origin or transit, and for safe return in dignity; calls for the EU and its Member States to be fully transparent about cooperation policies with and the allocation of funds to third countries for cooperation on migration; considers it important that resources for development and cooperation are not diverted from their objectives, and must not benefit those responsible for human rights violations; calls for the EU to support the UNHCR initiative to end statelessness by 2024 within and outside the EU;

58. Denounces the deaths of refugees and migrants and the human rights abuses they endure in the Mediterranean Sea; also denounces the attacks against NGOs that help these people; calls for the EU and its Member States to increase humanitarian assistance for forcibly displaced persons; calls for the EU and its Member States to provide support for refugee-hosting communities; insists that the implementation of the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees must therefore go hand in hand with the implementation of the UN's 2030 Agenda as set out in the SDGs, as well as with increased investment in developing countries;

59. Stresses that the climate emergency and mass biodiversity loss constitute a major threat to human rights; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to work towards a EU strategy to protect a healthy environment by working closely with third countries and international organisations such as the UNHCR, which has recently launched a joint strategy with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); underlines that the UN estimates that there will be many environmentally-displaced people by 2050; recalls the obligations and responsibilities of states and other bodies responsible to mitigate the effects of climate change and to prevent it from having a negative impact on human rights; welcomes international efforts to promote the integration of environmental issues, natural disasters and climate change with human rights; calls for the EU to participate actively in the international debate on a possible normative framework for protecting 'environmentally and climate-displaced persons';

Democracy support

60. Stresses that the EU should continue to actively support democratic and effective political pluralism in human rights institutions, independent media, parliaments and civil society in their efforts to promote democratisation, in a context-sensitive manner, while taking into account the cultural and national background of the third countries concerned in order to strengthen dialogue and partnership; recalls that human rights are a fundamental cornerstone of democratisation processes; takes positive note of the European Endowment for Democracy's (EED) consistent engagement in the Western Balkans and in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods of the EU to promote democracy and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms; recalls that the experience gained and the lessons learned from transitions to democracy in the framework of the enlargement and neighbourhood policies could make a positive contribution to identifying the best practices that could be used to support and consolidate other democratisation processes worldwide; recalls that EU enlargement proved to be the most effective tool for supporting democracy, the rule of law and human rights on the European continent, and that the option of EU accession should therefore remain open to the countries that are willing to join and have implemented reforms as stipulated in Article 49 of the TEU; urges the EU to closely follow the implementation of provisions protecting human rights and the rights of persons belonging to minorities throughout all enlargement processes;

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61. Welcomes the Council conclusions on democracy of 14 October 2019 as the start of the process of updating and strengthening the EU's approach to strengthening democracy; in this respect, emphasises the role of education on human rights and democratisation as essential tools to consolidate these values both within and outside the EU; stresses the importance of adopting specific funding rules for EU democracy support programmes taking into consideration the nature of democratic changes; underlines the need to invest in adequate resources to better coordinate democracy support programmes and policy priorities; supports the effort to ensure transparency over the EU aid in this area; commits itself to promoting greater transparency of democratic processes, particularly financing of political- and issue-based campaigning by different non-state actors;

62. Reiterates its positive view of the EU's continued support for electoral processes, and its provision of electoral assistance and support to domestic observers; welcomes and fully supports, in this context, the work of Parliament's Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group; recalls the importance of proper follow-up to the reports and recommendations of election observation missions as a way of enhancing their impact and strengthening the EU's support for democratic standards in the countries concerned; stresses the need to support democracy throughout the electoral cycle by means of long-term, flexible programmes that reflect the nature of democratic change; urges rigorous follow-up of cases of human rights violations against candidates during electoral processes, in particular against those belonging to vulnerable groups or minorities;

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63. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the EU Heads of Delegation.

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P9_TA(2020)0008

Annual report on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy**European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy — annual report (2019/2136(INI))**

(2021/C 270/04)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the common foreign and security policy,
- having regard to Title V of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE),
- having regard to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 and the joint declaration on EU-NATO cooperation of 10 July 2018,
- having regard to the declaration by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on political accountability ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the 2016 Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 7 June 2017 on a strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action (JOIN(2017) 0021),
- having regard to the Sofia Declaration of 17 May 2018 and the Council conclusions on enlargement and stabilisation and association process of 26 June 2018 and 18 June 2019,
- having regard to United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', of 25 September 2015,
- having regard to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which established the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda in 2000,
- having regard to its recommendation of 15 November 2017 to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) on the Eastern Partnership in the run-up to the November 2017 Summit ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0054/2019),

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 210, 3.8.2010, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0440.

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- A. whereas Parliament has a duty and responsibility to exercise its democratic oversight of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and common security and defence policy (CSDP) and should get the necessary and effective means to fulfil this role;
- B. whereas the EU's external action has a direct impact on the wellbeing of its citizens both within and outside the EU, and sets out to ensure security and stability while promoting the European values of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights; whereas the credibility of the European Union as a global actor for peace and security rests on its practical adherence to its values, therefore meaning that value-driven foreign policy is in the Union's immediate interest;
- C. whereas the European Union cannot be a promoter of its core values unless they are protected and respected in all of its Member States;
- D. whereas, currently we are witnessing the retreat of traditional partners from the global stage, increasing pressure on multilateral cooperation and institutions, and the rising assertiveness of regional powers;
- E. whereas for some time now, the Union's strategic environment has been deteriorating, meaning that the need for a stronger Europe that acts on its external relations in a unified manner is more urgent than ever before in order to face the multiple challenges that directly or indirectly affect the security of its Member States and its citizens; whereas issues that affect the security of EU citizens include: armed conflicts immediately to the east and south of the European continent and fragile states; terrorism — and in particular Jihadism —, cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns; foreign interference in European political and electoral processes; the proliferation of arms of mass destruction and agreements on the non-proliferation of weapons being called into question; the exacerbation of regional conflicts that have given rise to forced displacement and uncontrolled migration flows; tensions over the energy supply of the Member States; competition for natural resources, energy dependency and energy security; the rise in organised crime at borders and in Europe; the weakening of disarmament efforts; climate change;
- F. whereas Jihadism is one of the main challenges that threatens public safety in the EU today, and rapid, assertive and coordinated action should be taken both domestically and abroad;
- G. whereas no single Member State is able to tackle, on its own, any of the challenges the European continent and its close environment are facing today; whereas the principle of equality between the Member States in designing EU foreign and security policy and actions should be respected and guaranteed; whereas the prerogatives of the national parliaments in the area of their own national foreign and security policy should be respected; whereas an ambitious, credible and effective common foreign policy must be underpinned by adequate financial resources and timely and decisive actions from the EU; whereas EU external policy instruments need to be used in a more coherent and cohesive way;
- H. whereas multilateralism is the only guarantee for peace, security, and sustainable and inclusive development in a highly polarised international environment; whereas its foundations are threatened when universal rules and values — including fundamental human rights, international law, and humanitarian law — are either called into question or abused; whereas multilateralism is at the heart of the European Union's approach to its CFSP as enshrined in the TEU;
- I. whereas the world is facing a global shift of powers with geopolitical competition being a leading trend in foreign politics, which requires quick, unified and adequate response mechanisms and capabilities; whereas the EU is largely absent in this global shift of powers and geopolitical competition due to a lack of unity among its Member States;
- J. whereas rising state actors and new economic powers are pursuing potentially destabilising global and regional ambitions and endangering peace and stability in the European neighbourhood, with unpredictable consequences for peace, in addition to European and global security; whereas Europe is running the risk of being side-lined when it comes to decision-making and will be severely disadvantaged as a result; whereas this global reconfiguration is facilitating the emergence of autocratic leaders, violent non-state actors and popular protest movements;

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- K. whereas the EU's security environment, which is contingent on peace and stability in its neighbourhood, is more volatile, unpredictable, complex and vulnerable to external pressure — something which is already taking place in the form of hybrid warfare, including hostile propaganda from Russia and other actors, in addition to the rise in threats from radical terrorist groups, which hinder the EU from exercising its sovereignty and strategic autonomy; whereas instability and unpredictability at the EU's borders and in its near neighbourhood represent a direct threat to the security of the continent; whereas the link between internal and external security is indivisible; whereas this external pressure implies both a physical and an online dimension; whereas disinformation and other forms of foreign interference from external forces poses serious risks for European sovereignty and a serious threat to the stability and security of the Union;
- L. whereas socioeconomic inequality, oppression, climate change, and a lack of participatory inclusion are the leading causes of global conflict; whereas the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in 2015 by all UN Member States to provide a roadmap for equitable, just, sustainable, and inclusive global cooperation;
- M. whereas the effects of climate change are having increasingly severe impacts on different aspects of human life, development opportunities, and on the worldwide geopolitical order and global stability; whereas those with fewer resources to adapt to climate change will be hardest hit by its impact; whereas EU foreign policy should focus more on promoting multilateral activities by cooperating on specific climate-related issues, building strategic partnerships and strengthening cooperation and inter-actions between state and non-state actors, including major contributors to global pollution;
- N. whereas human rights are facing a rollback globally; whereas people from all regions around world, when failed by their own governments, are looking to Europe for support in ensuring that their human rights are upheld;
- O. whereas the EU's enlargement policy is an effective foreign policy instrument of the Union; whereas the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is a key instrument with regard to the EU's eastern and southern neighbours;
- P. whereas more than half of the world's population growth by 2050 is expected to take place in Africa, which is expected to account for 1,3 billion of the additional 2,4 billion people on the planet; whereas the concentration of this growth in some of the poorest countries, together with the effects of climate change, will lead to a series of new challenges, which, if not addressed immediately, will have extremely problematic consequences both for the countries in question and for the European Union; whereas the recent United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report on Trade and development 2019 includes figures for an additional USD 2,5 trillion a year in order to achieve the goals outlined in the UN 2030 SDG Agenda;
- Q. whereas in view of the collapse of important arms control and disarmament agreements — and also in view of 'emerging technologies' such as cyber technology and autonomous weapons disarmament arms control and non-proliferation should become a major focus of the EU's foreign and security policy; whereas the Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP⁽³⁾ has to be reviewed and updated so that the criteria have to be strictly applied and implemented and that a sanction mechanism be established;

Multilateralism at stake: urgent need for a stronger and united Europe

1. Recalls that at a moment when competing powers are increasingly challenging the rules-based global order, we, as Europeans, must defend universal values, rules and principles — in particular multilateralism, international law, the rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, free and fair trade, non-violent conflict resolution and shared European interests — both outside and inside the EU; stresses that, in order to retain credibility as a bearer of universal values like democracy, the European Union must take action that is consistent with its principles;

⁽³⁾ OJ L 335, 13.12.2008, p. 99.

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2. Underlines that multilateralism must be at the centre of the EU's efforts to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflicts based on the norms and principles of international law, the UN Charter and the OSCE 1975 Helsinki Final Act and is the best way of guaranteeing transnational political dialogue, peace and a stabilised global order; stresses its firm belief that, in a strategic environment that has been deteriorating considerably, the EU and its Member States have a growing responsibility to contribute to international security;

3. Outlines that multilateralism is the cornerstone of the EU's foreign and security policy and represents the best way of ensuring peace, security, human rights and prosperity; stresses that this approach delivers benefits for people in Europe and across the world; recognises a three-fold approach of multilateralism based on the following principals: upholding international law and ensuring that the EU's action is based on rules and norms of international law and cooperation, extending multilateralism to a new global reality that encourages a collective approach and considers the potential of taking advantage of the EU's normative capacity, autonomy and influence within international organisations, preserving and extending their influence and reforming international organisations, making multilateral organisations fit for purpose; recognises further that if multilateralism is to be effective, the issue of power inequalities between state and non-state actors must be addressed and resolved; welcomes action taken by the Union for its decisive support for the Paris Agreement, regional peace agreements and nuclear disarmament;

4. Expresses its regret at the gradual retreat by the United States from the multilateral world order, namely its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the UN Human Rights Council and UNESCO, and its decision to suspend its funding of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); strongly supports the preservation and full implementation by all sides of the JCPOA as an integral part of global multilateral order and non-proliferation regime and contribution to the regional security in the Middle East; rejects the unilateral, extraterritorial reimposition of sanctions by the United States following its withdrawal from the JCPOA, as it severely interferes with the EU's legitimate economic and foreign policy interests; calls for the EU and its Member States to build up their unity, deterrence and resilience against secondary sanctions from third countries, and be prepared to adopt countermeasures against any country that harms the EU's legitimate interests through the means of secondary sanctions;

5. Expresses its regret over the fact that the transatlantic partnership is facing a significant number of challenges and disruptions, yet it remains indispensable for security and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic; expresses its regret over the progressive retreat of the US from the multilateral, rules-based world order;

6. Calls, once again, for the Member States to support reforms in the composition and functioning of the Security Council; emphasises that the EU is committed to strengthening the international role of the UN;

7. Calls for a stronger, united, effective, proactive and more strategic European Union, especially given that a new European political cycle has just started and that the EU's foreign and security policy is subject to change; believes that no single Member State can provide, on its own, an efficient response to today's global challenges; stresses the need for European cooperation to have an influence on the world stage — something which requires a united approach and would not be possible if the EU were divided; calls for the EU to intensify efforts to protect interests and values, while acting as a reliable international partner; believes that it is important to boost the EU's own effectiveness and enforcement powers at international level, and calls on the EU institutions to focus on being citizen-focused and act in the people's interest; stresses that the EU should communicate policy objectives, set priorities and targets that engage with citizens, are focused on people and not on processes, deliver tangible results and do not lead to further bureaucracy; calls for the EU to improve dialogue with governmental and non-governmental actors of third countries when developing policy proposals with an international dimension in order to allow the EU to speak with one single voice;

8. Reiterates the urgent need to strengthen the EU's resilience and independence by reinforcing a CFSP that is committed to peace, regional and international security, human rights, social justice, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law in the EU, its neighbourhood and throughout the world; stresses that the EU's credibility in the world is contingent on these principles being protected and adhered to; believes that this reinforced CFSP should be more coherent, including not only traditional soft power, but also a strong CSDP, an effective sanctions policy and cross-border anti-terrorism cooperation; reiterates its call for the swift adoption of an EU human rights sanction mechanism, (i.e. an EU version of the 'Magnitsky Act'), that allows for targeted sanctions against individuals that have a complicit role in serious human rights violations;

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9. Believes that the European Union needs to become a credible and effective global actor so that it can take on a global responsible, tangible, proactive and prominent leadership role at the international stage and unlock its political potential to think and act like a geopolitical power with a meaningful impact, while defending and promoting the objectives of Article 21 of the TEU, its universal principles and rules, its common values — starting with peace and human rights — and interests in the world, helping to resolve conflicts worldwide and shaping global governance; reaffirms the need to secure EU strategic autonomy, in particular improved decision-making, capacities and adequate defence capabilities, recognised in the EU Global Strategy, reconfirmed in June 2018 by the 28 heads of state and government, and that seeks to promote a more capable, independent EU at a time of growing geopolitical competition;

10. Fully supports the Commission President's decision to transform the EU's executive branch into a 'geopolitical Commission', whose focus is on building a credible external actor that will systematically address external action matters; welcomes the commitment of the VP/HR to coordinate the external dimensions of the Commission's action and to ensure a better link between internal and external aspects of our policies; underlines that a geopolitical Commission would therefore be expected to adopt a proactive rather than responsive approach to global affairs and to make the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) reflect this mandate; believes, in this regard, that the European Union should strive to become a more assertive actor, without prejudice to its standing as a normative power; stresses that a geopolitical Commission is to safeguard its interests in full respect of international law and its own values; underlines that the EU is to engage all powers based on a spirit of cooperation and openness, while reserving the right to push back when required;

11. Reaffirms its commitment to the EU Global Strategy as a decisive step forward from ad hoc crisis management to an integrated approach towards the foreign policy of the European Union; believes that a strategic revision of the EU Global Strategy would be timely and needed, in particular in light of some of the profound geopolitical changes that have taken place since its adoption (e.g. political divergences across the transatlantic partnership, the emergence of new, more assertive powers such as China, and the aggravation of the climate emergency), all of which have serious implications for the Union's foreign policy objectives and overall security policy; calls, as a result, on the VP/HR to begin a process of all-around inclusive consultations, starting with the Member States and leading experts in EU foreign policy from outside the EU institutions, and by including civil society organisations;

12. Considers that the EU should rely more on trade and development instruments such as bilateral agreements and free trade agreements with third countries, by making the ratification of an agreement conditional on signing up to the Paris Agreement and respect for fundamental European values;

13. Considers also that the EU, in order to keep its external credibility, should put respect for human rights clauses at the core of the EU's agreements with third countries, making them conditional and applying them when necessary;

14. Believes that the European Union needs to be able to react to crises more rapidly and effectively, with all the diplomatic and economic instruments it has available and to include more civil and military missions as part of the CSDP; recalls, to this end, that it should put greater emphasis on preventing conflicts by addressing the root causes of instabilities and by creating instruments to cope with them; recalls, in this respect, the need to significantly boost EU budget resources for the next MFF and to at least double funds on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and mediation; recalls the EU's fundamental role in fostering democracy in the European neighbourhood, especially via the European Endowment for Democracy support programmes;

15. Stresses that the European Union has to switch from a responsive to an anticipatory approach and the importance of teaming up with like-minded EU strategic partners, in particular NATO and emerging countries in order to defend the global rule-based order that is founded on international and humanitarian law and multilateral treaties; recalls that the EU's CFSP is based on partnership and multilateralism, which help to unite the relevant regional and global powers; underlines the urgent need to explore new flexible forms of alliance cooperation, especially in monitoring and control of flows of technology, trade and investments and find innovative and inclusive mechanisms for cooperation, developing smart multilateralism; calls for joint efforts to reform multilateral organisations to make them fit for purpose;

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16. Promotes an EU foreign policy that unites the EU institutions and Member States behind a common and strong EU-level foreign policy, thus giving the EU more credibility; endorses the idea that such a policy should wholeheartedly support the vital role carried out by the VP/HR; encourages the establishment of ad hoc coalitions of Member States that contribute to greater flexibility and improved responsiveness of the Union's external action, by reducing the pressure created by the need to achieve consensus among the Member States; encourages re-establishing closer forms of cooperation between the VP/HR and foreign ministers, so that the latter are delegated to act on behalf of the EU in order to strengthen EU cohesion and democratic legitimacy; calls for the EU to better communicate its vision and CFSP policy objectives to its citizens;

17. Calls for greater solidarity and enhanced coordination between the EU and the Member States; recalls the need for consistency among the Union's external policies and with other policies with an external dimension, and for such policies to be coordinated with international partners; believes that cooperation between the Member States is essential to safeguarding the EU's democracy, common values, freedoms, and social and environmental standards; underlines the need to extend cooperation between the Member States, partner countries and international organisations; reiterates the importance of Article 24(3) TEU, which states 'Member States shall support the Union's external and security policy unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity and refrain from any action which is contrary to the interest of the Union'; underlines that, as set out in the Treaty, the EU Foreign Affairs Council is the forum at which national ministers present their views and agree on policies, and that, once the policy is agreed, Member States are to fully support the VP/HR in the execution of said policy, including in their own diplomatic endeavours;

18. Stresses that the Union must fully implement the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and use existing instruments more effectively; calls for the EU to act in a more harmonised and coherent manner in order to improve its decision-making processes and become an effective and credible external actor, in which the EEAS plays a pivotal role;

Reinforcing the European Parliament as a pillar of the CFSP

19. Underlines that the European Union can only deliver its full potential when speaking and acting as one voice and when decision-making is carried out, gradually, from the national to the supranational level, thus taking full advantage of the possibilities offered by the EU treaties, institutions and their procedures and while fully complying with the principle of subsidiarity and upholding the competences of the Member States; stresses that the European Union should use all available means to achieve this goal, including those offered by parliamentary diplomacy;

20. Reiterates, in this respect, that over the years, Parliament has developed a series of instruments and networks in the field of external action, such as joint parliamentary committees and parliamentary cooperation committees with third countries, as well as the work of interparliamentary delegations, ad hoc delegations and election observation missions, which are both distinct from and complementary to those of the EU's executive branch; underlines the powers of oversight and control conducted by Parliament and stresses that its reports and resolutions deserve greater attention; emphasises the importance of parliamentary assemblies as forums for cooperation and institutional dialogue, highlights the valuable contribution they make to European Union external action and to the area of security and defence; emphasises the need to promote their activities and guarantee the proper conduct of their work;

21. Underlines the vital role of the EU's election observation missions; stresses the political responsibility of the Chief Observers, which are nominated from the ranks of MEPs; calls, therefore, for a more integrated approach to EU foreign and security policy, which includes a parliamentary dimension; calls for more interinstitutional cooperation when devising strategies towards third countries and regions, with a special emphasis on the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries; recalls the importance of the parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary relations to support these aims; affirms that Parliament must have a stronger role in the CFSP and in the international arena; outlines the need for the EU and the Member States to work together to set out an overall policy strategy for a refocused parliamentary diplomacy that includes a more integrated approach of the EU foreign and security policy and adapt the way they work;

22. Underlines the role of each institution involved in the CFSP/CSPD in revisiting its working methods and evaluating the best way to fulfil its role under the Treaties;

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23. Calls for improved interinstitutional cooperation in the sense that Parliament would receive information, in sufficient time, for it to be able to express its point of view, if appropriate, and for the Commission and the EEAS to be able to take Parliament's views into account; calls for the effective and comprehensive sharing of information by the Commission and the EEAS, so that Parliament is able to exercise its role of scrutiny in an efficient and timely manner, including in the field of the CFSP; welcomes the commitment of the VP/HR to better and sooner inform, involve and consult Parliament on the fundamental choices of the CFSP;

24. Calls for the strengthening of Parliament's roles of oversight and scrutiny of EU external action, including by continuing to hold regular consultations with the VP/HR, the EEAS and the Commission; calls for the conclusion of negotiations on Parliament's access to sensitive Council information in the field of the CFSP and the CSDP;

25. Notes that if/when Brexit takes place, Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), as the leading committee responsible for relations with third countries, should be given all the necessary information by the EU executive to enable it to scrutinise, on behalf of Parliament, the negotiation process in line with Article 218 of the TFEU, and to provide timely input on the future agreement(s) with the United Kingdom, which will require Parliament's consent; stresses the importance of future cooperation between the European Union and the United Kingdom in the areas of the CFSP and the CSDP and recognises the need to find creative solutions;

26. Highlights the EU's efforts in consistently affirming the importance of maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order that is based on the respect of rule of law;

27. Requests that, prior to the adoption of a CFSP-related strategy or communication by the Commission and the EEAS, a consultation mechanism with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and relevant bodies be established;

28. Calls for a more strategic approach, greater coherence, consistency and complementarity, as laid down in the Treaties, between the EU's external financing instruments and the CFSP so as to enable the European Union to tackle growing security and foreign policy challenges; stresses that a credible and effective CFSP must be underpinned by adequate financial resources; calls for these to be made available for the EU's external action under the next MFF (2021-2027) and for the EU to focus its resources on strategic priorities;

29. Notes the Commission's proposal to combine most of the existing instruments for external action into a single instrument, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI); reiterates that pooling external action instruments into a single fund may lead to synergies, effectiveness and rapidness in decision-making processes and disbursement of funds, but should not divert the Union's funding from its longstanding and overarching foreign policy goals of poverty eradication, sustainable development and the protection of human rights; welcomes the simplified structure of external instruments proposed under the NDICI; calls for proper checks and balances, a sufficient level of transparency, and strategic policy input and regular scrutiny of application by Parliament; stresses the importance of the differentiation principle in assistance for neighbourhood countries with a higher level of commitment to European reforms under the principle 'more for more' and 'less for less';

30. Stresses the need for an increased role of Parliament during the scrutiny and steering of all EU external instruments, including for the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for 2021-2027 (IPA III); highlights the role of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), particularly in supporting peace and stability around the world; expects a timely adoption of the post-2020 instruments, including the European Peace Facility (EPF) so as to avoid unnecessary funding gaps;

31. Believes that conflict prevention, peacebuilding and mediation and the peaceful resolution of protracted conflicts, in particular in the EU's immediate neighbourhood, should be a priority in the coming years; underlines that such an approach would deliver a high degree of EU added value in political, social, economic and security terms; recalls that conflict prevention and mediation activities help to assert the presence and credibility of the EU on the international stage and that these should form part of a holistic approach that combines security, diplomacy and development; points out the need to consolidate the European Union as an influential global player and to invest in conflict prevention and mediation; calls for

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the EU to further prioritise conflict prevention and mediation; highlights Parliament's valuable contribution in the field of conflict resolution and input on mediation, dialogue and the promotion of the values of democracy, the rule of law, respect for minorities and fundamental rights, particularly in the countries of the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Neighbourhood and calls for the further development of interinstitutional cooperation on mediation; welcomes the EU's increased role in conflict resolution and confidence building in the framework or in support of existing agreed negotiating formats and principles;

32. Recalls the importance of a strong ENP, where the EU commits to common societal, political and economic interests with partner countries of the east and south; underlines the strategic role the Union can play through the ENP to strengthen the resilience of the EU's partners as a key priority in order to contend with the threats and pressures they are experiencing; acknowledges that for the European Union to be a strong global actor, the EU needs to be a relevant actor in the neighbourhood;

33. Recalls that modern democracies require fully functioning legislative branches and, in this regard, underlines the importance of supporting the work of parliaments in both the Western Balkans and in the neighbourhood;

34. Recognises the importance of the stability of the Eastern Neighbourhood for the Union's own stability and EU's transformative potential for neighbouring regions and countries; reiterates its support for the Eastern Partnership (EaP), which celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2019; stresses, however, that in order for the EaP to be more successful, it needs new initiatives and commitments from both sides (i.e. the EU and its partners); encourages the development of ever closer relations with the EaP, including targeted strategies for Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova and the importance of taking note of ideas such as the Trio Strategy 2030 and those from the most advanced EaP EU-associated countries; highlights that such an approach should be based on the principle of 'more-for-more' and 'less-for-less', led by EU institutions and the coalition of like-minded Member States, known as the European Trio process, with a focus on tangible projects and programmes to follow the best practices from the Berlin process and European Economic Area integration; believes that the success of transformation in the EaP countries — especially the EU-associated countries of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia — can yield positive results, which could also have an influence on society in neighbouring Russia;

35. Recalls and emphasises that cooperation with EaP countries and other EU neighbourhood countries should be a priority for the CFSP due to the vital interest of the EU in the development and the democratisation of these countries; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to continue strengthening economic and connectivity ties, using trade and association agreements, access to the single market and deepened people-to-people contacts, including through visa facilitation and liberalisation when all requirements are fulfilled; emphasises that the above could serve as incentives to foster democratic reforms and the adoption of EU rules and standards;

36. Reiterates the EU's commitment to supporting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine and all EaP countries within their internationally recognised borders, in accordance with international law, norms and principles in order to increase support for conflict-affected residents, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees and to counter attempts at destabilisation from third countries, in particular Russia; rejects the use of force or the threat of force when resolving conflicts and reiterates its vision that current conflicts in all EaP countries should be settled in accordance with international law norms and principles; remains fully committed to the policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea; strongly underlines the importance of the proactive stance based on international law against protracted conflicts in the Eastern Neighbourhood; condemns, furthermore, the continued militarisation in the Georgian occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations under international law; underlines, that more than a decade after the end of the Russian act of aggression in Georgia and subsequent ceasefire brokered by the EU, the Russians are still acting in blatant violation of some of its own provisions and the 'borderisation' process is ongoing; calls for the strengthening of the mandate of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) and the enhanced visibility thereof; urges the Russian Federation, as the occupying power, to honour its international obligations and grant EUMM unhindered access to the occupied regions;

37. Welcomes the President of the Commission's reassertion of the European perspective of the Western Balkans and stresses its commitment to enlargement, which remains a key policy and serves as the EU's propulsive force; reiterates the need for the EU's stance on enlargement to be ambitious and credible;

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38. Calls for a credible EU enlargement strategy in the Western Balkans, rooted in strict and fair conditionality in accordance with the application of the Copenhagen criteria, and which remains for foreign policy reasons an important tool for promoting security by enhancing the resilience of countries in a region of strategic importance to the EU;

39. Reiterates that, apart from the overall CFSP, the objectives of EU policy regarding the Western Balkan countries is to guide them towards accession; highlights that this process of enlargement is merit-based and depends on their respect for the Copenhagen criteria, the principles of democracy, respect for the fundamental freedoms and human and minority rights, observance of the rule of law and their individual achievements to meet the imposed criteria;

40. Underlines the importance of an ongoing reform process linked to the transformative effect on candidate countries; remains fully committed to supporting EU-oriented reforms and projects, in particular those focusing on further strengthening the rule of law and good governance, protecting fundamental rights and fostering reconciliation, good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation; notes with regret the slowing down of the process;

Strengthening the CFSP to counter global threats

41. Calls for strengthening the capacity of the EU and the Member States to act autonomously in the area of security and defence; stresses that efficient and close partnerships with partner organisations, such as the UN or NATO, and with other international institutions, such as the African Union and the OSCE is more vital than ever; emphasises that NATO is the key security partner of the EU; underlines the importance of close cooperation with NATO on all defence-related matters and in addressing security challenges that the EU and its neighbourhood faces, in particular those regarding countering hybrid threats;

42. Welcomes EU efforts to bolster EU security and defence so as to better protect the Union and its citizens and to contribute to peace and stability in the neighbourhood and beyond, in accordance with the joint declaration on EU-NATO cooperation of 10 July 2018;

43. Underlines the role of NATO as an important pillar of European security and welcomes the ongoing process of NATO enlargement, which contributes to the stability and wellbeing of Europe;

44. Believes that qualified majority voting (QMV) would make the EU's foreign and security policy more effective and would speed up the decision-making process; calls on the Council to make regular use of QMV in the cases envisaged in Article 31(2) of the TEU and calls on the Council to take up this initiative by making use of the 'passerelle clause' contained in Article 31(3) of the TEU; encourages the Council to consider extending QMV to other areas of the CFSP;

45. Supports a debate within the EU on new formats, such as an EU Security Council in full dialogue and cooperation with the Member States, and on ways of coordinating more closely within the EU and with international authorities so as to facilitate a more efficient decision-making process in the field of security policy;

46. Welcomes the decision of the President of the Commission to build, within five years, a genuine and operational European defence union and calls for transparent exchanges with Parliament and the Member States for the establishment of a defence union; believes that, in this context, the EU should make best use of the already existing mechanisms and instruments, such as permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), military mobility and the European Defence Fund (EDF), which aims at improving national and European capabilities and support the enhancement of the efficiency of the European defence industries; calls for the creation of a mechanism for parliamentary democratic control of all new instruments in the field of defence;

47. Underlines the need to ensure the constant evaluation of PESCO and the EDF and the ways in which they contribute to CFSP objectives, in order to ensure the provision of adequate resources in line with PESCO commitments, and to implement EU decisions effectively and coherently — including through a more integrated European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) — in a way that guarantees that the Union remains open for cooperation;

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48. Recalls that Article 20(2) of the TEU, which lays down provisions for enhanced cooperation, provides additional possibilities for Member States to move forward with the CFSP and should therefore be used;

49. Recalls that climate change has an impact on all aspects of human life, and that, *inter alia*, it increases the likelihood of conflicts and violence; stresses that climate security concerns and the willingness to enforce global environmental governance should be integrated into EU foreign policy;

50. Underscores the fact that the EU should develop capacities to monitor climate change-related risks, which should include conflict sensitivity and crisis prevention policies; acknowledges, in this context, that linking climate adaptation and peacebuilding measures reinforces conflict prevention; underlines the need to develop a comprehensive and anticipatory approach to climate change; calls for the EU and the Member States to act with high ambitions at the international climate conference and to implement their obligations; stresses the value of climate diplomacy in this regard;

51. Underlines the need to develop a comprehensive approach to climate change and security in line with the SDGs, in particular SDG 13 and SDG 16, to secure equitable and sufficient flows of climate finance under the Paris Agreement and to devote higher levels of financing for such actions under the current IcSP and the upcoming NDICI;

52. Underlines the growing geopolitical importance of the Arctic and its effect on the security situation both within the EU and globally; urges the EU to work towards a more coherent EU internal and external policy, an Arctic strategy and concrete action plan on the EU's engagement in the Arctic that also takes into account the security and geostrategic aspect; notes the ability of the EU to contribute to the resolution of potential security and geostrategic challenges;

53. Calls for stronger support to the EU maritime security strategy as freedom of navigation presents a growing challenge both globally and for the neighbourhood; insists that freedom of navigation must be respected at all times and that measures need to focus on de-escalation and the prevention of armed conflicts and military incidents;

54. Expresses its regret that tensions are on the rise and violations of the Law of the Sea and international maritime law continue to persist around many of the world's major maritime hotspots, such as in the South China Sea, the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea; recalls the volatile situation in the Sea of Azov; notes that many of these tensions are geopolitical in nature;

55. Calls for the EU to take active measures and to consider restrictive measures in response to severe breaches of freedom of navigation and international maritime law;

56. Recalls that effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes are a cornerstone of global and European security; notes that irresponsible arms transfers to third countries undermine and weaken the CFSP, in particular EU efforts for peace, stability and sustainable development; calls for strict compliance with the eight criteria set out in Common Position 2008/944/CFSP on the control of arms exports and calls for a mechanism for EU-level monitoring and control in this respect; emphasises the need for a defence industry that uses taxpayers' money effectively and efficiently, in addition to the need for the EU to foster a more integrated internal market in defence goods and a coordinated policy to support defence research and development; calls on the Member States to make multilateral nuclear disarmament an EU foreign and security policy priority; believes that the EU must continue its efforts to keep the Iran nuclear deal alive; urges the VP/HR to use all available political and diplomatic means to safeguard the joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA) and new strategic arms reduction treaty (New START) and to launch a coherent and credible strategy for multilateral negotiations on regional de-escalation and confidence-building measures in the Gulf that involves all the actors in the region; emphasises that the EU's ability to engage diplomatically with all actors concerned is a strong asset that should be fully used for that end;

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57. Urges the Member States to fully comply with the Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP on the control of arms exports, to strictly implement their obligations stemming from this Common Position, in particular criterion 4 on regional peace, security and stability, regarding their arms export policy to Turkey and to impose an arms embargo to Turkey following its illegal invasion of northern Syria and its illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean — in particular, its invasion of the exclusive economic zone and territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus; reiterates its position that the Common Position has to be reviewed and updated so that the criteria have to be strictly applied and implemented and a sanction mechanism has to be established; calls on the VP/HR to treat this dossier as a priority;

58. Calls on the VP/HR to promote a multidimensional biregional cooperation strategy with Latin America and the Caribbean in the area of security and defence, to advocate the joint defence of the multilateral order, the strengthening of cooperation in combating terrorism and organised crime and in combating climate change and its effects on social, political and economic stability, and to foster dialogue as a tool for achieving negotiated, peaceful settlements to the political conflicts we are witnessing;

59. Calls for exploring the possibility of creating a new forum for multilateral cooperation among Western allies, i.e. the EU, the USA, Japan, Canada, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, drawing on the legacy of the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Strategic Export Controls; stresses that the remit of a new forum should cover the monitoring and control of export of technologies, trade flows and sensitive investments to countries of concern;

60. Stresses that strengthening substantial relations with east and southeast Asia is essential to the EU's rules-based, comprehensive and sustainable connectivity strategy and vice versa; promotes, therefore, sustainability, a rules-based approach and the MFF as a decisive instrument;

61. Takes note of the military build-up in the region and calls for all parties involved to respect the freedom of navigation, to solve differences through peaceful means and to refrain from taking unilateral actions to change the status quo, including in the East and South China Seas and the Taiwan Strait; expresses concern that foreign interference from autocratic regimes through disinformation and cyber-attacks on the upcoming general elections threaten Asian democracies and regional stability; reiterates its support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations, mechanisms and activities;

62. Stresses that the Commission should integrate a cybersecurity strategy into EU digitalisation efforts and promote the initiative in all Member States as part of a strong political and economic commitment to digital innovation;

63. Calls on the VP/HR, the Commission and the Member States to step up their efforts when it comes to confronting cyber and hybrid threats that are combinations of ambiguous posturing by strengthening the cyber-defence mechanisms of the EU and its Member States and their resilience against hybrid threats, by building critical infrastructures that are cyber-resilient; calls, in this regard, for the development of comprehensive joint capacities and methods to analyse risk and vulnerability; stresses that better coordination is needed in order to overcome such challenges effectively; recalls that strategic communication and public diplomacy should strengthen the EU's geopolitical influence and overall image in the world and should protect EU interests;

64. Stresses that foreign interference in EU affairs poses a great risk to the EU's security and stability; strongly supports the boosting of the European Union's strategic communication capabilities; calls, in that connection, for further support for the three strategic communication task forces (East, South and Western Balkans); calls for increased support for the EEAS Strategic Communications Division, as it plays a vital role, by turning it into a fully-fledged unit within the EEAS that is responsible for the eastern and southern neighbourhoods, with proper staffing and adequate budgetary resources — possibly by means of an additional dedicated budget line;

65. Calls on the Member States to strengthen their capacities and encourage cooperation and information sharing to prevent state and non-state actors from third countries to exert hostile interference on EU and Member State decision-making; believes that increased EU strategic communication capabilities could contribute to that goal;

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66. Underlines that interference in elections is part of a broader strategy of hybrid warfare and that responding to it therefore remains a core security and foreign policy issue; calls on the VP/HR, the Commission and the Member States to develop a comprehensive strategy in the fight against foreign electoral interference and disinformation in national and European democratic processes, including those coming from state-sponsored Russian propaganda;

67. Notes that Russia is the most imminent source of hybrid and conventional security threats to the EU and its Member States and is actively striving to undercut European unity, independence, universal values and international norms; maintains, that while no change in aggressive policy can be expected under the current leadership in Moscow, the positive change to a more democratic and European-style country is possible in a more distant future; calls, therefore, for increased efforts to strengthen resilience of the EU and its Member States and for the creation of a long-term EU strategy towards Russia that is built on three pillars of deterrence, containment and transformation;

68. Calls on the Council to supplement the EU human rights and foreign policy toolbox with a global 'Magnitsky Act'-type sanction regime to strengthen the one that already exists by enabling the imposition of asset freezes and visa bans on individuals involved in grave human rights violations;

69. Stresses the need to benefit from the EU's competitive advantage so that the EU can quickly establish a strategic position in the international race of emerging technologies, information, defence, renewable energy industries, 5G deployment, the European high-performance computing joint undertaking (EuroHPC) ecosystem and the EU's autonomous, reliable and cost-effective access to space in order to prevent the EU from becoming dependent on third country non-European technological and digital giants; emphasises that developing reliable artificial intelligence technology is essential to ensuring EU strategic autonomy, in particular, in the remit of decision-making and capabilities; calls, therefore, on the Union to keep up and increase its investment in this area;

70. Recognises the fundamental role played by the civil and military missions that form part of the CSDP and points out that those missions must be given the human and material resources to maintain peace, avoid conflicts, strengthen international security and reinforce European identity and the EU's strategic autonomy; expresses regret that the effectiveness of these CSDP missions and operations is being undermined by persistent structural weaknesses, a strong disparity in Member State contributions and the limits of its mandates;

71. Believes the EU has not yet made adequate use of its abundant resources in the field of CSDP; calls on the VP/HR, on the Commission and on the Member States to step-up their efforts in the field of CFSP cooperation, in order to make CSDP civil and military missions more robust, to improve their operational capacity by means of increased flexibility, to increase efficiency and effectiveness on the ground, and to make their mandates more encompassing, streamlined and clear; believes that new instruments such as the European peace facility could enhance solidarity and burden-sharing between the Member States when it comes to contributing to CSDP operations and could more generally help increase the effectiveness of the EU's external action;

72. Recalls that an inclusive approach to conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution is paramount to their long-term viability and recalls the increased success of conflict resolution when gender parity and equality are respected along the process; calls for increased participation and managerial positions of women in such missions, including in decision-making and negotiations; stresses that a gender perspective should be more systematically mainstreamed into CSDP missions and operations, and to actively contribute to the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and its follow-up resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security; calls, therefore, on the Commission to provide for the structural inclusion of women, youth, human rights defenders, and religious, ethnic and other minorities in all its conflict management-related activities;

73. Calls for the effective mainstreaming of gender equality and minority rights in the strategic and operational aspects of the EU's external action, which could include targeted programming in the new NDICI financial instrument; welcomes the commitment from the VP/HR to reach the goal of 40 % women in management positions and Heads of Delegation by the end of his mandate; calls on the EEAS to provide Parliament with regular updates on the implementation of that commitment;

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74. Stresses that the terrorist threat remains present both in Europe and beyond; strongly believes that the fight against terrorism should remain a priority for the EU in the coming years; calls on the new Commission to present an EU action plan against terrorism;

75. Emphasises the importance of strengthening and guaranteeing intelligence cooperation within the EU, given that terrorism is threatening our core European values as well as our security, and requires a multidimensional approach involving border authorities, the police, the courts and the intelligence services of all the Member States, in addition to countries outside the EU;

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76. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the Member States.

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P9_TA(2020)0009

Annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy

European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the implementation of the common security and defence policy — annual report (2019/2135(INI))

(2021/C 270/05)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 20 December 2013, 26 June 2015, 15 December 2016, 22 June 2017, 28 June 2018, 14 December 2018 and 20 June 2019,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on the common security and defence policy of 25 November 2013, 18 November 2014, 18 May 2015, 27 June 2016, 14 November 2016, 18 May 2017, 17 July 2017, 25 June 2018 and 17 June 2019,
- having regard to the document entitled ‘Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe — A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy’, presented by the Vice-President of the Commission/ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on 28 June 2016,
- having regard to the joint declarations of 8 July 2016 and 10 July 2018 by the Presidents of the European Council and the Commission and the Secretary-General of NATO,
- having regard to the common set of 42 proposals endorsed by the Council of the European Union and the North Atlantic Council on 6 December 2016 and the progress reports of 14 June and 5 December 2017 on the implementation thereof, and to the new set of 32 proposals endorsed by both Councils on 5 December 2017,
- having regard to the Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence of 7 June 2017 (COM(2017)0315),
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2013 on the EU’s military structures: state of play and future prospects ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations and to the Helsinki Final Act of 1 August 1975 of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2017 on a Space Strategy for Europe ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its recommendations of 15 November 2017 to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS on the Eastern Partnership, in the run-up to the November 2017 Summit ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2016 on the European Defence Union ⁽⁴⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 93, 9.3.2016, p. 144.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 337, 20.9.2018, p. 11.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 356, 4.10.2018, p. 130.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 224, 27.6.2018, p. 18.

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- having regard to its resolution of 16 March 2017 on the constitutional, legal and institutional implications of a common security and defence policy: possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2017 on the mandate for the trilogue on the 2018 draft budget ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2018 on military mobility ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 establishing the European Defence Industrial Development Programme aiming at supporting the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the Union's defence industry ⁽⁸⁾,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 18 April 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Fund ⁽⁹⁾,
- having regard to its resolutions of 23 November 2016 on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (based on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy) ⁽¹⁰⁾, of 13 December 2017 on the Annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy ⁽¹¹⁾ and of 12 December 2018 on the annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy ⁽¹²⁾,
- having regard to the document entitled 'Implementation Plan on Security and Defence', presented by the VP/HR on 14 November 2016,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 June 2018 on EU-NATO relations ⁽¹³⁾,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 30 November 2016 on the European Defence Action Plan (COM(2016)0950),
- having regard to the new defence package presented by the Commission on 7 June 2017 in the press release entitled 'A Europe that defends: Commission opens debate on moving towards a Security and Defence Union',
- having regard to its resolutions of 14 December 2016 on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy ⁽¹⁴⁾, of 13 December 2017 on the Annual Report on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy ⁽¹⁵⁾ and of 12 December 2018 on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy ⁽¹⁶⁾,
- having regard to Russia's illegal invasion and annexation of Crimea,
- having regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, Russia's repeated violations thereof, including the development and deployment of 9M729 ground-launched cruise missile systems and the withdrawal from the Treaty by the United States and Russia,
- having regard to Russia's violation of the airspace and maritime borders of Member States,

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 263, 25.7.2018, p. 125.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 334, 19.9.2018, p. 253.

⁽⁷⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0498.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ L 200, 7.8.2018, p. 30.

⁽⁹⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0430.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ C 224, 27.6.2018, p. 50.

⁽¹¹⁾ OJ C 369, 11.10.2018, p. 36.

⁽¹²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0514.

⁽¹³⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0257.

⁽¹⁴⁾ OJ C 238, 6.7.2018, p. 89.

⁽¹⁵⁾ OJ C 369, 11.10.2018, p. 47.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0513.

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- having regard to China's growing economic and military presence in Mediterranean and African countries,
- having regard to the threat of domestic and foreign terrorism, primarily from groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda,
- having regard to new technologies such as artificial intelligence, space capabilities and quantum computing, which present new opportunities for mankind, but also create new challenges in defence and foreign policy that require a clear strategy and consensus among allies,
- having regard to the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) of 24 June 2014 in Case C-658/11, the European Parliament, supported by the Commission, against the Council of the European Union ⁽¹⁷⁾,
- having regard to the Union's Action Plan on Military Mobility published on 28 March 2018,
- having regard to the Council Conclusions on Reinforcing the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management: Priorities 2019-2021, adopted on 18 September 2018,
- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0052/2019),

Lasting uncertainty and unpredictability in the security environment

1. Notes the lasting deterioration in the Union's security environment in the face of multiple challenges directly or indirectly affecting the security of its Member States and citizens: armed conflicts and fragile states on the European continent and in its vicinity provoking massive population displacement and human rights abuses facilitated by transnational organised crime networks, jihadist terrorism, cyber attacks, hybrid threats and warfare against European countries, the weakening of disarmament efforts and international arms control regimes, increasing threats to natural resources, energy insecurity and climate change;
2. Considers that instability and unpredictability on the Union's borders and in its immediate neighbourhood (North Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, Russian aggression against Ukraine and Georgia, etc.), as well as in its extended neighbourhood (Sahel, Horn of Africa, etc.), pose both a direct and indirect threat to the security of the continent; stresses the inextricable link between internal and external security; acknowledges that active engagement in the neighbourhood is in the interests of the European Union;
3. Notes that some global actors (the United States, China, Russia) and an increasing number of regional actors (Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, etc.) are seeking to assert power through a combination of unilateral diplomatic posturing, shifts in alliances, destabilising activities of a primarily hybrid nature and increasing military build-ups;
4. Underlines the growing geopolitical importance of the Arctic and its effect on the security situation in the EU and globally; urges the EU to work towards a more coherent internal and external policy, an Arctic strategy and a concrete action plan on the EU's engagement in the Arctic, also taking into account the security and geostrategic aspects; notes the EU's capacity to contribute to the resolution of potential security and geostrategic challenges;
5. Expresses serious concerns over Turkey's overall destabilising behaviour, including its illegal activities within Cyprus's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) / continental shelf, which violates international law and good neighbourly relations, and threatens peace and stability in an already fragile region;

⁽¹⁷⁾ Judgment of the Court (Grand Chamber) of 24 June 2014, *European Parliament v Council of the European Union*, C-658/11, ECLI:EU:C:2014:2025.

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6. Deplores the fact that, in this context, some of these actors are deliberately circumventing or attempting to destroy the multilateral mechanisms, the principles of the UN Charter and the relevant international law provisions essential to maintaining peace; notes that they might become a direct threat to the EU's security and jeopardise established bilateral relations between the EU and partner countries;

7. Stresses, with a view to tackling the threat of nuclear proliferation, the importance of multilateral negotiations between the EU and the parties concerned; urges respect for the nuclear treaties; urges, furthermore, that support be given to concluding a new treaty to replace the INF Treaty and to renewing the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2020;

8. Stresses that strengthening substantive relations with East and Southeast Asia is essential to the EU's rules-based, comprehensive and sustainable connectivity strategy; takes note of the military build-up in the region and calls for all parties involved to respect the freedom of navigation, to resolve differences through peaceful means and to refrain from taking unilateral action to change the status quo, including in the East and South China Seas and the Taiwan Strait; expresses concern that foreign interference from autocratic regimes through disinformation and cyber attacks in the context of the upcoming general elections threatens Asian democracies and regional stability; reiterates its support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations, mechanisms and activities;

9. Expresses concern about the activities and policies by Russia that continue to destabilise and change the security environment; stresses that Russia's occupation of eastern Ukraine is still ongoing, the Minsk agreements have not been implemented and the illegal annexation and militarisation of Crimea and Donbass are continuing; expresses concern about the ongoing frozen conflicts maintained by Russia in Europe (in Moldova and Georgia); stresses the need to speak with one voice on the EU's policy in this context;

10. Continues to condemn Russia's military intervention and illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula; expresses its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity;

11. Recalls the importance of ensuring the coherence of EU policy in relation to situations involving the occupation or annexation of territory;

12. Notes that the Union has been slow to react and adapt — politically, diplomatically and militarily — to new crises and to this new international context; considers that, in the specific area of defence, insufficient investments, lack of capabilities and a lack of interoperability, but also, and above all, a political reluctance to implement the robust provisions provided for in the European treaties and the numerous cooperation arrangements between Member States, hampers the Union's ability to play a decisive role in external crises and to realise its full potential; recognises and underlines further that no country is able by itself to address the security challenges on the European continent and in its immediate environment; asks the European Council to make using qualified majority voting in the Council in the field of the common security and defence policy (CSDP) a political priority where the TEU allows it; calls on the Member States to develop an effective integrated approach to crisis and conflicts, which combines civilian and military means in the best possible and most balanced way; believes that the Union's capacity to adequately react to emerging crises and conflicts also depends on the speed of decision-making; notes that targeted restrictive measures can be effective tools, but stresses that they should not affect innocent people and should be in line with the principles of UN Charter and of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP);

13. Welcomes the recognition of shared security interests and the growing political will on the part of European Union's Member States, as well as the remaining European countries and the European institutions, to act collectively for their security by endowing themselves with greater means to act in a more preventive, fast, effective and autonomous manner; notes that only through a collective approach can the EU become stronger and be able to take greater responsibility for its own security and defence;

14. Stresses that these challenges are best met together, not by any single country; considers it vital for the EU to respond to these challenges rapidly, consistently and effectively, with one voice and in concert with allies, partners and other international organisations;

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15. Is convinced that the response to the Union's security challenges lies primarily in defining and strengthening its strategic autonomy, its capabilities and its ability to work in strategic partnership with others;

16. Underlines that the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO is fundamental to addressing the security challenges facing the EU and its neighbourhood; stresses that EU strategic autonomy does not represent a challenge to NATO and does not undermine the current security architecture in Europe; stresses that a stronger Europe strengthens NATO and allows the EU to take on more global challenges together with NATO;

17. Welcomes the achievements of the last five years in terms of strengthening the CSDP, and calls on the Council and the Commission to develop further the Union's capacity to act as a global partner, representing the interests of European citizens and acting as a positive force in international relations;

18. Welcomes and supports Operation Atlantic Resolve and NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence on the European continent, and recognises the importance of NATO troops in the effort to deter further Russian aggression and provide crucial support in the event of a conflict;

19. Recognises European involvement and support for Operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan; further recognises the importance of this mission to the stability and security of Afghanistan and the region;

The need to develop and strengthen European strategic autonomy

20. Notes that the ambition of achieving European strategic autonomy was put forward for the first time in the European Council Conclusions of 19 and 20 December 2013 and recognised for the first time in the 'Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign Affairs and Security Policy', presented by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on 28 June 2016, which set out European strategic autonomy as a long-term objective and called for a gradual synchronisation and mutual adaptation of national defence planning cycles and capability development practices;

21. Considers that European strategic autonomy is based on the ability of the Union to strengthen its freedom to assess its independent operational capacity, comprising credible military forces, its industrial capacity to produce the equipment that its forces need and its political capacity to take decisions where circumstances so require, and reflects the aim of taking more responsibility for European security, in order to defend its common interests and values, with partners wherever possible, and alone when necessary; stresses that energy security is an important component in achieving strategic autonomy; strongly believes that European strategic autonomy should include the capacity to deploy military forces on the EU's periphery;

22. Considers, therefore, that European strategic autonomy is based, above all, on the ability of the Union to assess a crisis situation and take a decision autonomously, which necessarily entails an independent and efficient decision-making process, the availability of means of assessment and a freedom to analyse and take action; considers, furthermore, that European strategic autonomy is based on the ability of the Union to act alone when its interests are at stake (theatres of operations considered as priorities by the EU Member States) or within the framework of existing cooperation arrangements; underlines that European strategic autonomy is part of a multilateral framework which respects commitments within the UN and complements and reinforces the alliances and partnerships to which most Member States have signed up; stresses that strategic autonomy does not mean that the Union will systematically act alone, everywhere and always;

23. Considers that the affirmation of European strategic autonomy depends on the establishment of a comprehensive CFSP supported by European defence cooperation in the technological, capability, industrial and operational fields; considers that only practical and flexible cooperation based on pragmatic initiatives will make it possible to gradually overcome the difficulties, forge a genuine common strategic culture and shape common responses tailored to the EU's main security and defence issues;

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24. Stresses that in order to increase the EU's strategic autonomy, Member States need to increase their defence spending and aim for a target of 2 % of GDP; considers that increased investment in security and defence is a matter of urgency for the Member States and the EU, and that defence solidarity and cooperation should become the norm;

25. Stresses that European strategic autonomy can only be genuinely achieved if Member States demonstrate political will, cohesion and solidarity, which is also reflected in particular in the need to prioritise the procurement of European capabilities where equipment meets the highest standards, is available and competitive, in order to secure reciprocal access to highly protected armaments markets at the same time;

26. Reiterates that Europe's strategic autonomy is a legitimate and necessary ambition, and that it must remain a priority objective of the CFSP and European defence policy; stresses that its practical and operational implementation falls to both the EU and its Member States;

Real progress to be consolidated in order to achieve European strategic autonomy

27. Maintains that European strategic autonomy must take practical form in the areas of foreign and security policy, industry, capability (joint programmes, investment in defence technologies) and operations (financing of operations, capacity building for partners and the capacity to plan and conduct missions);

28. Considers it appropriate to pursue a restrictive arms export policy for all types of weapons, including for dual-use goods; urges the Member States to comply with the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports; reiterates the need for the strict application by all Member States of the rules laid down in Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 ⁽¹⁸⁾ on arms exports, including the firm application of criterion two on respect for human rights in the country of final destination;

CSDP missions and operations

29. Considers that Europe's defence is based largely on the Union's capacity and on the political willingness of Member States to intervene militarily, in a credible manner, in external theatres of operations; maintains that the Union has considerable human, financial, technical and military resources at its disposal, endowing it with a unique capacity to conduct military and civilian operations and respond promptly and pre-emptively to future security challenges, for instance through active peacekeeping missions;

30. Stresses that, since the adoption of the 2016 EU Global Strategy, the proliferation of regional and local conflicts, not least in the vicinity of the Union's immediate neighbourhood, poses many challenges for the Union's security, as they often have spill-over effects; considers, in this regard, that the Union should become a more robust actor in crisis management, conflict resolution and in peace-keeping, whenever possible in concert with other regional and international organisations such as the UN and the African Union, in line with its commitments towards multilateralism, but also on its own, when the situation so requires;

31. Encourages the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Member States to introduce a more forward-looking approach to capability planning and development, and to anticipate future needs for a strong EU response to crises and conflicts;

32. Notes that the Union currently has a presence on three continents through the deployment of 16 civilian or military missions (10 civilian and six military, of which three are executive and three are non-executive missions); recognises the contribution made by these missions to peace and international security and stability; stresses that their implementation must be accompanied by an overhaul of selected instruments laid down in the Lisbon Treaty and introduced in recent years, in order to make them more effective and enhance the security of EU citizens; promotes the goal of achieving a higher level of effectiveness of CSDP missions by reaching the 70 % target for the share of seconded personnel, and calls on the Member States to make greater contributions;

⁽¹⁸⁾ Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment (OJ L 335, 13.12.2008, p. 99).

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33. Welcomes the involvement of the European Court of Auditors in auditing CSDP missions and operations, and encourages it to produce further special reports on other missions and operations;

34. Calls on the Member States and European bodies to prioritise and maintain a high level of commitment in Africa; welcomes, therefore, the Council's decision of July 2018 to extend the mandate of the European Union Training Mission in Central African Republic (EUTM RCA) by two years and its intention to launch a civilian mission to complement the military component; notes that these recent developments are a positive sign of re-engagement on the part of the Member States, but stresses that the security and human rights situation in the country remains highly problematic;

35. Stresses the Union's comprehensive commitment in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa through six civilian (EUCAP Mali, EUCAP Niger, EUCAP Somalia) and military (EUTM Mali, EUTM Somalia, ATALANTA) missions; welcomes and encourages the efforts made to regionalise the functioning of civilian missions in the Sahel in the face of security challenges extending beyond the countries where European missions are deployed; welcomes, furthermore, the EU's support for the G5 Sahel operation; criticises, in this context, the fact that the EEAS did not lay down any suitable indicators to monitor the outcome of the EUCAP Niger and EUCAP Mali missions, and that the monitoring and assessment of the mission activities were inadequate and not geared to take account of their implications;

36. Is deeply concerned about the dozens of cases of very serious human rights abuses committed by Malian security forces, as investigated and reported by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which could amount to war crimes under humanitarian law; urges the VP/HR to make sure that the EU's partners strictly comply with international humanitarian and human rights law, in addition to legally binding EU regulations, and that those cases are brought to justice without delay; calls on the EEAS to report to Parliament about these cases as a matter of urgency;

37. Is concerned at the deteriorating situation in Burkina Faso and its geopolitical implications for the Sahel region and the West, which may justify a civilian and/or military mission in order to strengthen security sector governance, human rights and the restoration of people's trust in their security forces;

38. Reiterates the strategic importance of the Western Balkans for the security and stability of the EU; stresses the need to improve the EU's engagement, integration and coordination in the region, including through the mandate of the EU's CSDP missions; reiterates that the EU's policy on the Western Balkans aims to align the countries in the region with the EU *acquis* and assist them along the path towards accession, enhancing the management of peace and stability for Europe as a whole;

39. Reiterates the strategic importance of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans for the stability and security of the EU, and highlights the need to focus and strengthen the EU's political engagement towards these regions, including a strong mandate for the EU's CSDP missions;

40. Emphasises the pivotal role of Operation EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina in moving towards and maintaining peace and security in the country and the region; welcomes the Council's conclusions of October 2019 that support the continued presence of European military forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

41. Calls for the swift and effective implementation of the compact on civilian missions adopted in November 2018 by the Council and the Member States with a view to enhancing civilian CSDP resources in order to reach the agreed staffing levels and make the missions more flexible and more operational, a prerequisite for the effectiveness and efficiency of Union action on the ground; urges the Member States to carry out a solid annual review that helps to take stock of progress in implementing the civilian CSDP compact and that is able to support the further professionalisation of civilian CSDP missions beyond 2023, including measures to ensure the accountability of all actors involved for the missions' achievements; calls on the Member States to test the newly introduced concept of specialised teams in the field as soon as possible through conducting a pilot, using it as a means to make specialised capabilities available for a limited period of time and fill current capability gaps, as well as to evaluate lessons from first deployments;

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42. Highlights that there are currently 10 civilian CSDP missions with high added value in terms of peace and security deployed in the EU's neighbourhood, more specifically in Africa and the Middle East, the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe;

43. Highlights that the implementation of the civilian CSDP compact should not be the end of the line in terms of strengthening civilian CSDP;

44. Notes, however, that the effectiveness of CSDP missions and operations in general is being hampered by persistent structural weaknesses and by an increasing reluctance on the part of Member States and the European institutions to make such missions and operations more robust, both in terms of human resources and of their mandates and calls for the creation of a common European solution to tackle them; notes that CSDP military operations increasingly tend to be based on armed forces training (EUTM), with no executive dimension and notes that, although EUTM personnel do valuable work, owing to training limits and the absence of weapons, the units formed are unable to operate adequately and incapable of containing armed rebellions and the progression of jihadist terrorism;

45. Deplores the fact that the need to summon up a common political will means that decision-making and implementation processes run at widely differing speeds; points out that very few recent military operations have been given an executive mandate because decision-making processes could not make up for the lack of political will, and calls, in this context, on the Member States, when faced with a crisis, to find the political will needed to make active use of CSDP structures and procedures so that missions can be deployed in a more rapid, flexible and coherent manner; calls on the VP/HR to explain to Parliament the thinking behind what is clearly a new crisis-management tool, namely the launching of mini-missions under Article 28 of the TEU;

46. Stresses the lack of flexibility in administrative and budgetary procedures, which is causing serious problems for personnel deployed on the ground;

47. Stresses the need to assess missions and operations on a regular basis in order to make them more effective; calls on the EEAS and the Commission to draw up mandates, budgets and rules of engagement and operational procedures which are appropriate to the operations concerned, and to provide for an exit strategy; calls, in this context, for more regular information sharing and consultations with the relevant parliamentary committees prior to, during and after the missions, and calls on the committees to focus their missions and delegations on areas where CSDP missions and operations are deployed; insists that the European Parliament — alongside national parliaments— be given a strengthened role in relation to the CSDP, so as to guarantee parliamentary oversight of the CSDP and of its budget;

48. Highlights the importance of organising and executing joint training and exercises between European armed forces, as well as EU-NATO parallel and coordinated exercises, thereby promoting organisational, procedural and technical interoperability and military mobility, with a view to maximising mission preparedness, ensuring complementarity, avoiding unnecessary duplication and addressing a broad range of threats, both conventional and non-conventional; welcomes, in that respect, the European Initiative for the Exchange of Military Young Officers (Military Erasmus — EMILYO), operated by the European Security and Defence College, which aims to enable national military education and training institutions to explore possibilities for quantitative and qualitative exchange of knowledge and know-how; welcomes the recognition that there is no security without women and stresses the importance of the participation of women in negotiations and missions;

49. Stresses that the recurring problem faced by armed forces in countries in which the EU is intervening is a lack of equipment, which is an obstacle to the success of training missions; notes the difficulty of supplying suitable equipment in a timely manner owing, in particular, to cumbersome public procurement procedures; believes that achieving positive results in terms of training and advice for third-country armies will not be possible in the long term without the capacity to back up such efforts with worthwhile and coordinated equipment-supply programmes; welcomes the Capacity Building for Security and Development (CBSD) initiative, which resulted in the revision of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP+) in 2017 so as to provide funding for training and the supply of non-lethal equipment to third countries' armed forces; notes that, to date, three projects have been carried out, in Mali, the Central African Republic and Burkina Faso; highlights the strong demand from local populations for support in the area of training and equipment supply;

50. Calls for the EU to address the consistent and growing threats to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage and clamp down on the smuggling of cultural artefacts, especially in conflict zones; notes that depriving societies of their cultural heritage and historical roots makes them more vulnerable to radicalisation and more susceptible to global jihadist ideologies; calls for the EU to develop a broad strategy to counteract such threats;

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51. Is concerned at the problem of force generation, in particular when launching military missions; stresses that EUTM Somalia is struggling to bring together the necessary forces; notes that the last general force generation conference on 4 June 2019 raised the possibility of the mission failing owing to a lack of personnel; notes that the Union's current military operations involve on average only a dozen or so Member States; stresses that the competence, professionalism and dedication of personnel on the ground are key to the success of a mission; calls on the Member States to make a stronger commitment as regards the quality of personnel deployed on missions and to fill more of the posts assigned to missions;

52. Calls on the Council to explain why certain missions are continuing even though they have already achieved their limited military or civilian purpose; considers that all existing missions should be evaluated to determine which are still relevant; believes that the Union should concentrate its efforts on missions where it generates the highest added value; is in favour of the establishment of and compliance with objective criteria by which to measure that added value and decide whether to pursue a mission;

53. Notes the decision of 26 September 2019 to extend the EU maritime operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia) by six months to 31 March 2020; deeply deplores the continued suspension of the naval presence; stresses the urgent need to reach agreement among the Member States and calls for the redeployment of naval assets and full implementation of the mandate;

54. Considers that the issue of financing for CSDP missions and operations is crucial to the sustainability of the policy; highlights the importance of reviewing the Athena mechanism with the aim of making the financing mechanism for CSDP military operations and missions more effective; supports, in this connection, the proposal by the VP/HR, backed by the Commission, to create a European Peace Facility, which would finance part of the costs of EU defence activities, including the joint costs of CSDP military operations and those relating to military capacity-building for partners; hopes that the Member States will reach an agreement quickly so that this instrument can be introduced; stresses the importance of making the Union's financial rules more flexible in order to enhance its ability to respond to crises and facilitate the implementation of Lisbon Treaty provisions; calls on the Member States and the Commission to consider a flexible mechanism to help Member States wishing to participate in a CSDP mission to bear the cost of doing so, thereby facilitating their decision to launch or strengthen a mission; notes that this instrument would be wholly consistent with the Union's strategic autonomy objectives in the operational field;

55. Calls on the VP/HR to regularly consult the European Parliament on all aspects of and the fundamental choices surrounding the common security and defence policy; considers, in that regard, that Parliament should be consulted in advance about strategic planning for CSDP missions, changes to their mandate and the potential to bring them to an end;

56. Supports the creation of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) for executive missions to enable all CSDP military operations to be carried out; calls for enhanced cooperation between the MPCC and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability; draws attention to the problems of recruitment and resource provision, which need to be overcome in order for the MPCC to be fully effective; calls on the EEAS to transform the MPCC from a virtual entity, with multiple-assignment posts, into a robust military entity which can plan and conduct the entire spectrum of military operations provided for under Article 43(1) of the TEU;

57. Notes the failure of the Union's battlegroup project — the battlegroups have never been deployed since their creation in 2007 and have been used only as a means to transform the European armed forces — owing in particular to the reticence of Member States and the complexity of their implementation and funding, which is at odds with the original objective of speed and efficiency; is of the opinion that the EU battlegroup system should be restructured, further developed politically and granted sufficient funding so as to make it functional, usable, fast and efficient; calls for the re-evaluation and reinvigoration of the battlegroup project on the basis of lessons learned;

58. Notes that the mutual assistance clause (Article 42(7) of the TEU), which has been invoked once, notably in response to an armed attack on the territory of a Member State, demonstrates the solidarity that exists among Member States; notes, however, that the conditions for triggering the article and the arrangements for providing the assistance required have never been clearly defined; calls for precise guidelines in order to provide a well-defined framework for the future activation and more operational implementation of this instrument, for more discussion of the experience of invoking this legal clause and for joint efforts to clarify its scope;

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59. Recalls that the solidarity clause (Article 222 of the TFEU) also provides the Union and the Member States with the possibility of providing assistance to a Member State that have suffered a terrorist attack or a natural or man-made disaster; recalls that the EU's 2013 Cybersecurity Strategy states that 'a particularly serious cyber incident or attack could constitute sufficient ground for a Member State to invoke the EU Solidarity Clause (Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union)'; recalls that Council Decision 2014/415/EU on the arrangements for the implementation by the Union of the solidarity clause establishes that the solidarity clause calls for the Union to mobilise all the instruments at its disposal, including the structures developed within the framework of the CSDP; calls on Member States to consider the activation of the solidarity clause in the future;

60. Believes that the implementation of CSDP missions and operations must be backed up by flexible instruments in order to make it easier for the Union and its Member States to commit to ensuring European strategic autonomy, in the service of the stability of the European continent; stresses, in this connection, the effectiveness of modular, multipurpose and genuinely operational command structures, such as the European Corps (Eurocorps); notes that the missions of this command structure have been successfully extended and diversified: between 2015 and 2018 the European Corps was deployed four times as part of the EU training missions in Mali and the Central African Republic (EUTM Mali and EUTM RCA); calls on the Member States and the Commission to follow this example of flexible and operational cooperation, which has already proved valuable and effective;

61. Expects the Union to make effective use of all existing CFSP and CSDP policy instruments in the areas of diplomacy, cooperation, development, humanitarian aid, conflict management and peacekeeping; stresses that CSDP military and civilian instruments cannot, under any circumstances, be the only solution to security issues and that an 'integrated approach' should always be adopted; considers that only the use of all these instruments on the basis of an 'integrated approach' will provide the flexibility needed to effectively achieve the most ambitious security objectives;

62. Recalls the increased success of conflict resolution when gender parity and equality are respected throughout the process; calls for an increase in the participation of women and in the number of managerial positions held by women in such missions, for a gender perspective to be mainstreamed more systematically in CSDP missions, and for an active contribution to the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; calls on the EEAS and Member states to initiate ambitious steps to increase the representation of women among international experts at all levels of CSDP missions and operations, possibly through a dedicated action plan, targeted incentives and career planning for women or recruitment mechanisms that ensure better representation;

63. Calls on the VP/HR to regularly consult Parliament on urgent matters pertaining to the implementation of the CSDP; believes that the VP/HR, or an appropriate EEAS official with direct oversight over CSDP command structures and involved in the design, implementation and appraisal of current civilian and military operations, should promptly inform Parliament of important changes to the structure of any such operations, particularly with regard to their overall nature, mandate, length or early termination;

64. Stresses the growing and essential role of women in peacekeeping missions and security and defence policy and calls on the VP/HR to enter into dialogue with Parliament on the instruments to be introduced and action to be taken;

65. Underlines the need to further develop the parliamentary and democratic character and dimension of the CSDP; believes that an effective CSDP which is fit for 21st-century security challenges must go hand in hand with strong parliamentary scrutiny and high transparency standards at both national and EU level; is of the opinion that strengthening the parliamentary dimension of the CSDP corresponds with the demands of EU citizens for security, peace and more cooperation on security and defence among Member States;

Capability and industry

66. Stresses that achieving European strategic autonomy will necessarily be based on increasing the Member States' capabilities and defence budgets, and on strengthening the European defence technological and industrial base;

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67. Notes that the defence and space industries are facing unprecedented global competition and major technological changes with the emergence of advanced technologies (robotics, artificial intelligence, cyber technology, etc.);

68. Welcomes the significant reversal of the trend of cutting defence budgets; calls, in that connection, on the Member States to invest the additional funding intelligently in cooperative programmes; is of the opinion that this should be supported and encouraged at Union level; encourages Member States to increase their defence spending to 2 % of GDP;

69. Welcomes the recent efforts by the EU institutions and the Member States, following on from the publication of the EU Global Strategy, to breathe new life into existing CSDP instruments and to fully implement the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty; stresses that these promising ambitions must now be consolidated and followed up with practical action so that they make an effective contribution to security on the European continent and in its immediate neighbourhood;

70. Notes with satisfaction the Commission's proposal of 2 May 2018 to establish a EUR 13 billion budget line for defence cooperation in the next multiannual financial framework (MFF), supporting collaborative defence research and capability development; notes that this proposal, which reflects an unprecedented commitment by the Commission, remains subject to the unanimous agreement of the Member States in the next MFF and subsequently the approval of the European Parliament;

71. Welcomes the Commission's proposal of June 2017 to create a European Defence Fund (EDF), which would coordinate, complete and amplify national investments in defence, foster cooperation between Member States with a view to developing ultramodern and interoperable defence technologies and equipment, and support an innovative and competitive defence industry throughout the Union, which includes cross-border SMEs; notes that this proposal is the first initiative for which Community funds are to be used in direct support of common cooperative EU defence projects; recognises that this is a major step forward for European defence, from both a political and an industrial perspective; notes that the EDF could contribute to the financing of research and development for structural projects such as the European future combat air system, tanks, heavy-lift aircraft or a European anti-missile defence capability, as well as small and medium-sized projects creating innovative future-orientated solutions for defence; welcomes the 2019 work programme for preparatory action, which will dedicate EUR 25 million to research on electromagnetic spectrum dominance and future disruptive defence technologies, two key areas for maintaining Europe's technological independence in the long term; welcomes, also, the adoption by the Commission in March 2019 of the first European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), which provides for co-financing of EUR 500 million for the joint development of defence capabilities over the period 2019-2020, and the publication of nine calls for proposals for 2019, including for the Eurodrone, which is a key capability for Europe's strategic autonomy; points out that 12 further calls for proposals will follow in 2020, covering priority areas in all domains (air, land, sea, cyber and space); notes the link between the procurement decisions taken today by the Member States and the prospects for industrial and technological cooperation under the EDF;

72. Welcomes the effective implementation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) as an important step towards closer cooperation in security and defence among Member States; stresses that this provision, introduced in the 2009 Lisbon Treaty (Article 46 of the TEU), is legally binding and includes a set of ambitious commitments to enable European countries wishing to do so to move ahead faster on common defence projects; recognises the part that PESCO can play in structuring European demand; notes that a significant number of EDIDP-eligible projects are being developed within the PESCO framework and may also benefit from higher rates of subsidy; supports full consistency between PESCO projects and the EDF;

73. Highlights that it is vital that PESCO be aligned with the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), launched in 2017, and the EDF, in order to enhance the Member States' defence capabilities and optimise their budget expenditure in this field; criticises once again the fact that, so far, there has been no strategic justification of the measures in the light of defence policy considerations; calls, in this regard, on the Council and the Commission, jointly with the European Parliament, to draw up an EU white paper on security and defence as a form of interinstitutional agreement and a strategic paper on the defence industry for the period 2021-2027; stresses that new projects should be covered by the Capability Development Plan (CDP), which will serve to foster cooperation between Member States with a view to closing the capability gap through the work of the European Defence Agency; considers that the CARD should make an effective contribution to harmonising and ensuring the complementarity of the investments and capabilities of national armed forces in an effective manner, guaranteeing the Union's strategic and operational autonomy and allowing Member States to invest more efficiently in defence;

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74. Welcomes the full coordination between the capability roadmap established by the European Defence Agency and the capability planning carried out to date, which demonstrates that there is extensive interoperability between the armies of those EU Member States that are members of NATO;

75. Underlines the importance of military mobility; welcomes the Commission's proposal to allocate EUR 6,5 billion to military mobility projects in the next MFF; emphasises that progress needs to be made to establish military mobility that works for both the EU and NATO; is pleased that the project is part of PESCO; stresses that military mobility faces two challenges: streamlining procedures and expanding infrastructure; points out that the collective security and defence of the EU Member States and their ability to intervene in crises abroad are fundamentally dependent on their ability to move allied troops, civilian crisis management personnel, material and equipment across each other's territory and outside the EU freely and rapidly; highlights that military mobility is a strategic instrument that will allow the EU to pursue its security and defence interests effectively and in a manner complementary to the work of other organisations such as NATO;

76. Questions the slow start-up of the 34 PESCO projects and the delays to the launch of a third wave of 13 projects, given that none are as yet up and running, and highlights the need for concrete deadlines for the delivery of the projects and a clearer overview of what their end products will entail; notes that only four projects will reach their initial operational capacity in 2019; highlights the lack of ambition and scale of some projects, which do not address the most obvious capability gaps, particularly those in the first wave, which are primarily capability projects involving as many Member States as possible; calls on the VP/HR to immediately inform Parliament about which PESCO projects are to be terminated early and of the grounds for terminating them; notes that the desired inclusion of participation in PESCO projects should not jeopardise a high level of ambition on the part of the participating Member States; considers that the involvement of third countries and third-country entities in PESCO should be subject to stringent conditions envisaged from the beginning and based on established and effective reciprocity; draws attention, in this connection, to the rights of the European Parliament arising from the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in case C-658/11; calls on the Member States to submit projects with a strategic European dimension, thereby strengthening the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), in order to respond directly to the operational needs of European armed forces;

77. Invites the Council to adopt Parliament's position on Article 5 of the future regulation on the EDF; underlines the need to finalise the EDF without delay; points out that this instrument has not yet been finally approved, with only partial and political agreement having been given in April 2019; stresses the importance of maintaining Parliament's position concerning the amount of the EDF, the involvement of third countries and the establishment of an appropriate intellectual property policy in relation to security and defence in order to protect research results; recalls that the European defence market is remarkably open to third-country providers; reaffirms that the EDF can in no way be confused with any sort of protectionist instrument; calls on allied countries of the European Union to consider a reciprocal opening-up of their defence markets; draws attention, in that connection, to the highly sensitive and strategic nature of defence research, both for industrial competitiveness and for the strategic autonomy of the Union; calls for the initial lessons learned from the implementation of the EDIDP (in particular concerning the application of derogations for eligible entities), the pilot project and the preparatory action on defence research to be properly taken into account; calls on the Member States to be fully involved in the decision-making process as they are the final clients of the defence industries, in order to ensure that the programmes included address the strategic needs of the CSDP and the Member States; considers that the success of the EDF will depend on its ability to cater for the specific defence needs of the participating states, to promote defence material which can be deployed and to guarantee the availability of sufficient budgetary resources, while ensuring that industrial know-how is not duplicated, national defence investment is complemented, and cooperation does not become over-complicated and is based on common EU armament and military equipment standardisation and interoperability; considers that developing the European defence industry by regulating access for entities controlled by non-EU third parties to projects financed by the Fund is fully consistent with the European ambition of strategic autonomy and does not contravene the security and defence interests of the EU and its Member States;

78. Hopes that decisions on the participation of third parties in PESCO projects will under no circumstances undermine the conditions agreed in the negotiations on the EDF and the EDIDP, as the financing of these programmes underlines their European added value;

79. Stresses the strategic dimension for Europe of the space sector, considers that an ambitious space policy can contribute effectively to enhancing CSDP, and emphasises the need to make progress in developing technologies with both civilian and military uses which are capable of ensuring European strategic autonomy; welcomes the inclusion in the next

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MFF of the Commission's proposal for a regulation establishing the space programme of the Union and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme to boost EU space leadership; reiterates its proposal to finance the programme with up to EUR 16,9 billion; welcomes the progress made on EU satellite services (Galileo, Copernicus, EGNOS); emphasises that, if it is to enjoy decision-making and operational autonomy, the Union must have adequate satellite resources in the fields of space imagery, intelligence-gathering, communications and space surveillance; emphasises how important it is for the EU to enjoy autonomous access to space; considers that space-based services should be fully operationalised in order to provide high-resolution satellite imaging in support of CSDP missions and operations; stresses the need to finance, through the EDF, industrial projects with a space dimension where the Union can generate real added value;

80. Emphasises that satellite communications are vital for defence, security, humanitarian aid, emergency response interventions and diplomatic communication, and are a key element of civilian missions and military operations; welcomes the new Governmental Satellite Communications (GOVSATCOM) initiative, which will contribute significantly to strengthening the Union's strategic autonomy by providing Member States with guaranteed access to secure satellite telecommunications;

81. Calls for an urgent analysis of possible civilian uses of the European Union Satellite Centre's geospatial capabilities; believes that beyond security, the EU's satellite capabilities should be deployed in support of EU and Member State monitoring activities in the areas of migration, agriculture, forestry management, the search for natural resources, the security of borders, the state of icebergs and many others;

82. Emphasises that space infrastructure is vulnerable to interference, attacks and a host of other threats, including collisions with space debris and other satellites; reiterates the importance of securing critical infrastructure and communications, as well as developing resilient technologies; takes the view that there is a need for capacity-building to address emergent threats with regard to space, and welcomes the Commission's proposal, as part of the space programme, to strengthen the space surveillance and tracking services (SST) currently in place;

83. Emphasises that today, an increasing number of powers have military capabilities in space; points out that a principle against the weaponisation of space has been established in international law; notes, nevertheless, that certain powers have broken that principle, putting forward a proposal for legislation to set up a fully armed space force and defining space as a setting for armed conflict; takes the view that the Union must condemn this trend towards the weaponisation of space, as well as the implementation of space deterrents designed to seriously undermine enemies' space capabilities, as such developments are signs of a strategically unstable situation;

84. Takes the view that the Commission's future Directorate-General for the Defence Industry and Space should look into the synergies between European space programmes and the European Defence Action Plan of November 2016 so as to ensure general consistency in this strategic area;

85. Is convinced that the Union has a vital interest in creating a safe and open maritime environment which makes for the free passage of goods and people; stresses that freedom of navigation is paramount and may not be undermined; notes that most of the strategic assets, critical infrastructure and capabilities are under the control of Member States and that their willingness to enhance cooperation is paramount for European security; reaffirms the Union's role as a global maritime security provider, and stresses the importance of developing relevant military and civilian capabilities; welcomes in that connection the adoption of the revised EU Maritime Security Strategy Action Plan in June 2018;

86. Believes that the Union and its Member States face an unprecedented threat in the form of cyber attacks, cyber crime and terrorism from both state- and non-state actors; stresses that cyber incidents very often have a cross-border element and therefore concern more than one EU Member State; believes that the nature of cyber attacks makes them a threat that requires a Union-level response, including common analytical support capabilities; encourages the Member States to provide mutual assistance in the event of a cyber attack against any one of them;

87. Considers it vital that the EU and NATO not only continue but also step up the sharing of intelligence in order to enable the formal attribution of cyber attacks and consequently enable the imposition of restrictive sanctions on those responsible for them; deems it necessary to maintain active interaction between the EU and NATO in the field of cyber security and defence through participation in cyber exercises and joint training;

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88. Calls for a stable source of financing for the EEAS Strategic Communications Division, with substantial allocations for the East StratCom Task Force;

89. Urges the EEAS and the Council to step up their ongoing efforts to improve cybersecurity, in particular for CSDP missions, *inter alia* by taking measures at EU and Member State level to mitigate threats to the CSDP, for instance by building up resilience through education, training and exercises, and by streamlining the EU cyber-defence education and training landscape;

90. Welcomes efforts to strengthen the Union's capacity to address 'hybrid' threats, which are combinations of ambiguous posturing, direct and indirect pressure and the involvement of military and non-military capabilities, and are just some of the range of internal and external security challenges facing the Union; notes the reflections on the triggering of the mutual assistance clause with regard to hybrid threats in order to provide the Union with an effective common response;

91. Recognises the growing importance of cyber and automated intelligence capabilities; stresses that these entail threats to the Member States and the EU institutions; urges all EU institutions and Member States to continue to improve upon their cyber and automated technologies; further encourages cooperation on these technological advances;

92. Recognises the increasingly prominent role of artificial intelligence in European defence; notes, in particular, the many military applications stemming from artificial intelligence for managing and simulating operational environments, assisting the decision-making process, detecting threats and processing intelligence; stresses that the development of reliable artificial intelligence in the field of defence is essential for ensuring European strategic autonomy in capability and operational areas; calls for the Union not only to keep up but also to increase its investment in this area and in particular in disruptive technologies through existing instruments (European Defence Fund, European Innovation Council, future Horizon Europe, Digital Europe programme); calls for the Union to play an active role in the global regulation of autonomous lethal weapons systems;

93. Notes that emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, that are used in weapons systems must be developed and applied according to the principles of responsible innovation and ethical principles, such as accountability and compliance with international law; stresses that, taking into account the highly controversial concept of fully autonomous weapon systems, the EU must explore the possibilities of artificial intelligence while at the same time guaranteeing full respect for human rights and international law;

94. Notes that according to Europol's EU Terrorism Situation and Trend report of 2019, a general increase in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) terrorist propaganda, tutorials and threats was observed in 2018 and the barrier to gaining knowledge on the use of CBRN weapons has been lowered; stresses, in this regard, the need to increase CBRN security in Europe;

95. Recognises that new capabilities will open up new opportunities for units in the theatre of operations to collaborate in an immersive digital space and stay protected in near-real time, especially when 5G is combined with other innovations such as the defence cloud and hypersonic defence systems;

96. Underlines that given that the risk of the proliferation and use of chemical weapons poses a serious threat to international peace and security, the EU must continue its strong and consistent support to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the implementation of its mandate, both politically and financially, and step up its resilience to hybrid and CBRN-related threats;

97. Notes that capability cooperation is still at an early stage, so that the Union and its Member States cannot yet benefit from the practical results of sustained and intensive cooperation; believes that the operational implementation of European ambitions is a long-term process based on the continuing political will of the Member States; stresses the need for flexible cooperation through adaptable, modular instruments which help bring strategic cultures closer together and facilitate interoperability between voluntary partners having capabilities; calls for ad hoc cooperation or pooling mechanisms such as the European Air Transport Command (EATC), which has already proved its effectiveness, and supports its extension to other areas (helicopters, medical support);

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98. Stresses the need to apply a gender perspective in the EU's CSDP action, considering the role that women play in war, post-conflict stabilisation and peace-building processes; emphasises the need to address gender violence as an instrument of war in conflict regions; underlines that women are more adversely affected by war than men; invites the EU and its international partners to actively involve women in peace and stabilisation processes, and to address their specific security needs;

99. Notes the growing importance of space security and satellites; stresses the importance of the European Union Satellite Centre and asks the agency to analyse and produce a report on the safety of EU and Member State satellites and/or their vulnerabilities to space debris, cyber attacks and direct missile attacks;

Defence cooperation and CSDP partnerships

100. Stresses that the ambition of European strategic autonomy is based on the ability of Europeans to take action to defend their interests, either independently or, preferably, within an institutional cooperation framework (NATO, UN);

101. Considers multilateralism a crucial value for security and defence and underlines that the EU will only emerge as an effective and credible security actor if its actions are based on sustainable cooperation and strategic partnerships with countries and organisations sharing the Union's values; welcomes, furthermore, the contributions made by CSDP partners to Union missions and operations;

102. Stresses that partnerships and cooperation with countries and organisations that share the EU's values contribute to a more effective CSDP; welcomes the contributions made by CSDP partners to ongoing EU missions and operations that contribute to enhancing peace, regional security and stability;

103. Stresses that the EU and the United Kingdom will still share the same strategic environment and the same threats to their peace and security after Brexit and therefore considers it essential to maintain strong, close and special defence and security cooperation between the Union and the United Kingdom after Brexit; stresses that working in cooperation with the United Kingdom will enable the Union to maximise its capabilities and operational capacities; considers that defence cooperation which systematically excludes the United Kingdom should be ruled out; proposes the conclusion of a defence and security treaty with the United Kingdom which enables that country to participate, as far as possible, in Union instruments;

104. Draws attention to NATO's fundamental role in collective defence, as explicitly recognised in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; believes that the EU-NATO strategic partnership is essential for addressing the security challenges facing Europe and its neighbourhood; believes that EU-NATO cooperation should be mutually reinforcing, take full account of each of the two institutions' specific features and roles and continue with full respect for the principles of inclusiveness and reciprocity and the decision-making autonomy of both organisations, notably when common or EU interests are at stake; welcomes EU-NATO cooperation through the Defender-Europe 20 exercise and considers that this exercise constitutes a real opportunity to test Europe's capability to respond to acts of aggression, but also to examine the developments and improvements in border crossing and military mobility;

105. Notes the importance of the EU-UN partnership in the resolution of international conflicts and peace-building activities; calls on both organisations to further coordinate their efforts in areas where they deploy major civilian and military missions, in order to avoid duplication and optimise synergies;

106. Stresses the importance of cooperation between the Union and other international institutions, in particular the African Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE); considers that the Union should also strengthen dialogue and cooperation with third countries that share their values and strategic priorities and with regional and sub-regional organisations;

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107. Supports, in parallel with institutional cooperation and partnerships, the combining of different forms of flexible, multifaceted, open and, at the same time, operational, ambitious and demanding cooperation, both within and outside EU, NATO and UN structures, which could facilitate joint commitments in operations, thereby strengthening the Union's operational objectives; stresses, in this connection, that examples of cooperation such as the European Intervention Initiative, the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO), the Visegrád Group and the increasing integration of the German and Dutch armed forces reflect this drive for closer military cooperation between Member States;

108. Recognises that political and economic stability along with military capabilities and cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa are key to mitigating the growth of jihadist activity and migrant crises and combating the spread and influence of extremism;

109. Recognises and supports the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to Libya, which has been assisting with the transition to democracy, providing training and advisory services in the field of border security and working to develop border security at Libya's land, air and sea borders;

110. Calls for the EU to keep the commitments made at the Fourth EU-Africa Summit to support economic and political stability and the capabilities of the African Standby Force;

111. Encourages the Member States to continue cooperating with the African Union and fulfilling the commitments made thus far;

112. Recognises the growing political, economic, environmental, security and strategic value of the Arctic Circle; urges the Member States to continue cooperating with the Arctic Council on all issues of EU interest and to formulate a comprehensive strategy for the region;

Institutional framework

113. Considers that progress in European defence will pave the way for major structural changes; welcomes the announcement of the creation of a Directorate-General for the Defence Industry and Space at the Commission under the responsibility of the Commissioner for the Internal Market; welcomes the fact that this new DG will be responsible for supporting, coordinating and complementing the Member States' actions in the area of European defence and will thus contribute to strengthening European strategic autonomy; notes the definition of its five main tasks (implementation and oversight of the EDF, creation of an open and competitive European defence equipment market, implementation of the action plan on military mobility, enhancement of a strong and innovative space industry, implementation of the future space programme); calls on the Commission to provide further details on the role and responsibilities of the new DG; encourages the Commission to present a plan setting out how it will coordinate its work with that of other defence policy structures with other responsibilities (European Defence Agency, EEAS, etc) in order to maximise the efficiency of the use of available resources and ensure effective cooperation;

114. Commits to providing close parliamentary scrutiny and monitoring of European defence missions, instruments and initiatives; calls on the VP/HR, the Council and the various European structures concerned to report to the Subcommittee on Security and Defence on a regular basis on the fulfilment of their mandate;

115. Calls for a European defence strategy to be drafted as a necessary supplement to the 2016 Global Strategy, providing a framework for steering and planning, both of which are vital to ensuring that new instruments and resources can be implemented effectively;

116. Highlights that, while respecting the traditions of military neutrality in several Member States, it is crucial to ensure the support of EU citizens to underpin the political ambition of EU defence policy; underlines the fact that according to the latest public opinion surveys, three quarters of EU citizens are in favour of more cooperation between Member States on security and defence, thus supporting of a common defence and security policy for the Member States, a proportion that has remained above 70 % since 2004;

117. Calls for progressive steps to be taken towards a common defence policy (Article 42(2) of the TEU) and, eventually, a common defence, while also strengthening conflict prevention and resolution approaches, including through an increase in financial, administrative and human resources dedicated to mediation, dialogue, reconciliation, peace-building and immediate crisis responses;

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118. Considers that an EU white paper on security and defence would be an essential strategic tool to reinforce the governance of EU defence policy, and that, while progressively framing the European Defence Union, it would provide for strategic long-term planning and allow for the gradual synchronisation of defence cycles across the Member States; calls on the Council and the VP/HR to draw up such a tool, with a view to including it in, inter alia, the planning for the MFF, and with the further objective of ensuring consistency between the EU Global Strategy Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, the CARD and PESCO;

119. Recalls the existence of Article 44 of the TEU, which provides additional flexibility provisions and introduces the possibility of entrusting the implementation of crisis management tasks to a group of Member States, which would carry out such tasks in the name of the EU and under the political control and strategic guidance of the Political and Security Committee and the EEAS;

120. Stresses that the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe should include reflections on the future European Defence Union and, in particular, the need to establish a European intervention force endowed with sufficiently effective defence capabilities to engage in peacekeeping and conflict prevention and strengthen international security, in accordance with the UN Charter and the tasks set out in Article 43(1) of the TEU;

121. Warns about the multiplicity of institutional actors and overlaps of the EU defence environment; calls on all the stakeholders to embrace a reflection on how it is possible to improve this environment in order to make it more understandable for citizens, more institutionally logical and coherent and more effective in delivering;

122. Calls for a reflection about the role that the European Defence Agency should play in the progressive framing of a common EU defence policy;

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123. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council, the Commissioner for the Internal Market, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of NATO, the EU agencies in the fields of space, security and defence, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

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P9_TA(2020)0010

European Parliament's position on the Conference on the Future of Europe**European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Parliament's position on the Conference on the Future of Europe (2019/2990(RSP))**

(2021/C 270/06)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolutions of 16 February 2017 on improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty ⁽¹⁾, of 16 February 2017 on possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union ⁽²⁾, of 16 February 2017 on budgetary capacity for the euro area ⁽³⁾, and of 13 February 2019 on the state of the debate on the future of Europe ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to the proposal by the President-Designate of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen of 16 July 2019 in the framework of the political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024 and the organisation of a Conference on the Future of Europe (the 'Conference'),
 - having regard to the European Council conclusions of 12 December 2019 on the general approach to the Conference on the Future of Europe,
 - having regard to the opinion in letter form of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of 9 December 2019 on the organisation of the Conference on the Future of Europe,
 - having regard to the outcome of the meeting of 19 December 2019 of the working group of the Conference of Presidents on the Conference on the Future of Europe,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas voter turnout increased at the 2019 European Parliament elections, demonstrating growing citizen engagement and interest in the European integration process, as well as an expectation that Europe will address its current and future challenges;
- B. whereas there is a need to tackle both the internal and external challenges that Europe is facing, as well as the new societal and transnational challenges which had not been fully envisaged when the Lisbon Treaty was adopted; whereas the number of significant crises that the Union has undergone demonstrates that reform processes are needed in multiple governance areas;
- C. whereas the principle of European integration since the creation of the European Economic Community in 1957, subsequently reconfirmed by all heads of state and government as well as all national parliaments of Member States during each round of successive integration and changes to the treaties, has always been the creation of an 'ever closer union among the peoples of Europe';
- D. whereas there is a consensus that the mandate of a Conference on the Future of Europe should be a process with a duration of two years, work thereon commencing preferably on Schuman Day, 9 May 2020 (the 70th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration), with a view to completion thereof by summer 2022;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 215.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 201.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 235.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0098.

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- E. whereas this Conference process should be an occasion to closely involve EU citizens in a bottom-up exercise in which they are listened to and their voices contribute to the debates on the future of Europe;
- F. whereas the European Parliament is the only EU institution that is directly elected by EU citizens and should have a leading role in this Conference process;

Objective and scope of the Conference

1. Welcomes the proposal for a Conference on the Future of Europe and believes that, 10 years after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, it is an appropriate time to give EU citizens a renewed opportunity to have a robust debate on the future of Europe so as to shape the Union that we want to live in together;
2. Believes that the Conference is an opportunity to identify what the EU does well and what new measures it needs to do better, to increase its capacity to act and to make it more democratic; considers that its aim should be to adopt a bottom-up approach to engaging directly with citizens in a meaningful dialogue, and is of the opinion that, in the long run, a permanent mechanism for engaging with the citizens in contemplating the future of Europe should be envisaged;
3. Is of the opinion that prior to the launch of the Conference process, a listening phase should be initiated to enable citizens from across the European Union to express their ideas, make suggestions and propose their own vision of what Europe means for them; proposes that the methodologies used to collect and process citizens' inputs be uniform and consistent across all Member States and at EU level;
4. Believes that citizens' participation in the Conference process should be organised in such a way that the diversity of our societies is fully represented; believes that consultations should be organised using the most efficient, innovative and appropriate platforms, including online tools, and should reach all parts of the EU, in order to guarantee that any citizen can have a say during the work of the Conference; believes that ensuring youth participation will be an essential part of the long-lasting impacts of the Conference;
5. Underlines that the Conference process should be an open and transparent process that takes an inclusive, participatory and well-balanced approach to citizens and stakeholders; stresses that the involvement of citizens, organised civil society and a range of stakeholders at European, national, regional and local level should be the key element of this innovative and original process;
6. Proposes that the Conference should be a process that is governed by a range of bodies with defined/ad hoc responsibilities, including institutional bodies and the direct involvement of citizens;
7. Proposes that the Conference Plenary should enable an open forum for discussions among the different participants without a predetermined outcome, while including input from Citizens' agoras and without limiting the scope to pre-defined policy fields or methods of integration; suggests that as a maximum, pre-defined but non-exhaustive policy priorities could be identified, such as:
 - European values, fundamental rights and freedoms,
 - Democratic and institutional aspects of the EU,
 - Environmental challenges and the climate crisis,
 - Social justice and equality,
 - Economic and employment issues including taxation,
 - Digital transformation,
 - Security and the role of the EU in the world;

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underlines that this is a non-exhaustive set of policies that could serve as guidance for the Conference; suggests that special Eurobarometer surveys are used to support agenda setting and debates in the framework of the Conference process;

8. Believes that the Conference should take stock of the initiatives used in the run-up to the 2019 elections; believes that, in order to prepare well in advance for the next European elections in 2024, work on issues such as the lead candidate system and transnational lists should be taken into consideration during the Conference process, taking into account existing deadlines and working with all interinstitutional, political and legislative tools available;

Organisation, composition and governance of the Conference process

9. Proposes that the Conference be composed of a range of bodies with diverse responsibilities, such as: a Conference Plenary, Citizens' agoras, Youth agoras, a Steering Committee and an Executive Coordination Board; requests that all bodies at all levels of the Conference should be gender-balanced;

10. Proposes that several thematic Citizens' agoras reflecting the policy priorities should be held throughout the Conference process, and that they should be composed of a maximum of 200-300 citizens with a minimum of three per Member State, calculated in accordance with the principle of degressive proportionality; stresses that they should be held in different locations across the Union and must be representative (in terms of geography, gender, age, socio-economic background and/or level of education);

11. Proposes further that the selection of participating citizens from among all EU citizens be made randomly by independent institutions in Member States in accordance with the above-mentioned criteria, and that criteria be defined to guarantee that elected politicians, senior government representatives and professional interest representatives cannot participate in Citizens' agoras; calls for the Citizens' agoras to have different participants in the different locations, whereas each individual thematic Citizens' agora must be composed of the same participants at each of its meetings in order to ensure coherence and consistency; insists on a minimum of two meetings of each thematic Citizens' agora in order to provide input for the Conference Plenary and receive global feedback on the deliberations in another meeting in dialogue format; underlines that Citizens' agoras should seek to find agreement by consensus and, where this is not possible, a minority opinion can be voiced;

12. Proposes that, in addition to the Citizens' agora, at least two Youth agoras be held: one at the beginning of the Conference and one towards the end, as young people deserve their own forum because young generations are the future of Europe and it is they who will be most affected by any decision taken today on the future direction of the EU; calls for the age of participants to be set at between 16 and 25 and for the selection, size, status and working methods to be based on the same criteria as those used for the Citizens' agora;

13. Requests that arrangements be made to ensure that all citizens (including young people) participating in the Conference process are assisted in terms of reimbursing their travel and accommodation costs and, where appropriate, arranging for authorised leave of absence from their workplace and compensation for social costs (e.g. loss of income, day-care and special arrangements for disabled persons);

14. Calls for the membership of the Conference Plenary to be constituted by:

— the European Parliament representing the Union's citizens with a maximum of 135 members,

— the Council representing the Member States with 27 members,

— the national parliaments with between two and four members per Member State parliament,

— the European Commission, represented by the three corresponding Commissioners,

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- the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions with four members each,
- the EU-level social partners with two members per side;

15. Stresses that in order to guarantee the feedback loop, representatives from the thematic Citizens' and Youth agora will be invited to the Conference Plenary in order to present and discuss their conclusions so that these can be taken into account during the deliberation in the Conference plenary;

16. Insists that Council representation must be at ministerial level and that representatives from the European Parliament and the national parliaments should ensure balanced political representation reflecting their respective diversity; underlines that the institutional parties of the Conference will participate as equal partners and that strict parity will be ensured between the European Parliament, on the one hand, and the Council and national parliaments, on the other; insists that a consensus be sought on the recommendations of the Conference Plenary or, at a minimum, that the recommendations represent the views of the majority of representatives of each of the three EU institutions and of the national parliaments;

17. Proposes that the Conference meet in plenary session at least twice per semester at the European Parliament; suggests that, at its first meeting, the Conference Plenary adopt a working plan and that, after each meeting of the Conference Plenary, a plenary report with conclusions and working group reports be made available to the Conference participants and the general public; is of the opinion that final conclusions should be adopted at the final meeting of the Conference Plenary, summarising the outcome of the Conference process as a whole;

18. Stresses the need to provide support through preparatory sessions and from well-established and experienced civil society organisations and other experts; acknowledges the importance of the expertise of NGOs, universities, research centres and think tanks across Europe and invites them to support the Conference process at the various levels and provide support for the various bodies;

19. Believes that the Conference should seek ways of involving representatives of the EU candidate countries in discussions on the future of Europe;

20. Is of the opinion that a high-level patronage should be ensured by the three main EU institutions at the highest level, namely by the Presidents of the European Parliament, of the European Council and of the European Commission; believes that this high-level patronage should guarantee the process and provide for its oversight all as well as kick off the Conference process;

21. Is of the opinion that, in order to ensure efficient guidance of the process as a whole and for all bodies concerned, governance of the Conference process should be ensured by a Steering Committee and an Executive Coordination Board;

22. Proposes that the Steering Committee should consist of:

- representatives of Parliament (all political groups represented as well as a representative of the Constitutional Affairs Committee and a representative of the European Parliament Bureau),
- representatives of the Council (EU Presidencies),
- representatives of the Commission (three Commissioners responsible);

calls for the composition of the Steering Committee to ensure political and institutional balance and for all of the components of the Steering Committee to have equal weight;

23. Is of the opinion that the Steering Committee should be responsible for the preparation of the meetings of the Conference Plenary (drafting agendas, plenary reports and conclusions) as well as the Citizens' and Youth agoras and the oversight of the activities and organisation of the Conference process;

24. Proposes further that the Executive Coordination Board be composed of the three main EU institutions under Parliament's leadership; insists that members of the Executive Coordination Board be part of the Steering Committee; recommends that the Board be responsible for the daily management of the Conference process, in particular the practical organisation of the Conference, working groups, the Citizens' agoras and any other initiative determined by the Steering Committee;

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25. Proposes that the Conference process be assisted by a secretariat whose members should be drawn from the three main EU institutions;

Conference process communication and political memorandum

26. Is of the opinion that communication with citizens, the participation of citizens in the Conference process and the work and outcome of the Conference is of paramount importance; stresses that all existing and new communication tools for digital and physical participation should be coordinated among the three institutions, starting with Parliament's existing resources and the European Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLOs), so that citizens can keep abreast of the Conference process throughout and follow proceedings once the plenary sessions and Citizens' and Youth agoras have begun;

27. Is of the opinion that all Conference meetings (including plenary meetings and Citizens' and Youth agora) should be web-streamed and open to the public; insists that all documents pertaining to the Conference should be published, including contributions from stakeholders, and that all proceedings should take place in the official languages of the Union;

28. Is of the opinion that the Conference process, its concept, structure, timing and scope should be agreed jointly by Parliament, the Commission and the Council in a memorandum of understanding;

Output

29. Calls for the Conference to produce concrete recommendations that will need to be addressed by the institutions and turned into actions in order to meet the expectations of citizens and stakeholders after a two-year process and debate;

30. Calls for a general commitment from all participants in the Conference to ensure a proper follow-up of its outcome, each in accordance with their respective role and competencies;

31. Commits itself to a genuine follow-up of the Conference without delay, with legislative proposals, initiating treaty change or otherwise; calls on the other two institutions to make the same commitment;

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32. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the Commission, the President of the European Council and the presidency in office of the Council.

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P9_TA(2020)0011

Burundi, notably freedom of expression

European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2020 on Burundi, notably freedom of expression (2020/2502(RSP))

(2021/C 270/07)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Burundi, notably those of 9 July 2015 ⁽¹⁾, 17 December 2015 ⁽²⁾, 19 January 2017 ⁽³⁾, 6 July 2017 ⁽⁴⁾ and 5 July 2018 ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the Commission decision of 30 October 2019 on the financing of the 2019 annual action programme for the Republic of Burundi,
- having regard to the declaration of 29 November 2019 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Burundi,
- having regard to the reports of the UN Secretary-General of 23 February 2017, 25 January 2018 and 24 October 2019 on the situation in Burundi,
- having regard to the report of the UN Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry on Burundi of September 2019,
- having regard to the letter signed by 39 Members of the European Parliament calling for the release of journalists from Burundian news outlet Iwacu, dated 9 December 2019,
- having regard to the declaration of 10 December 2019 by the VP/HR on behalf of the EU on Human Rights Day,
- having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 2248 of 12 November 2015 and 2303 of 29 July 2016 on the situation in Burundi,
- having regard to the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi presented to the UN Human Rights Council on 15 June 2017,
- having regard to the press statement by the UN Security Council of 13 March 2017 on the situation in Burundi,
- having regard to the report by the UN Independent Investigation on Burundi (UNIIB), published on 20 September 2016,
- having regard to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi (Arusha Agreement) of 28 August 2000,
- having regard to the declaration on Burundi adopted at the African Union Summit on 13 June 2015,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 265, 11.8.2017, p. 137.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 399, 24.11.2017, p. 190.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 242, 10.7.2018, p. 10.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 334, 19.9.2018, p. 146.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0305.

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- having regard to UN Human Rights Council resolution 36/19 of 29 September 2017 on the renewal of the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2015/1755 of 1 October 2015 ⁽⁶⁾ and Council Decisions (CFSP) 2015/1763 of 1 October 2015 ⁽⁷⁾, (CFSP) 2016/1745 of 29 September 2016 ⁽⁸⁾ and (CFSP) 2019/1788 of 24 October 2019 ⁽⁹⁾ concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Burundi,
 - having regard to the declaration of 8 May 2018 by the VP/HR on behalf of the European Union on the situation in Burundi ahead of the constitutional referendum,
 - having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the Members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 (Cotonou Agreement),
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which was adopted on 27 June 1981 and entered into force on 21 October 1986, and was ratified by Burundi,
 - having regard to Council Decision (EU) 2016/394 of 14 March 2016 concerning the conclusion of consultations with the Republic of Burundi under Article 96 of the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part ⁽¹⁰⁾,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the section of the Human Rights Watch World Report 2019 on Burundi,
 - having regard to the 2019 World Press Freedom Index produced by Reporters without Borders,
 - having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the 2015 presidential elections in Burundi sparked civic unrest, were considered by the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi to be marked by a severe impairment of the essential conditions for the effective exercise of the right to vote, and were boycotted by the opposition;
- B. whereas independent radio stations remain closed, dozens of journalists are still unable to return from self-imposed exile, and those who stayed find it hard to work freely, often as a result of harassment by the security forces, which is encouraged by official discourse associating non-aligned media with enemies of the nation;
- C. whereas the situation in Burundi remains worrying, with many reported violations of fundamental civic and political freedoms, while rising prices having a negative impact on economic and sociocultural rights, such as the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to education, the rights to adequate food and freedom from hunger, women's rights, the right to work and union rights;
- D. whereas the stalemate on reaching a political solution through the Inter-Burundi Dialogue severely threatens the holding of elections scheduled for May 2020; whereas these elections may further solidify Burundi's descent into authoritarianism in the absence of meaningful political dialogue; whereas uncertainty persists over the participation of all interested stakeholders in the process, amid shrinking political space and the need to create an environment conducive to peaceful, transparent and credible elections;

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 257, 2.10.2015, p. 1.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ L 257, 2.10.2015, p. 37.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ L 264, 30.9.2016, p. 29.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ L 272, 25.10.2019, p. 147.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ L 73, 18.3.2016, p. 90.

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- E. whereas the UN Human Rights Council-mandated Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (COIB) , in its report of 4 September 2019, highlighted that a few months ahead of the 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections, fear and intimidation prevailed for those who opposed the ruling CNDD-FDD party, and while tensions have continued to rise as the May 2019 polls approach, local authorities and members of the ruling party's notorious youth league, the Imbonerakure, continued to perpetrate politically motivated violence and serious human rights abuses; whereas although the COIB has made repeated requests, the Government of Burundi has refused to cooperate with it;
- F. whereas the UN Human Rights Office in Burundi, which worked with the Government of Burundi on peacebuilding, security sector reform and justice sector reform and helped to build institutional and civil society capacity on human rights issues, was closed in March 2019 at the insistence of the Government of Burundi, which had already suspended all forms of cooperation with the Office in October 2016;
- G. whereas the World Bank estimated Burundi's economic growth to be at 1,8 % in 2019, compared with 1,7 % in 2018; whereas the overall State budget for 2019–2020 shows a deficit of FBu 189,3 billion (14,26 %), compared with a deficit of FBu 163,5 billion for the same period in 2018–2019; whereas according to the UNHCR, 369 517 Burundian refugees were in neighbouring countries as of 30 September 2019; whereas a total of 78 000 refugees have voluntarily returned to Burundi since September 2017; whereas 130 562 Burundians were internally displaced as of 28 February 2019;
- H. whereas Reporters Without Borders ranks Burundi 159th out of 180 in its 2019 World Press Freedom Index; whereas freedom of expression and freedom of speech are vital to ensuring free and informed elections; whereas free, independent and non-partial journalism represents an extension of the fundamental human right to freedom of speech; whereas state-controlled traditional media such as radio and newspapers remain dominant sources of information; whereas strengthening media literacy and access to the internet and social media are necessary to enable access to information and strengthen social and political stability and dialogue, and therefore ensure free, informed and just elections;
- I. whereas Burundi is one of the world's poorest countries, with 74,7 % of its population living in poverty, and is ranked 185th out of 189 on the Human Development Index; whereas more than 50 % of the Burundian population suffers from chronic food insecurity, almost half of the population is under the age of 15 and, in 2019 alone, over eight million people contracted malaria, of whom 3 000 died from the disease; whereas poverty, poor social services, high youth unemployment and a lack of opportunities continue to spark violence in the country;
- J. whereas on 27 September 2018, Burundi's National Security Council announced a three-month suspension of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), thereby seriously hampering the operations of around 130 international NGOs, some of which were providing life-saving assistance;
- K. whereas on 18 July 2019, the Government adopted two decrees creating an inter-ministerial monitoring and evaluation committee on international NGOs operating in Burundi;
- L. whereas the Government has refused to acknowledge any human rights violations since the closure of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Burundi on 28 February 2019 and has shown no commitment to maintaining any form of cooperation with the Office; whereas the COIB is currently the only independent international mechanism investigating human rights violations and abuses committed in Burundi;
- M. whereas the Burundian authorities have continued to reject the COIB's work wholly and systematically, and have refused to give it access to the country, deeming it politically biased, but have offered no evidence to substantiate their accusations;
- N. whereas in October 2017, Burundi withdrew from the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court; whereas despite calls from the international community to launch a procedure to accede once again to the Rome Statute, no action has been taken by the Burundian Government;

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- O. whereas Tanzania and Burundi signed an agreement in 2019 to return the 180 000 Burundian refugees in Tanzania to their country of origin, whether voluntarily or not, by 31 December 2019; whereas in August 2019, the UNHCR reported that conditions in Burundi were not conducive to promoting returns as returnees were among the main targets of human rights abuses;
- P. whereas on 30 December 2019 Burundi's public prosecutor asked for a 15-year sentence for four journalists from the Iwacu Press Group, Christine Kamikazi, Agnès Ndirubusa, Tércence Mpozenzi, Egide Harerimana, and their driver Adolphe Masabarakiza, who were arrested on 22 October 2019 in Musigati Commune, Bubanza Province, while they were covering clashes between rebels and government forces in north-western Burundi, and charged with complicity in undermining state internal security;
- Q. whereas Iwacu reporter Jean Bigirimana has been missing since 22 July 2016 and was reportedly last seen in the custody of members of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in Muramvya, 45 km east of the capital, Bujumbura; whereas the Burundian authorities have never said anything about his disappearance;
- R. whereas on 13 October 2015, journalist Christophe Nkezabahizi and his wife and two children were murdered in their house in Bujumbura; whereas no real effort was made by the authorities to investigate this violent crime and bring the perpetrators to justice;
- S. whereas Article 31 of Burundi's Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, including press freedom; whereas Burundi is also a party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which guarantees the right of every Burundian to receive and disseminate information; whereas the Burundian Government has a responsibility to promote and protect the rights of freedom of expression and association as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Burundi is a State Party;
- T. whereas space for civil society and the media has become much more limited in recent years, and many civil society activists and independent journalists remain in exile; whereas many of those who have remained in Burundi face intimidation, detention or trials on trumped-up charges;
- U. whereas the Government and members of the ruling party's youth wing, the Imbonerakure, orchestrated a national campaign to collect 'voluntary' contributions from the population to help fund the 2020 elections; whereas the Human Rights Watch report of 6 December 2019 found that, to that end, members of the Imbonerakure and local government officials often used violence and intimidation, restricted movement and access to public services, and beat those who failed to comply;
- V. whereas human rights activist Germain Rukuki, a member of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT), was sentenced to 32 years in prison in April 2019 on charges of rebellion and threatening state security, participation in an insurrectional movement and attacks on the Head of State; whereas in August 2018, activist Nestor Nibitanga, an observer for the Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Detained Persons (APRODH), was sentenced to five years for threatening state security;
- W. whereas the BBC and Voice of America (VOA) have been barred from broadcasting in Burundi since May 2019 when their licenses were suspended, originally for six months, as reported by the Committee to Protect Journalists at the time; whereas on 29 March 2019, Burundi's media regulator, the National Communication Council (CNC), announced that it had withdrawn the BBC's operating licence and renewed its suspension of the VOA; whereas the CNC also forbade any journalist in Burundi from 'providing information directly or indirectly that could be broadcast' by either the BBC or VOA;
- X. whereas on 24 October 2019, the Council renewed the EU restrictive measures in place against Burundi until 24 October 2020;
- Y. whereas these measures consist of a travel ban and asset freeze against four people whose activities were deemed to be undermining democracy or obstructing the search for a political solution to the crisis in Burundi;

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- Z. whereas efforts by the East African Community (EAC) to find a mediated solution to the political crisis sparked by the President's decision in 2015 to stand for a third term have continued to stall; whereas President Pierre Nkurunziza has reiterated on several occasions that he will not seek another term in office, but the ruling party has yet to designate its candidate for the next presidential election;
1. Strongly condemns the current restrictions on freedom of expression in Burundi, including the broader sets of limitations to public freedoms, as well as the large-scale violations of human rights, intimidation and arbitrary arrests of journalists and the broadcast bans that have reinforced the climate of fear for Burundi's media, increased the constraints on reporting and prevented proper coverage, in particular in the run-up to the 2020 elections;
 2. Remains deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Burundi, which undermines any initiative for reconciliation, peace and justice, in particular, the persistence of arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial executions;
 3. Deeply condemns the continued deterioration of the human rights situation in the country, in particular for real and suspected supporters of the opposition, including for Burundians who return from abroad; recalls that Burundi is bound by the human rights clause of the Cotonou Agreement; urges the Burundian authorities to immediately reverse this abusive trend and to uphold the country's human rights obligations, including those enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the ICCPR and other international mechanisms that the Government has ratified;
 4. Reminds the Government of Burundi that the conditions for holding inclusive, credible, peaceful and transparent elections imply the right to freedom of expression, access to information, freedom of the press, freedom of the media and the existence of a free area in which human rights defenders can speak out without intimidation or fear of reprisals; urges the Burundian authorities, therefore, to lift measures that limit or obstruct the work of civil society and that limit access to and the freedom of independent traditional and modern media;
 5. Call on the Burundian authorities to drop the charges against and immediately and unconditionally release the recently jailed Iwacu journalists and all others arrested for exercising their fundamental rights;
 6. Stresses the vital role played by civil society and journalists in a democratic society, particularly in the context of the approaching elections, and calls on the Burundian authorities to stop the intimidation, harassment and arbitrary arrest of journalists, human rights activists and members of the opposition; further calls on the authorities to allow human rights activists and journalists to conduct their legitimate duties of investigating and reporting human rights abuses without hindrance;
 7. Notes with great concern the growing number of internally displaced persons from Burundi and neighbouring countries; calls for the EU to step up funding and other humanitarian efforts for Burundians who are internally displaced or who are refugees;
 8. Call on the Burundian authorities to put an end to the extortion of citizens and ensure that no individual is prevented from accessing public goods and services, such as health care, food, water and education, and to allow humanitarian actors to operate independently and deliver assistance based on the duty to meet the most urgent needs;
 9. Underlines that considerable improvements to the political and human rights situation, in particular regarding fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of association and assembly, and progress on reconciliation are necessary to enable credible elections; calls on the Government of Burundi to ensure that violations of these rights are investigated impartially and the perpetrators prosecuted in trials that meet international standards;
 10. Urges authorities to conduct thorough and transparent investigations to bring to justice in fair and credible trials all alleged perpetrators of killings, disappearances, extortion, beatings, arbitrary arrests, threats, harassment, or other types of abuses; expresses great concern about the continued impunity of perpetrators of human rights violations committed by the Imbonerakure; urges the Burundian authorities to launch an independent investigation into the disappearance of journalists Jean Bigirimana, missing since 22 July 2016, and Christophe Nkezabahzi, murdered along with his wife and two children on 13 October 2015;

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11. Recognises the key role of the region, namely the EAC and the African Union (AU), in providing a sustainable solution to the political crisis in Burundi, and stresses the need for a more active approach and increased efforts to put an end to the crisis and protect the Burundian population, so as to avoid further regional escalation; calls on the AU to urgently deploy its human rights observers to Burundi and ensure that they have unfettered access across the country in order to carry out their mandate;
12. Expresses regret over the deadlock in the implementation of the Arusha Agreement and urges the guarantors of the agreement to strive for reconciliation; expresses its commitment to the Inter-Burundi Dialogue; calls on the VP/HR to support the EAC in the facilitation of the Inter-Burundi Dialogue; urges all participants in the Inter-Burundi Dialogue to collaborate constructively and allow for the unobstructed participation of the opposition, human rights defenders and civil society organisations;
13. Urges Burundi to revert to the agenda of regional and international community meetings to agree on a compromise for the implementation of existing decisions at the UN and AU levels namely: implementation of the resolution 2303; signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with AU Observers; resume cooperation with the OHCHR;
14. Regrets that Burundi persisted in its refusal to cooperate with the UN Commission of Inquiry and to consent to the resumption of the activities of the local office of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights;
15. Calls on the UN to continue the impartial investigations of all alleged violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including those committed by state agents and the Imbonerakure youth league, and to prosecute those responsible appropriately; stresses that criminals and killers must be brought to justice, no matter what group they belong to, and that adequate redress must be provided to victims and survivors of grave human rights violations in Burundi;
16. Urges the EU Member States to provide flexible and direct financial support to civil society and media organisations, including women's organisations, that are still working in the field, but also to those in exile, in particular those working for the promotion and protection of political, civil, economic, social and media rights;
17. Calls for the EU and EU Member State diplomats in Burundi to ensure the full implementation of the EU guidelines on human rights defenders, including in particular by attending the trial hearings of all journalists, political prisoners and human rights defenders in Burundi, in particular the Iwacu journalists, and by visiting human rights defenders, activists and journalists in prison;
18. Calls for the expansion of the EU's targeted sanctions and urges the UN Security Council to impose its own targeted sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against individuals responsible for ongoing serious human rights violations in Burundi; calls on the VP/HR to urgently prepare an expanded list of names of those responsible for planning, organising and executing human rights violations, with a view to adding them to the list of those Burundian officials who are already under EU sanction;
19. Deeply regrets that no action has been taken by Burundi to accede once again to the Rome Statute; urges the Burundian Government to start such a procedure immediately; calls for the EU to support all efforts made by the International Criminal Court to investigate the crimes committed in Burundi and to bring the perpetrators to justice;
20. Regrets the continued underfunding of the Burundian refugee crisis, which is severely impacting on the safety and well-being of refugees; calls on the international community and humanitarian agencies to increase their assistance to all those who are currently refugees or displaced by the conflict; urges the EU and its Member States, as recommended by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, to grant refugee status to asylum-seekers from Burundi and to closely follow the situation in Burundi with regard to the 2020 elections;

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21. Expresses deep concern about reports of increased pressure on Burundian refugees to return home ahead of the 2020 elections; calls on governments in the region to ensure that the return of refugees is voluntary, based on informed decisions and carried out in safety and dignity; recalls that the UNHCR considers that conditions for safe, dignified and voluntary returns have not been met;
 22. Calls on the Government of Burundi to allow political opponents in exile to return and campaign freely without intimidation, arrest or violence, and to allow external monitors to observe preparations for the polls, as well as the voting and counting procedures;
 23. Reiterates that an inclusive political dialogue, under international mediation and in compliance with the Arusha Agreement and the Constitution of Burundi, remains the only way to ensure lasting peace in Burundi; calls on the EAC, therefore, as the key convener of the Inter-Burundian Dialogue, to take appropriate measures to engage the Burundian Government firmly and without delay in an inclusive dialogue for a peaceful and lasting solution to the current crisis;
 24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the President of the Republic of Burundi, the Speaker of the Burundian Parliament, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, and the African Union and its institutions.
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P9_TA(2020)0012

Nigeria, notably the recent terrorist attacks**European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2020 on Nigeria, notably the recent terrorist attacks (2020/2503(RSP))**

(2021/C 270/08)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria, most recently on 18 January 2018 ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the statement of 24 December 2019 attributable to the Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General on Nigeria,
- having regard to the report of 25 November 2019 of the Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief outside the European Union,
- having regard to the end of visit statement of 2 September 2019 of the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on her visit to Nigeria,
- having regard to the UN Security Council Press Statement of 31 July 2019 on Acts of Terrorism in North-East Nigeria,
- having regard to the statement of 29 July 2018 by the Spokesperson of the VP/HR on the Boko Haram terrorist attack in Borno, North-East Nigeria,
- having regard to the section of the Human Rights Watch World Report 2019 on Nigeria,
- having regard to the Human Rights Committee concluding observations on Nigeria in the absence of its second periodic report, of 29 August 2019,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief of 2013,
- having regard to the award of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to human rights defender Hauwa Ibrahim in 2005,
- having regard to the 2019 Global Terrorism Index,
- having regard to the letter on the restrictions on humanitarian actions in North-East Nigeria addressed to the VP/HR and the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management by the Chair of the Committee on Development,
- having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in particular its provisions in Chapter IV on the protection of freedom of religion, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, ratified by Nigeria in April 1991,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 458, 19.12.2018, p. 43.

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- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979,
 - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the security situation in Nigeria has significantly deteriorated in recent years, posing a serious threat to regional and international security; whereas human rights violations and mass killings are widespread, notably in the North-East Region of the country; whereas over 36 000 people have been killed by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria since 2009;
- B. whereas the country is in its 10th year of a regionalised armed conflict; whereas violent extremism and terrorist activities, in particular, are on the rise, with jihadist groups, such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), growing in power and influence; whereas Boko Haram has attacked Nigeria's police and military, politicians, schools, religious buildings, public institutions and civilians with increasing regularity since 2009; whereas the vast majority of victims are Muslims;
- C. whereas Nigeria ranks third out of 163 countries on the Global Terrorism Index behind Iraq and Afghanistan, making it the third in the list of countries most affected by terrorism;
- D. whereas the security situation has been aggravated by an escalation of religious and ethnic violence in some parts of the country, including the conflict in the agricultural Middle Belt, where farmers and nomadic herders are in conflict over land and water resources;
- E. whereas it is believed that ISWAP currently holds dozens of captives, including Christian leaders, security forces and aid workers;
- F. whereas Nigeria's population, the most numerous in Africa, is almost equally distributed between Muslims and Christians; whereas the country is home to the region's largest Christian community, with nearly 30 million Christians living in northern Nigeria; whereas historic rivalry between the predominantly Muslim north and Christian south has dramatically intensified with the spread of radical Islam;
- G. whereas ISWAP claimed responsibility for the execution of 11 people in a video released on 26 December 2019; whereas the group claimed all those killed were Christians, and that the attack was in retaliation for the death of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Syria;
- H. whereas these killings are part of a wider series of terrorists acts, including the attack of 24 December 2019 on a Christian village near Chibok that resulted in the death of seven villagers and kidnapping of a teenage girl, the killing of three civilians outside Biu on 23 December 2019, and the killing of seven civilians in Nganzai on 22 December 2019;
- I. whereas according to the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, over 6 000 Christians have been murdered since 2015 by jihadist groups or have perished as a result of the 'your land or your blood' policy carried out by Fulani militants; whereas in the Sharia States Christians face constant discrimination, and are often considered second-class citizens;
- J. whereas although President Muhammadu Buhari has condemned the killings and urged the population not to become divided along religious lines, these attacks have been carried out with total impunity, with perpetrators rarely being held to account; whereas an Amnesty International report has demonstrated wilful negligence by the Nigerian Security Forces concerning the deadly attacks against farmers' communities;
- K. whereas Human Rights Watch has reported that the Nigerian military has detained over 3 600 children, half of them girls, suspected of involvement with Islamist and non-state armed groups, often on the basis of little or no evidence; whereas many detainees have suffered abuse, including sexual violence, and have died in detention from disease, hunger, dehydration or gunshot wounds; whereas the military has systematically denied access to the detention facilities to verify the conditions in which children are held;

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- L. whereas the situation of girls and women in Nigeria is especially problematic due to generalised discriminatory practices, limited access to health services and education, widespread female genital mutilation and child marriages;
- M. whereas the International Criminal Court (ICC) has stated that there are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity under Article 7 of the Rome Statute have been committed in Nigeria by Boko Haram and the Nigerian Security Forces (NSF), including murder and persecution; whereas in its 2019 Report on Preliminary Examinations, the ICC concludes that despite a number of steps taken by the Nigerian authorities towards ascertaining the criminal responsibility of alleged perpetrators, the investigative or prosecutorial steps undertaken to date in relation to members of Boko Haram and the NSF appear to have been limited both in scope and depth;
- N. whereas since 2015 the government has been criticised for its inadequate handling of the Islamic insurgency across the country; whereas Nigeria's military and police are facing a myriad of security threats and appear overstretched and unable to tackle simultaneous security crises;
- O. whereas the Multinational Joint Task Force has driven terrorist groups out of many areas under their control since its establishment in 2015, though the region still remains highly unstable; whereas the recent withdrawal of 1 200 Chadian soldiers, coinciding with a surge of violence in the North-East Region, has caused concern among the population; whereas hundreds of Nigerian civilians installed nearby fled the area fearing new attacks by the jihadists after this withdrawal;
- P. whereas the EU, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) launched a project on Peace and Security Architecture and Operations (EPSAO) in October 2019; whereas the objective of the project is to strengthen ECOWAS mechanisms and capacity to manage conflict and support a post-conflict environment in West Africa;
- Q. whereas the situation in Nigeria has caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and led to the displacement of more than 2 million people in the North-East, according to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); whereas according to Human Rights Watch most internally displaced people cannot exercise their basic rights to food, housing, education, health, protection from harm, as well as the right to freedom of movement; whereas the EU has allocated EUR 28,3 million to support humanitarian assistance in the country; whereas humanitarian aid needs are far from being met by current funds;
- R. whereas according to section of the Human Rights Watch World Report 2019 on Nigeria, over 35 000 internally displaced people returned to north-eastern communities in 2018 despite security concerns and the lack of basic necessities, including food and shelter;
- S. whereas nearly half of the Nigerian population live in extreme poverty; whereas it is estimated that over 7 million Nigerians are in urgent need of life-saving assistance;
- T. whereas thousands of Nigerians are risking their lives on the migration routes to the EU in the hope of living in better economic, social and security conditions;
- U. whereas the humanitarian space in the country has shrunk, with the kidnapping and killing of several aid workers; whereas eight aid workers were killed in 2019, part of a total of 26 who have lost their lives in the conflict since 2011; whereas security risks often hinder aid delivery and have caused the departure of many humanitarian organisations;
- V. whereas, furthermore, the Government has suspended a number of international aid agencies and charities, claiming they had been acting as money-launderers for Islamist groups; whereas in September 2019, the Nigerian Armed Forces requested the closure of Action Against Hunger and Mercy Corps without notice, leaving 400 000 people without access to aid;
- W. whereas under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, the EU engages in regular political dialogue with Nigeria on human rights and democratic principles, including issues such as ethnic, religious and racial discrimination;

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1. Deplores the terrorist attacks which have taken place in the country; reiterates its concern about the protracted crisis in Nigeria and the volatile security situation in the north-east, and strongly condemns the repeated violations of human rights, international and humanitarian law, whether based on religion or ethnicity;
2. Condemns in particular the recent increase in violence against ethnic and religious communities, including the targeting of religious institutions and worshippers;
3. Extends its condolences to the families of the victims, and expresses its solidarity with the Nigerian people, who have been suffering the effects of terrorism in the region for over a decade;
4. Urges the Nigerian authorities to guarantee respect for human rights in the country, and to protect the civilian population from terrorism and violence; insists that such efforts must be conducted in full accordance with respect for human rights and the rule of law, in line with the country's international obligations;
5. Considers any form of extermination of human beings or ethnic cleansing barbaric and a crime against humanity; urges the Nigerian Government to address the root causes of violence by ensuring equal rights for all citizens and non-discrimination legislation; insists, in this regard, on the need to further promote inter-religious dialogue and the peaceful coexistence of citizens irrespective of their religion, engaging with all relevant stakeholders, including the Nigerian Inter-religious Council;
6. Recalls that women and children are most vulnerable to the effects of conflict, terrorism and violence in the country; deplores the fact that children are increasingly recruited by terrorist groups and used as child soldiers or suicide bombers;
7. Is deeply worried by the reports of ill-treatment of children detained in military facilities; calls on the Nigerian authorities to allow the UN access to its military detention facilities, sign a formal handover protocol to ensure that children detained by the military are quickly transferred to appropriate child protection authorities, and to end military detention of children; insists that the counter-terrorism response, as well as the judiciary and law-enforcement framework, should be tailored to protect the rights of the most vulnerable populations, including children;
8. Reminds the Nigerian authorities of their obligation to protect the rights of children and to ensure protection and provide care to those affected by terrorism or conflict, including by ensuring their access to education; further recalls that education and economic opportunities are powerful tools against radicalisation, and urges international partners to support the provision of accessible, quality education as part of an anti-terrorism strategy in the region;
9. Is deeply concerned that Nigerian women continue to be victims of discrimination, violence, sexual abuse and rape; urges Nigeria to fully implement CEDAW; urges greater support for the victims of the widespread sexual and gender-based violence, including psychological support;
10. Stresses that the fight against impunity is fundamental to the stability of the country and the building of lasting peace; calls, therefore, on the Nigerian authorities to conduct immediate, thorough and transparent investigations to bring perpetrators to justice and hold them accountable; further calls for measures to improve the capacity and independence of Nigeria's judiciary system as a means to promote the effective use of criminal justice to combat violence, terrorism and corruption;
11. Deplores that progress has stalled in the fight against Boko Haram, ISWAP and the increased occurrence and severity of suicide attacks and direct attacks against military positions; recalls that Nigeria's President Buhari was re-elected in 2019 on the promise of defeating the violent extremism promoted by Boko Haram and other terror groups, and urges the President to implement his campaign promises;

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12. Supports the objectives of the Peace and Security Architecture Operations project led by the EU and ECOWAS; encourages strong Member State support to contribute to capacity building and conflict resolution in West Africa;
 13. Reaffirms its support for the regional Multinational Joint Task Force, and commends its efforts to effectively fight terrorism and restore stability in the Lake Chad region; recalls that terrorism knows no borders, and calls on the countries of the region to continue to coordinate their efforts to make the entire region secure;
 14. Encourages further security sector reform in Nigeria to strengthen the capacity of national and regional actors in combatting terrorism; calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Member States to continue EU technical assistance in this field;
 15. Warns against an instrumentalisation of the farmers-herders conflict as a means to spread religion-based hatred; urges the Nigerian Government to implement the National Livestock Transformation Plan that aims to protect the interests of both farmers and pastoralists; believes that further steps are necessary, such as strengthening conflict mediation, resolution, reconciliation and peacebuilding mechanisms;
 16. Stresses the interdependence of development, democracy, human rights, good governance and security in the country; believes that military action alone is not sufficient to combat terrorism effectively; calls on the Nigerian Government to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of terrorism, by focusing on a preventive approach that aims to eliminate the appeal of terrorist ideology, curtail opportunities for recruitment and radicalisation, and cut off its funding, as well as by supporting and funding community-focused programs of civil society organisations;
 17. Calls on the EU, the African Union and the international community to step up their efforts in supporting the fight against terrorism in Nigeria, and pursue continued political and security assistance in the country, as well as the entire region;
 18. Is deeply concerned by the impact of the security situation in the country on the effectiveness of humanitarian and development aid; calls for the EU to continue to pursue its humanitarian and development efforts not only in Nigeria, but also the region as a whole; welcomes the additional EUR 50 million pledged by the EU in 2019 to support recovery and resilience in Nigeria;
 19. Acknowledges the pressures Nigeria and neighbouring countries are under from regional displacement; calls for increased support and donor coordination for the displaced population in Nigeria, including additional financial resources from the international community; recalls that development funds should not be diverted from their initial objective to eradicate poverty in all its forms;
 20. Condemns all attacks on humanitarian aid personnel or facilities, and urges measures to ensure the safety of aid workers and a secure environment for humanitarian organisations to carry out their essential work;
 21. Is extremely concerned at rapidly intensifying climate change and its impact on lives and livelihoods, particularly in the Middle Belt; reiterates that long-term solutions need to be found for protecting natural resources and ensuring access to them; recalls that tackling the climate emergency is a vital component of securing economic stability and peace in the region;
 22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the President and Parliament of Nigeria, the African Union, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, and the Pan-African Parliament.
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P9_TA(2020)0013

Situation in Venezuela after the illegal election of the new National Assembly Presidency and Bureau (parliamentary coup)

European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2020 on the situation in Venezuela after the illegal election of the new National Assembly Presidency and Bureau (parliamentary coup) (2020/2507(RSP))

(2021/C 270/09)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Venezuela, in particular that of 31 January 2019⁽¹⁾ recognising Juan Guaidó as the interim president of Venezuela,
 - having regard to the statements on Venezuela by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), in particular the declaration of 9 January 2020 on behalf of the EU on the latest developments on the National Assembly and the statement of 5 January 2020 by his spokesperson on the events in the National Assembly in Venezuela,
 - having regard to the statement of 9 January 2020 by the International Contact Group on Venezuela,
 - having regard to Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/1893 of 11 November 2019 amending Decision (CFSP) 2017/2074 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Venezuela⁽²⁾, which renews the targeted restrictive measures currently in place until 14 November 2020,
 - having regard to the statement of 5 January 2020 of the Organisation of American States (OAS) General Secretariat on the situation in Venezuela and the resolution of 10 January 2020 adopted by the OAS Permanent Council entitled 'Regarding recent events in Venezuela',
 - having regard to the statement of the Lima Group of 5 January 2020,
 - having regard to the Venezuelan Constitution,
 - having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the EU, its Member States and the European Parliament have reiterated that the National Assembly is the only legitimate and democratically elected body in Venezuela; whereas, according to Article 194 of the Venezuelan Constitution, the National Assembly shall elect among its members one President and the executive bureau for a term of one year;
- B. whereas Juan Guaidó was elected President of the National Assembly in January 2019 and later sworn in as the interim president of Venezuela, in accordance with Article 233 of the Venezuelan Constitution; whereas he has been recognised as interim president of Venezuela by over 50 countries, including 25 EU Member States, as well as by the EU itself;
- C. whereas the events surrounding the scheduled election of the President of the National Assembly in Venezuela on 5 January 2020 were an orchestrated parliamentary coup d'état by the illegal regime of Nicolás Maduro, marked by serious irregularities and acts against the democratic and constitutional functioning of the National Assembly;

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0061.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 291, 12.11.2019, p. 42.

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- D. whereas the President of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, was brutally prevented by armed forces from chairing the session, several opposition parliamentarians were not allowed to enter the National Assembly and press access to the building was also blocked;
- E. whereas the attempt to appoint Luis Parra as chairman of a new pro-Maduro bureau was null and void as the session was never formally opened, there was no chair of the meeting, no quorum count took place and no formal roll call vote was verified, as required by Articles 7, 8 and 11 of the rules of procedure of the National Assembly and Article 221 of the Venezuelan Constitution;
- F. whereas hours later, owing to the forced circumstances, an overwhelming majority of parliamentarians held an extraordinary meeting at the headquarters of the El Nacional newspaper, in accordance with the Venezuelan Constitution and the rules of procedure of the National Assembly which allow for sessions to be held outside of the legislative premises; whereas 100 of the 167 parliamentarians, fulfilling the requirements governing the quorum condition and roll call vote of Article 221 of the Venezuelan Constitution, voted to re-elect Juan Guaidó and his Bureau as the leaders for the final year of the 2015-2020 term;
- G. whereas a formal sitting of the National Assembly on 7 January 2020 concluded with Juan Guaidó's swearing-in as president, despite attempts by forces loyal to Maduro's regime to prevent the session from taking place, including by obstructing the entrance to the building and cutting off electricity inside the building;
- H. whereas Members of the National Assembly must be able to exercise their parliamentary mandate as received from the Venezuelan people free of any intimidation or reprisal;
- I. whereas the presidential elections held on 20 May 2018 were conducted without complying with the minimum international standards for a credible process; whereas the EU, together with other regional organisations and democratic countries, recognised neither the elections nor the authorities put in place by this illegitimate process;
- J. whereas the ongoing actions against Members of the National Assembly, including the harassment and intimidation of 59 Members by irregular groups and security bodies, 29 arbitrary detentions and 27 forced exiles, as well as torture and forced disappearances, are hampering the constitutional work of the National Assembly;
- K. whereas the situation of human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Venezuela has been deteriorating severely for many years, and in particular since Nicolás Maduro came to power following contested elections in 2013; whereas the political, economic, institutional, social and multidimensional humanitarian crises in the country are significantly worsening;
1. Recognises and supports Juan Guaidó as the legitimate President of the National Assembly and as the legitimate interim president of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in accordance with Article 233 of the Venezuelan Constitution, as a result of the transparent and democratic vote of the National Assembly;
 2. Strongly condemns the attempted parliamentary coup by the Maduro regime and its allies, and their efforts to prevent the National Assembly — the only legitimate democratic body of Venezuela — from properly carrying out the constitutional mandate extended to it by the Venezuelan people;
 3. Deplores these grave violations that are incompatible with the legitimate election process for the President of the National Assembly and constitute a further step in the worsening Venezuelan crisis; strongly rejects the violations of the democratic, constitutional and transparent functioning of the National Assembly, as well as the continuous acts of intimidation, bribery, extortion, violence, torture and forced disappearances, and the arbitrary decisions against its members;
 4. Reiterates its full support for the National Assembly, which is the only legitimately elected democratic body of Venezuela and whose powers need to be respected, including the prerogatives and safety of its members; insists that a peaceful and political solution can only be reached by fully respecting the National Assembly's constitutional prerogatives;

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5. Recalls that the EU stands ready to support a genuine process towards a peaceful and democratic resolution of the crisis based on the roadmap adopted in the National Assembly of Venezuela; stresses that previous attempts to address the crisis through a process of negotiation and dialogue have not yielded any tangible results; requests that the European External Action Service (EEAS) continue to work through initiatives such as the International Contact Group;
 6. Recalls that respecting democratic institutions and principles and upholding the rule of law are essential conditions for finding a peaceful and sustainable solution to the crisis in Venezuela for the benefit of its people;
 7. Calls on the VP/HR to step up the EU's response to restoring democracy in Venezuela, including through the extension of targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for human rights violations and repression, and to extend these sanctions to their family members; supports the EU statement in this regard;
 8. Calls for those Member States that have not yet done so to recognise the legitimate mandate of President Guaidó, and welcomes the High Representative's acknowledgment of him as the only democratic authority recognised by the EU; demands therefore that the political representatives appointed by Juan Guaidó be recognised;
 9. Requests that a fact-finding mission be dispatched to the country in order to assess the situation;
 10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the legitimate interim president of the Republic and President of the National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the governments and parliaments of the Lima Group countries, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States.
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P9_TA(2020)0014

Ongoing hearings under article 7(1) of the TEU regarding Poland and Hungary**European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2020 on ongoing hearings under Article 7(1) of the TEU regarding Poland and Hungary (2020/2513(RSP))**

(2021/C 270/10)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 2 and Article 7(1) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2018 on a proposal calling on the Council to determine, pursuant to Article 7(1) of the TEU, the existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Commission reasoned proposal of 20 December 2017 in accordance with Article 7(1) of the TEU regarding the rule of law in Poland: proposal for a Council decision on the determination of a clear risk of a serious breach by the Republic of Poland of the rule of law (COM(2017)0835),
- having regard to its resolution of 1 March 2018 on the Commission's decision to activate Article 7(1) of the TEU as regards the situation in Poland ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 November 2019 on the criminalisation of sexual education in Poland ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 December 2019 on public discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people, including LGBTI-free zones ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2019 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2017 ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2016 with recommendations to the Commission on the establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 4 April 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 433, 23.12.2019, p. 66.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 129, 5.4.2019, p. 13.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0058.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0101.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0032.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 162.

⁽⁷⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0349.

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- having regard to the standard modalities for hearings referred to in Article 7(1) of the TEU approved by the Council on 18 July 2019,
 - having regard to the adoption on 20 December 2019 of a bill by the Polish Sejm, which introduced a set of amendments to the Act on Common Courts, the Act on the Supreme Court and certain other acts; having regard to the Polish Senate's request to the Venice Commission to issue an urgent opinion on this bill,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, as set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), and as reflected in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and embedded in international human rights treaties; whereas those values, which are common to the Member States and to which all Member States have freely subscribed, constitute the foundation of the rights enjoyed by those living in the Union;
- B. whereas any clear risk of a serious breach by a Member State of the values enshrined in Article 2 of the TEU does not concern solely the individual Member State where the risk materialises, but also has an impact on the other Member States, on the mutual trust between them and on the very nature of the Union and its citizens' fundamental rights under Union law;
- C. whereas Article 7(1) of the TEU constitutes a preventive phase endowing the Union with the capacity to intervene in the event of a clear risk of a serious breach of the common values; whereas such preventive action provides for a dialogue with the Member State concerned and is intended to avoid possible sanctions;
- D. whereas Article 7(1) of the TEU was triggered by the Commission and Parliament in relation to Poland and Hungary, respectively, following the determination of a clear risk of a serious breach of the values on which the Union is founded;
- E. whereas the Council has so far organised three hearings of Poland and two hearings of Hungary within the framework of the General Affairs Council;
- F. whereas on 11 December 2019 the Finnish Presidency requested a written explanation concerning an alleged breach by a public official from the Hungarian delegation under Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and Article 6(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Council on confidentiality of the meetings;
1. Takes note of the hearings organised by the Council under Article 7(1) of the TEU in response to threats to common European values in Poland and Hungary; notes with concern that the hearings are not organised in a regular, structured and open manner; urges the Croatian Presidency and other forthcoming presidencies to organise the hearings regularly; underlines that hearings must be objective, fact-based and transparent, and that the Member States concerned must cooperate in good faith throughout the process in accordance with the principle of sincere cooperation enshrined in Article 4(3) of the TEU; recommends that the Council address concrete recommendations to the Member States in question, as enshrined in Article 7(1) of the TEU, as a follow-up to the hearings, and that it indicate deadlines for the implementation of those recommendations; points out that mutual trust between Member States can be restored only once respect for the values enshrined in Article 2 of the TEU is ensured and calls on the Council to act in that direction; calls on Member States to respect the primacy of EU law;
 2. Expresses its deep concern that the standard modalities for hearings referred to in Article 7(1) of the TEU do not ensure the same treatment for Parliament as for the Commission and one third of the Member States for the purposes of presenting the reasoned proposal; recalls that Article 7(1) of the TEU provides for equal rights and procedural status for one third of the Member States, Parliament and the Commission with regard to triggering the procedure; welcomes the efforts of the Finnish Presidency to engage in informal dialogue with Parliament, believes that informal dialogue cannot replace the formal presentation of the reasoned proposal in the Council; insists that Parliament's invitation to a formal Council meeting is still owing on the basis of the right of initiative and the principle of sincere cooperation between institutions enshrined in Article 4(3) of the TEU; reiterates its call on the Council to keep Parliament promptly and fully informed at every stage of the procedure;

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3. Expresses its regret that the hearings have not yet resulted in any significant progress by the two Member States in question with regard to redressing clear risks of a serious breach of the values referred to in Article 2 of the TEU; notes with concern that the reports and statements by the Commission and international bodies, such as the UN, OSCE and the Council of Europe, indicate that the situation in both Poland and Hungary has deteriorated since the triggering of Article 7(1) of the TEU; points out that the failure by the Council to make effective use of Article 7 of the TEU continues to undermine the integrity of common European values, mutual trust, and the credibility of the Union as a whole; reiterates its position on the Commission's decision to activate Article 7(1) of the TEU as regards the situation in Poland and on its own proposal calling on the Council to determine, pursuant to Article 7(1) of the TEU, the existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded; calls on the Council, therefore, to ensure that hearings under Article 7(1) of the TEU also address new developments and assess risks of breaches of the independence of the judiciary, freedom of expression, including media freedom, freedom of the arts and sciences, freedom of association and the right to equal treatment; calls on the Commission to make full use of the tools available to address a clear risk of a serious breach by Poland and Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded, in particular expedited infringement procedures and applications for interim measures before the Court of Justice;
 4. Notes that the Commission's reasoned proposal regarding the rule of law in Poland has a limited scope; calls on the Council to examine how to address allegations of violations of fundamental rights in Poland in the context of its current hearings;
 5. Takes the view that the latest developments in the ongoing hearings under Article 7(1) of the TEU once again underline the imminent need for an EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights (DRF), as proposed by Parliament, in the form of an interinstitutional agreement consisting of an annual independent, evidence-based, non-discriminatory review which assesses, on an equal footing, the compliance of all EU Member States with the values stipulated in Article 2 of the TEU and with country-specific recommendations, to be followed by an interparliamentary debate and a permanent DRF policy cycle among the EU institutions; in this respect, calls on the Commission and the Council to enter without delay into negotiations with Parliament on the interinstitutional agreement in accordance with Article 295 of the TFEU; reiterates that the mechanism must complement and reinforce, rather than substitute, the ongoing and future proceedings under Article 7 of the TEU;
 6. Reiterates its position on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States, and calls on the Council to start interinstitutional negotiations as soon as possible;
 7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council, the respective Presidents, Governments and Parliaments of Poland and Hungary, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
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P9_TA(2020)0015

COP15 to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Kunming 2020)

European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2020 on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2019/2824(RSP))

(2021/C 270/11)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the mid-term review of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy and its resolution of 2 February 2016 on the mid-term review of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2017 on an Action Plan for nature, people and the economy ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2018 on the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP14) ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the Commission report of 20 May 2015 entitled 'The State of Nature in the European Union: Report on the status of and trends for habitat types and species covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives for the 2007-2012 period as required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and Article 12 of the Birds Directive' (COM(2015)0219),
- having regard to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy ⁽⁴⁾ (Marine Strategy Framework Directive),
- having regard to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy ⁽⁵⁾ (Water Framework Directive),
- having regard to the IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services report of 31 May 2019,
- having regard to the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species,
- having regard to the Metz Charter on Biodiversity of 6 May 2019,
- having regard to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to the Commission Reflection Paper of 30 January 2019 entitled 'Towards A Sustainable Europe by 2030'(COM(2019)0022),
- having regard to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special reports on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, and to its special report of 25 September 2019 on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, and to the special IPCC report entitled 'Global Warming of 1,5 °C', its fifth assessment report (AR5) and its synthesis report of September 2018,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 35, 31.1.2018, p. 2.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 356, 4.10.2018, p. 38.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0431.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

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- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 July 2019 entitled ‘Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests’ (COM(2019)0352) and the Commission communication of 20 September 2013 entitled ‘a new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’ (COM(2013)0659),
 - having regard to the 2019 report from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation 2019 entitled ‘The State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture’,
 - having regard to the statement of 15 October 2019 made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in New York,
 - having regard to the Beijing Call for Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change of 6 November 2019,
 - having regard to the European Environment Agency report of 4 December 2019 entitled ‘The European environment — state and outlook 2020’ (SOER 2020);
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the questions to the Commission and to the Council on the COP15 to the Convention on Biological Diversity, — to be held in Kunming, China, in 2020 (O-000044/2019 and O-000043/2019),
- A. whereas the mission statement of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity is to ‘take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity in order to ensure that by 2020 ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services, thereby securing and conserving the planet’s variety of life, and contributing to human well-being, and poverty eradication’;
- B. whereas the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity (‘2050 Vision’) adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is ‘living in harmony with nature’ and that ‘by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people’, and for our future generations;
- C. whereas the 2050 Vision adopted under the CBD is supported by five overall goals that also frame the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets: (a) address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society; (b) reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use; (c) improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity; (d) enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services; and (e) enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity-building;
- D. whereas as highlighted in the IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, current negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems will undermine progress towards 80 % of the assessed SDG targets related to poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans and land; whereas indigenous people and many of the world’s poorest communities are projected to be primarily and more severely affected; whereas loss and degradation of biodiversity must therefore be considered not only as environmental issues but also as developmental, economic, social and moral ones;
- E. whereas the massive use of broad-spectrum systemic herbicides such as glyphosate is directly responsible for massive loss of biodiversity;
- F. whereas according to the IPCC and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, no lasting solutions exist to address climate change without a greater implementation of consistent and effective nature-based solutions;

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- G. whereas climate change is recognised as the driving force behind the surge in extreme weather events causing natural disasters worldwide, including wildfires;
- H. whereas the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) provides a transparent legal framework for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge;
- I. whereas the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU and help stop global biodiversity loss by 2020;
- J. whereas the EU and the Member States have adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its seventeen SDGs and are fully committed to their implementation;
- K. whereas in its political guidelines, the 2019-2024 Commission outlines that its ambition is for the EU to work with its global partners to curtail biodiversity loss within the next five years;
- L. whereas forests are indispensable to worldwide subsistence, and while they only cover 30 % of the Earth's land area, they host 80 % of its biodiversity;
- M. whereas habitats and species are threatened by climate change, as evidenced by the death of most of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, and extreme weather events such as the Great Australian Bushfire, which has killed more than one billion animals; whereas nature conservation and halting biodiversity loss are crucial to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;
- N. whereas four out of nine planetary boundaries, as defined by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, have been crossed;

General remarks

1. Notes with concern that the IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services report clearly underlines the magnitude of the ecological crisis and the need for urgent and concerted efforts fostering transformative change, since nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history, the rate of species extinctions is accelerating and around one million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction, which have grave impacts on people around the world and will affect the life of our future generations;
2. Expresses its deep concern over the additional stresses on biodiversity caused by climate change on land as laid out in the IPCC special report of 8 August 2019; expresses its deep concern over the decline of marine mammals and other fish stocks and the dramatic disappearance of coral reefs, as documented in the IPCC special report of 24 September 2019, of which more than 99 % are projected to decline in a 2° C scenario according to the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1,5 °C;
3. Expresses its deep concern following the publication of the IPCC report on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate, which recognises climate change as one of the main direct drivers of biodiversity loss and underlines that its negative effects on nature and biodiversity, ecosystem services, oceans and food security are projected to become increasingly significant in the decades to come; underlines the IPCC's warning that the health of the ocean and marine ecosystems are currently affected by global warming, pollution, overexploitation of marine biodiversity, rising sea levels, acidification, deoxygenation, marine heat waves, unprecedented glaciers and sea ice melting, coastal erosion, and more frequent natural disasters, which are affecting marine and coastal ecosystems by altering their functioning and accelerating the decline of marine mammals and fisheries, as well as leading to the dramatic disappearance of coral reefs and mangroves; recalls that the ocean is part of the solution to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change; calls, therefore, for the EU to make the ocean one of its priorities in its Biodiversity Strategy, and calls on all Parties to the CBD ('Parties') to recognise the ocean as a common good of humanity in order to develop a new approach that places individual and collective responsibilities well above the traditional principles of freedom and ownership of the ocean in order to ensure its preservation;

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4. Considers that we are facing an environmental emergency, which requires significant action at EU level and globally; calls on the Commission to make nature protection and restoration a top priority in the European Green Deal alongside climate change;
5. Expresses its concern that the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets will not be met with the current trajectory of biodiversity loss, and reiterates its calls on all Parties to urgently step up their efforts; regrets that the EU is not on track to achieve its headline target of halting biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation by 2020; urges the Commission and the Member States to commit to immediate, substantial and additional mandatory efforts on biodiversity conservation and restoration so as to meet the global and EU targets and contribute to meeting the Aichi targets;
6. Recalls that biodiversity and healthy ecosystems, including the oceans, which absorb more than 25 % of CO₂ emissions and are the main supplier of oxygen, are key to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement and strengthening the EU's resilience and adaptive capacities to climate change; notes with regret that only 7 % of oceans are formally protected; recalls the importance of developing and implementing nature-based solutions for preserving biodiversity while mitigating and adapting to climate change, especially for carbon absorption; asks, therefore, for improved consistency and synergy between the three Rio Conventions ⁽⁶⁾ and for them to be better aligned with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; calls on the Commission to ensure the full integration of biodiversity into its climate policies;
7. Welcomes the Beijing Call for Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change of 6 November 2019;
8. Stresses that trade-offs between protecting the climate and protecting biodiversity should always be avoided, in particular in the bio-economy sector, which can play a central role in the transition towards a climate-neutral economy provided it does not threaten the quality of ecosystems; expresses its concern that such trade-offs have not been sufficiently addressed in recent policy discussions; calls on the Commission and all stakeholders to develop a cohesive approach in order to build a truly sustainable bioeconomy based on nature conservation and other ecosystem-based solutions, as such an approach gives the best results for both climate and biodiversity;
9. Stresses that biodiversity is not only indispensable for the production of food, fuel and medicines but, together with a healthy natural environment, is also important for long-term economic development;
10. Welcomes the commitments made by Ursula von der Leyen in the 2019-2024 Commission's political guidelines and in her mission letter of 10 September 2019 to the Commissioner for Environment and Oceans, to present, within the new Commission's first 100 days of office, an ambitious Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 as part of the European Green Deal, and her intention for the EU to lead the world at the 2020 Conference of the Parties to the CBD, as it did at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference; insists that this be a high priority for the new Commission and that the EU galvanise global ambition on biodiversity ahead of the COP15; calls on the Commission, in view of the global biodiversity crisis highlighted by the recent IPBES report, to apply a new approach and to move away from voluntary commitments and to propose an ambitious and inclusive Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 that sets legally binding targets for the EU and its Member States, including specific targets to reach at least 30 % of protected terrestrial and marine areas and to restore at least 30 % of degraded ecosystems at Union level by 2030;
11. Considers that in this new strategy, special attention should be paid to the restoration of ecosystems, habitats and species, notably through research and innovation, to foster the deployment of nature-based economies in all sectors, which are key in order to reach biodiversity targets;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to call for the COP15 to adopt provisions on horizon scanning, technology assessment and the monitoring of new technological developments, including those emerging from synthetic biology;

⁽⁶⁾ The Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

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13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to call for a global moratorium at the COP15 on releases of gene drive organisms into nature, including field trials, in order to prevent these new technologies from being released prematurely and to uphold the precautionary principle, which is enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union as well as the CBD;

14. Stresses that the protection and conservation of global biodiversity is an essential challenge and that it is a matter of strategic EU interest that should receive the highest political attention; calls on the Commission and the Member States to actively engage with third countries — in particular through their external action instruments, such as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) — in order to promote and set targets for biodiversity protection, conservation and restoration measures and governance, especially when it comes to multilateral and trade agreements and measures against non-compliance; Calls, therefore, on the Commission to include binding and enforceable trade and sustainable development chapters in all future trade agreements;

15. Recalls its own position regarding the fact that the NDICI should allocate 45 % of its funds to investments that contribute to climate objectives, environmental management and protection, biodiversity, and the combat against desertification;

16. Stresses the need for a comprehensive multi-level governance approach that addresses the protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services; calls for the EU and the Member States to remain strongly committed to further strengthening the CBD, to take a leading role in preparing for the post-2020 framework, in particular in the run up to the COP15, to commit to a biodiversity equivalent of the 1,5° C target of the Paris Climate Agreement, and to set out their visions and priorities transparently for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

17. Recalls that biodiversity and ecosystem preservation is inherently synergistic and fundamental to the achievement of the SDGs; stresses the need and calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement effective nature and biodiversity mainstreaming with biodiversity targets across all sectors, to change the economic model towards more sustainability addressing the EU footprint, and improved environmental policy coherence in all internal and external policies of the EU, including in agriculture, fishing, renewable energy, transport, trade and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021 — 2027; considers that increased collaboration across all sectors is needed to better integrate biodiversity protection, conservation and restoration; stresses that special attention should be paid to the lifecycle of goods from conception to consumption, to protect natural resources and biodiversity, and to take into account the cumulated impacts including transport;

18. Believes it to be critical to address key drivers of biodiversity loss with a long-term strategic approach and to urgently identify and safeguard the most critical and strategic biodiversity and ecosystem services hotspots and high-integrity ecosystems based on the sensitivity of an area, the presence of endangered species, knowledge gaps and/or effective management, and the presence of common species that are fundamental to ecological processes, and to limit losses of biodiversity and negative impacts on indigenous and local communities' territories and livelihoods;

19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to push for the COP15 to ensure that free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples and local communities is sought and obtained prior to the release of any technologies which may impact on their traditional knowledge, innovation, practices, livelihoods and use of land, resources and water; stresses that this must be done in a participatory manner involving all potentially affected communities prior to any deployment;

20. Reiterates that despite the importance of restoration, it is something that remains virtually ignored by the Member States in the context of the Bonn Challenge;

21. Stresses that the climate emergency and the consequences of mass biodiversity loss constitute a grave threat to human rights; recalls that fundamental human rights to life, health, food and safe water are at risk without a healthy environment; calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to work towards an EU strategy to protect the right to a healthy environment, by working closely with third countries and international organisations such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which has recently launched a joint strategy with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP);

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Implementation of the Convention and the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity

22. Welcomes the decision taken at the COP14 in Egypt, which urges Parties to, inter alia, significantly accelerate their efforts to implement the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and to consider undertaking national assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services; considers it to be of the utmost importance to step up efforts when it comes to implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, to focus on the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Nagoya Protocol on ABS, and to work on an ambitious post-2020 strategic plan and implementation mechanism that formally includes local and regional authorities, and with regard to a 2050 scenario, to take into account new challenges in the field of biodiversity in line with the 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals;

23. Notes with concern that in the EU, according to assessments ⁽⁷⁾ on the conservation status of species and habitat types of conservation interest, only 7 % of marine species and 9 % of marine habitat types show a 'favourable conservation status' and that 27 % of species assessments and 66 % of habitat types assessments show an 'unfavourable conservation status'; stresses, furthermore, that according to the same assessments, 48 % of marine animal and plant species with known population trends have been steadily declining over the last decade, therefore increasing the risk of monitored species becoming extinct;

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

24. Welcomes the progress made at COP14 on a comprehensive and participatory process to develop a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; supports the Metz Charter on Biodiversity adopted by the G7;

25. Underlines the need to increase ambition, inclusiveness and functioning for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen the implementation mechanisms of the CBD and to actively pursue the development of ambitious legally binding targets, detailed timelines, clear performance indicators, tracking instruments and peer review/reporting mechanisms based on common standards — ideally in cooperation with sub-national governments — to ensure full transparency and accountability for the Parties and the overall effectiveness of the next Global Biodiversity Strategy plan;

26. Highlights the fact that an international framework in the form of a global legally binding agreement is needed to protect global biodiversity, to stop its current decline and to restore all aspects of biodiversity; believes that such a framework must be based on specific, measurable, quantifiable, ambitious, realistic, sectorial and time-bound targets and firm commitments, comprising of reinforced National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans and other appropriate instruments such as sub-national action plans, financial commitments and improved capacity building assurances, as well as a five-yearly monitoring and review mechanism, with an emphasis on an upward trajectory of ambition; highlights the need for regular reporting by the Parties and a harmonised collection and treatment of comparable and consistent data and indicators for a good monitoring process;

27. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to call for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to enshrine, as key pillars, the precautionary principle, a rights-based approach and horizon scanning, technology assessment and monitoring with regard to the adoption of new technologies;

28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the definition of a new global goal to reverse the global biodiversity loss curve by 2030, to put nature on the path to regeneration for the benefit of all, and to contribute to the protection of biodiversity, the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, the fight against desertification and land degradation and food security; calls for the EU to push for an increased level of ambition during the negotiations and potentially call for protecting half of the planet by 2050; is of the opinion that a clear global conservation objective for 2030 of at least 30 % of natural areas and the objective of restoring at least 30 % of degraded ecosystems that can be restored should be enshrined in the post-2020 framework, and that the EU should set similar objectives domestically;

(7) The Regional Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Europe and Central Asia https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2018_eca_full_report_book_v5_pages_0.pdf

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29. Underlines that international efforts and agreements will only be met if all stakeholders are actively involved; calls for the creation of a coalition of stakeholders, both from the private and public sectors, to deliver the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; points out the usefulness of the 'Agenda of Solutions' developed under the Paris Agreement in developing a positive agenda for all stakeholders relevant to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and calls for similar actions to be included in the post-2020 framework;

30. Highlights the importance of minimising time lags that may arise between the adoption of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and its translation into national biodiversity targets and sub-national action plans to avoid delays in taking concrete actions to stem biodiversity loss;

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

31. Urges the Commission to design a strategy that will address the main drivers of biodiversity loss, both domestically and worldwide;

32. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the consistency of the Farm to Fork strategy and the zero pollution ambition with the common agricultural policy post 2020, particularly with a view to reducing the use of pesticides;

33. Calls on the Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) to include biodiversity-proofing components in their financial instruments in order to avoid adverse effects on biodiversity; invites the EIB to update its environmental and social standards in line with the provisions of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;

34. Calls for an EU-wide legally binding target to restore degraded habitats by 2030, through the restoration of natural forests, peatlands, floodplains, wetlands, biodiversity-rich grasslands, coastal zones and marine areas; regrets that the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 failed to deliver on the target to restore 15 % of degraded ecosystems;

35. Urges the Commission and the EIB to include biodiversity proofing in its external action, particularly in its external financial instrument, in order to ensure that no EU funds or financing scheme contribute to net biodiversity loss;

36. Is of the opinion that the EU's global ambition will have to be consistent with its domestic actions in the framework of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;

37. Invites the Commission to include the reduction of the EU's global footprint as an important focus of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 in order to avoid inconsistency between its domestic and international actions;

Economic considerations and financing

38. Welcomes the agreement reached at COP14 by 196 governments to scale up investments in nature and people towards 2020 and beyond; underlines that economic growth can facilitate sustainable development only if it is decoupled entirely from the degradation of biodiversity and nature's capacity to contribute to people's well-being;

39. Highlights the necessity of appropriate and sufficient financing for biodiversity; calls for biodiversity improvement and climate proofing measures to be included in the next MFF and biodiversity mainstreaming to be increased across policy areas so as to make significant and positive progress towards the 2050 Vision; calls on the Commission and the Council to set a clear spending target for biodiversity mainstreaming of at least 10 % in the MFF, in addition to the target for spending on climate mainstreaming; Emphasises, furthermore, the need to establish a more transparent, comprehensive and stringent methodology for the tracking of biodiversity and climate expenditure; reiterates its calls to at least double the current level of funding for the LIFE programme; calls, moreover, for the phase-out of harmful subsidies, and for coherence between all EU funds and programmes to be ensured so that no expenditure under the EU budget can contribute to biodiversity loss;

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40. Stresses that biodiversity mainstreaming needs to be accompanied by data collection; notes with concern that basic research, including taxonomy, which is crucial for this purpose, is significantly under-resourced and does not receive a sufficient level of policy and research funding; calls for adequate funding for basic research projects and capacity building to be allocated under Horizon Europe and for the technical assistance axis of other EU funds to be used for this purpose;

41. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the establishment of additional international financial mechanisms for biodiversity protection and conservation linked to the CBD while doing their utmost to mainstream biodiversity into existing funds; notes that economic activities can be important drivers of global biodiversity decline and the loss of natural capital; calls, therefore, on businesses and financial organisations to make and share strong commitments and contributions to biodiversity, including by biodiversity-proofing their activities, and highlights the importance of leveraging private financing initiatives in this regard; regrets the inconsistency of data sets on finance flows for biodiversity that come from domestic and international public and private sources, which puts tracking and reporting systems at risk and negatively affects any potential reform; calls, therefore, on the Commission, the Member States and the EIB to develop coherent standards on data sets on finance flows for biodiversity; stresses that the future plan on sustainable finance will have to help financial market participants understand biodiversity-loss-related risks by including biodiversity in financial disclosure requirements;

42. Stresses the importance of increasing investment, including in nature-based solutions and corresponding initiatives, that result in co-benefits for biodiversity and climate action, which in turn will reduce the impact of climate change on biodiversity, while at the same time phasing out environmentally harmful investments; recalls that the majority of the investments made in the framework of the Paris Agreement have to be used for preserving and restoring biodiversity; regrets that despite the potential of natural climate solutions, land-based sequestration efforts receive only about 2,5 % of the global climate mitigation budget; calls for an increased use of EU and international climate funding to protect and restore natural ecosystems as a way of achieving shared benefits between biodiversity and climate mitigation and adaptation;

43. Welcomes the decision of the EIB Group to align all its financing activities with the goals of the Paris Agreement and to deliver at least 50 % of EIB finance for climate action; calls on the EIB to continue expanding biodiversity protection and conservation measures within its financial envelope; calls on the Commission to engage with Member States and the financial sector to align their activities with the Paris Agreement and to ensure climate and biodiversity proofing of transactions and investments at EU level and beyond;

44. Points out that international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the UNEP and the OECD agree that environmental taxation is an essential tool for addressing environmental challenges such as biodiversity loss; welcomes initiatives such as the Green Fiscal Policy Network of the UNEP and the IMF, which facilitate knowledge sharing and dialogue on green fiscal reform; draws attention to Aichi target three and the need for positive incentives to conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 and the need to mobilise and significantly increase financial resources from all sources in order to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems; highlights, therefore, the potential of fair environmental taxation, which is in line with the polluter pays principle, as a way to reduce damage to the environment and generate financial resources for the protection of nature; calls on the EU and its Member States to reorient taxation systems towards an increased use of environmental taxation;

45. Notes with concern that only 8,3 % of total financial commitments are related to reversing the decline in biodiversity, which is the lowest ratio since 2015, despite the unprecedented and accelerating species extinction rate; calls on the Commission to increase the allocation of resources to ensure the long-term and coherent protection of biodiversity across the EU; insists that the next MFF should rely on a robust methodology for tracking biodiversity and avoiding the risk of overestimating action towards biodiversity;

Forestry, agriculture, fisheries and soils

46. Underlines that agricultural and fisheries activities, healthy soils, and the preservation of biodiversity are closely linked; Notes the negative impacts of unsustainable agriculture, forestry and fishing on biodiversity; emphasises, however, that sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries can reduce the negative effects on species, habitats and ecosystems and the effects of climate change;

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47. Calls therefore on the EU and the Parties to make strong commitments towards sustainable food systems, agriculture, forestry and fishing, including requirements and strategies for the sustainable use of plant protection products and nutrients, a reduction in the use of pesticides, and the protection of soils, habitats and species providing key ecosystem services, such as pollination, and increased selectivity to reduce the cumulated impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems and to contribute to fish stock recovery in sensitive and overfished areas; calls on the Commission to include EU-wide binding reduction targets in the upcoming revision of the EU Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides (2009/128/EC) and on the Commission, the Member States and regional governments to direct support for agriculture, forestry and fishing to sustainable practices and eco-schemes;

48. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to financially support farming and forestry practices that are consistent with biodiversity targets, such as integrated pest and nutrient management, organic agriculture, agro-ecological practices, soil and water conservation practices, conservation agriculture, agroforestry, silvopastoral systems, irrigation management, small or patch systems, and practices to improve animal welfare;

49. Recalls that according to the Commission communication entitled 'Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests', forests are indispensable for our Planet's life-support systems, covering 30 % of the Earth's land area and hosting 80 % of its biodiversity; stresses that deforestation is a major cause of biodiversity decline and that land use, land use change and forestry emissions linked to deforestation are a significant cause of climate change; expresses its concern about the impact of EU consumption on deforestation, as the EU is the final consumer of 10 % of the products associated with deforestation; calls on the Commission to adopt a single unified definition for the term 'deforestation-free';

50. Calls on the Commission to propose a comprehensive set of measures to reduce the EU's consumption footprint on land (including legislation) based on due diligence that ensures sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains for products placed on the EU market, as well as an EU action plan on palm oil; is of the opinion that EU action against deforestation should tackle its main drivers, such as palm oil, soy, beef and cocoa; asks the Commission to phase out, as soon as possible, biofuels used in the EU that are highly likely to cause indirect land use changes;

51. Emphasises that forest policies must be consistent, must combat biodiversity loss and climate-change impacts equally, and must increase the EU's natural sinks while protecting, conserving and enhancing biodiversity;

52. Stresses that no substitution effect of forest-based products can compensate for the loss of old-growth and primary forests, which are recognised as irreplaceable⁽⁸⁾ and should be protected through legal and incentivising instruments targeting their complexity, connectivity and representativeness;

53. Points out that, according to the World Population Prospects of June 2019, the world's population is expected to increase by 2 billion persons over the next 30 years, increasing the impacts of land and sea use on biodiversity and carbon sequestration; notes that increasing biodiversity loss puts food security and nutrition at risk; calls on the Parties to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity in programmes contributing to food security and improved nutrition while contributing to achieving the SDG goals, with special attention to SDG 2 (zero hunger);

Urban areas

54. Notes that pollution, urban expansion, soil sealing and the destruction of habitats are other major causes of biodiversity destruction; recall that the IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services shows that the surface of urban areas has doubled since 1992 and that two out of three EU citizens live in urban areas; calls for a better assessment of the role of urban areas and cities in the preservation of biodiversity and the increased involvement of cities and local authorities in the definition of policies for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as in monitoring, reporting and verification;

⁽⁸⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 23 July 2019 on stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world's forests (COM(2019)0352).

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55. Insists that the potential of cities to help protect biodiversity and ecosystem services is underestimated; recalls that enhancing benefits from biodiversity, ecosystem services and urban green infrastructure in cities and peri-urban areas improves human health; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the incorporation and further integration of biodiversity and ecosystem functions in urban design, policy and planning while reducing carbon emissions and enhancing adaptation to climate change;

56. Notes that urban areas can play a transformative role within the EU in terms of biodiversity; stresses that plastic and water pollution are important drivers of biodiversity loss; believes that a strong circular economy, in the context of the new Circular Economy Action Plan, could be instrumental in the EU's efforts to restore biodiversity;

57. Deplores the fact that plastic and pollution from for example water treatment plants, pharmacological products and unsustainable agriculture practices such as the intensive use of nutrients, deeply affects the health of ocean ecosystems;

EU protected areas

58. Calls for an in-depth analysis of all EU protected areas, including Natura 2000 sites, and for the improvement, better connection and extension of these areas; underlines the need for a standardised method for calculating protected areas and a clear definition of what constitutes a 'protected area' in the EU; stresses that in the light of the recent IPCC report on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate, a comprehensive assessment and significant increase in EU coastal and marine protected areas and their governance is needed; calls for the extension of EU marine protected areas to include more offshore waters; stresses that besides the quantity, the quality of protected areas is essential to preventing biodiversity loss and that more emphasis therefore needs to be placed on good and sustainable management;

59. Calls on the Commission to continue to take legal action when it establishes that EU nature protection laws are not being observed; points out that procedures have to be more efficient in the field of environmental infringements due to the risk of irreversible damage to the environment; highlights that it is necessary to urgently ensure the proper enforcement of the nature directives and follow up on complaints about breaches of legislation in a transparent way;

60. Notes that the nature conservation framework could, subject to weak implementation, potentially create a hostile environment for activists and conservationists and directly or indirectly endanger their lives; underlines that murders of environmental activists and conservationists should be actively condemned by the EU;

61. Highlights that green infrastructure provides ecosystem services that support biodiversity, for example by increasing the quantity of ecological corridors in urban environments;

Innovation, research and education

62. Recalls the importance of innovation, research and development in achieving the objectives of the 2050 Vision; underlines the importance of supporting research and participative sciences in order to reinforce knowledge, in particular regarding oceans, most of which has not been explored; calls on the Commission and the Council to increase the budget allocation for Horizon Europe to EUR 120 billion in the next MFF, to benefit in particular the cluster on natural resources, including both basic and applied research, for example in the field of taxonomy, and to launch a mission for the protection and restoration of biodiversity within Horizon Europe; calls on the Parties to focus in particular on the links between biodiversity preservation and benefits to human health and economic well-being, and to coordinate data collection measures;

63. Calls on the Commission to support further research into the effects of land use and land use change, including deforestation and bioenergy production, on GHG emissions and take the results into account in future policy making;

64. Notes that, according to the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy adopted on 16 January 2018, the 150 million tonnes of plastic that have accumulated in the world's oceans could double by 2030, endangering more than 660 species and damaging our environment; calls on the Commission to deliver flagship initiatives against plastic pollution and its effect on biodiversity; underlines the specific case of microplastics, which account for more than 80 % of marine litter items collected, endangering marine biodiversity; welcomes therefore Ursula von der Leyen's commitment to open

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a new front in our fight against plastic waste by tackling microplastics; stresses the need for a circular economy approach that puts an emphasis on research and innovation for sustainable products;

65. Stresses the importance of education in raising awareness of biodiversity and environmental protection; notes that educational protected areas are a relevant and efficient tool for raising public awareness and enhancing preservation;

Capacity-building, public awareness and the involvement of all actors

66. Stresses that capacity building and awareness raising are key to successful implementation and to creating a greater understanding of the importance of biodiversity; welcomes, therefore, the COP14 decision, which invites parties, other governments and donors to provide financial resources for capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer if they are in a position to do so;

67. Emphasises the importance of providing comprehensive information and of seeking the closer involvement of civil society and members of the public from different age groups to achieve the EU and global targets;

68. Calls on the Parties to promote public awareness and the involvement of multiple stakeholders to provide tailor-made solutions in collaboration with local communities and indigenous people in order to foster the sustainable use of land for greater biodiversity so that regional differences in landscapes and habitats are fully respected;

69. Welcomes the intention to actively pursue a multi-stakeholder approach, which is fundamental to valuing, protecting, preserving, sustainably using and restoring biodiversity and underlines that improved engagement with and between governance levels, sectors and private actors will create opportunities for mainstreaming biodiversity objectives into other policies; believes that it is critical to involve business and financial organisations and, in this regard, welcomes the Commission's efforts to engage the private sector in the preservation of biodiversity, especially through the EU Business and Biodiversity Platform; in this perspective, welcomes private sector initiatives such as the launch of the One Planet Business for Biodiversity coalition at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York;

70. Calls on the Commission to consider a harmonised methodology for calculating the ecological footprint of EU companies as well as their impact on biodiversity;

71. Considers that transformative changes in societies are needed to tackle climate change, the degradation of the environment and the loss of biodiversity; stresses the importance of following the principle of a just transition, ensuring that the process is inclusive and equitable;

72. Notes that public awareness and access to comprehensive and easily understandable information enable consumers to make informed purchasing choices and promote sustainable consumption and insists, therefore, that they should form part of a comprehensive set of measures, in particular concerning the products that lead to deforestation, ecosystem destruction and human rights violations; calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve the traceability and control of products through their value and supply chains, thereby ensuring full transparency for consumers;

73. Emphasises the need to better develop eco-labelling and anti-deforestation certification;

74. Welcomes the 2020 meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature meeting in Marseille; invites the Commission to send visible signs of its support regarding its commitments to biodiversity during this forum;

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75. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

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P9_TA(2020)0016

Activities of the European Ombudsman in 2018**European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2020 on the activities of the European Ombudsman — annual report 2018 (2019/2134(INI))**

(2021/C 270/12)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the annual report on the European Ombudsman's activities in 2018,
 - having regard to Articles 15, 24, third paragraph, and 228 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
 - having regard to Articles 11, 41, 42 and 43 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union ('the Charter'),
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD),
 - having regard to Decision 94/262/ECSC, EC, Euratom of the European Parliament of 9 March 1994 on the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour, as adopted by Parliament on 6 September 2001,
 - having regard to the Framework Agreement on Cooperation concluded between Parliament and the European Ombudsman on 15 March 2006, which entered into force on 1 April 2006,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2019 on Ombudsman's strategic inquiry OI/2/2017 on the transparency of legislative discussions in the preparatory bodies of the Council of the EU ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2019 on the outcome of the Committee on Petitions' deliberations during 2018 ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the European Ombudsman's activities,
 - having regard to Rules 54 and 232(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the letter from the Committee on Constitutional Affairs,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Petitions (A9-0032/2019),
- A. whereas the annual report on the activities of the European Ombudsman in 2018 was formally submitted to the President of Parliament on 2 October 2019 and the Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, presented it to the Committee on Petitions in Brussels on 4 September 2019;
- B. whereas Articles 24 and 228 of the TFEU empower the European Ombudsman to receive complaints concerning instances of maladministration in the activities of the Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies, with the exception of the Court of Justice of the European Union acting in its judicial role;
- C. whereas Article 10(3) of the Treaty on European Union establishes that 'every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union' and that 'decisions shall be taken as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen';

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 113, 4.5.1994, p. 15.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0045.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0114.

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- D. whereas Article 15 of the TFEU states that ‘in order to promote good governance and ensure the participation of civil society, the Union’s institutions, bodies, offices and agencies shall conduct their work as openly as possible’ and that ‘any citizen of the Union, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, shall have a right of access to documents of the Union’s institutions, bodies, offices and agencies’;
- E. whereas Article 41(1) of the Charter states that ‘every person has the right to have his or her affairs handled impartially, fairly and within a reasonable time by the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union’;
- F. whereas Article 43 of the Charter states that ‘any citizen of the Union and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State has the right to refer to the European Ombudsman cases of maladministration in the activities of the institutions, bodies, offices or agencies of the Union, with the exception of the Court of Justice of the European Union acting in its judicial role’;
- G. whereas in 2018 the Ombudsman opened 490 inquiries, of which 482 were complaint-based and 8 own-initiative, while closing 545 inquiries (534 complaint-based and 11 own-initiative); whereas the greater part of the inquiries concerned the Commission (285 inquiries or 58,2 %), the next largest number concerned the EU agencies (43 inquiries or 8,8 %), and the rest were distributed as follows: Parliament (30 inquiries or 6,1 %), the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) (23 inquiries or 4,7 %), the European External Action Service (EEAS) (23 inquiries or 4,7 %), the European Investment Bank (16 inquiries or 3,3 %), the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) (14 inquiries or 2,8 %), and other institutions (56 inquiries or 11,4 %);
- H. whereas the top three concerns in the inquiries closed by the Ombudsman in 2018 were: transparency, accountability and public access to information and documents (24,6 %), culture of service (19,8 %), and proper use of discretion (16,1 %); whereas other concerns included respect of procedural rights such as the right to be heard, respect of fundamental rights, recruitment, ethical issues, public participation in EU decision-making, including in infringement procedures, sound financial management of EU tenders, grants and contracts, recruitment, and good management of EU personnel issues;
- I. whereas the 76 % compliance rate of the Ombudsman’s recommendations for good administration by the European Commission in 2018 represents a continuous decrease from 82 % in 2016 and 77 % in 2017 levels, respectively;
- J. whereas 17 996 citizens called on the Ombudsman’s services for help in 2018; whereas 14 596 were given advice through the interactive guide on her website; whereas 1 220 requests were forwarded elsewhere for information; whereas the Ombudsman took action on 2 180 complaints received;
- K. whereas in its strategic work in 2018, the Ombudsman’s office opened five new strategic inquiries, respectively on treatment of persons with disabilities under the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme, on accessibility of Commission websites for persons with disabilities, on pre-submission activities of the European Medicines Agency (EMA), on the Commission’s management of ‘revolving door’ situations concerning EU staff, and on the accountability of the Council’s legislative work; whereas in 2018 the Ombudsman opened ten strategic initiatives on, among other subjects, the use of languages in the EU civil service, anti-harassment policies in the EU civil service, and the protection of children in migration;
- L. whereas the Ombudsman has a crucial role to play in making the EU legislative process more open and accountable to citizens, so as to enable them to exercise their right to participate in the democratic life of the Union and thus increase citizen engagement and trust;
- M. whereas the Ombudsman has a crucial role to play in ensuring the accountability of the EU institutions and the maximum transparency and impartiality of the EU administration and decision-making processes in order to protect citizens’ rights, thereby increasing their trust, engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union;
- N. whereas the main priority of the European Ombudsman is to ensure that citizens’ rights are fully respected;

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- O. whereas in 2018 the Ombudsman launched a new website, which includes a revised and user-friendly interface for potential complainants; whereas the Ombudsman's 'fast-track' procedure for dealing with complaints about public access to documents reflects the Ombudsman's commitment to provide assistance and to take decisions within 40 days for those seeking assistance, in all 24 official languages of the EU; whereas this new initiative is part of a strategy to improve the effectiveness of her office;
- P. whereas the Ombudsman's strategic inquiry OI/2/2017/TE found that the Council lacks transparency regarding public access to its legislative documents and regarding its current practices in its decision-making process — and more specifically during the preparatory stage at the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) and working-group level; whereas following the Council's reluctance to implement her recommendations, on 16 May 2018, the Ombudsman submitted Special Report OI/2/2017/TE on the transparency of the Council legislative process to Parliament; whereas on 17 January 2019, Parliament adopted its report on the Ombudsman's strategic inquiry, which fully endorses the Ombudsman's recommendations; whereas the Finnish Presidency has expressed its commitment to enhancing the openness and legislative transparency of the Council;
- Q. whereas on 12 February 2019, Parliament approved a draft regulation of the European Parliament laying down the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties (Statute of the European Ombudsman) and repealing Decision 94/262/ECSC, EC, Euratom⁽⁴⁾, for which it has the primary legislative responsibility; whereas Council's approval of this this new regulation is pending;
- R. whereas greater openness and transparency on positions taken by Member States' governments in the Council will improve trust in the EU and reduce Euroscepticism and populism;
- S. whereas greater transparency in the decision making process in trilogues will enhance citizens' trust in the EU institutions;
- T. whereas in 2018, the Ombudsman launched an anti-harassment strategic initiative checking the anti-harassment policies the EU administration has in place; whereas the Ombudsman decided to write in 2018 to 26 EU institutions and agencies asking for details of the policies and how they are implemented;
- U. whereas in 2018, the Ombudsman launched an inquiry regarding gender discrimination and equal opportunity concerns at the European Investment Bank (EIB); whereas the EIB followed Ombudsman recommendations and suggestions regarding equal opportunities and gender parity;
- V. whereas the Ombudsman is part of the EU framework under the UNCPRD tasked with protecting, promoting and monitoring the implementation of that convention at the level of the EU institutions;
- W. whereas a conference bringing together the European Network of Ombudsmen and the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions was held in March 2018 and one of the main points of the discussion was on how ombudsmen could strengthen their cooperation;
1. Welcomes the annual report for 2018 presented by the European Ombudsman;
 2. Congratulates Emily O'Reilly for her excellent work and her constructive efforts to improve the quality of the EU's administration and the accessibility and quality of the services it offers to citizens;
 3. Emphasises the importance of transparency and public access to the documents held by the Council; stresses that a high level of transparency of the legislative process is essential in order to enable citizens, media and stakeholders to hold their elected officials and governments to account; acknowledges the valuable role the Ombudsman plays in liaising and mediating between the EU institutions and citizens; believes that the Council must revise its confidentiality policy; highlights the Ombudsman's work in making the EU legislative process more accountable to the public;

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0080.

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4. Stresses the need for more active citizen participation in decision-making and its importance, in addition to the need for greater transparency in the way in which the administration operates, as measures to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the Union's institutions that are aimed at restoring confidence;
5. Urges the Ombudsman to ensure greater transparency in the decision-making process in trilogues;
6. Stresses that restoring citizens' confidence in the Union's institutions is a primary concern of the European Parliament and is of the utmost socio-political and ethical importance;
7. Stresses the need to improve and enhance social dialogue, in addition to the dialogue held between the bodies, institutions and citizens of the Union;
8. Fully endorses the European Ombudsman's recommendations to the Council and urges the Council to take all measures necessary to implement these recommendations as swiftly as possible;
9. Encourages the Ombudsman to offer further guidance to the EU institutions on how to better communicate with citizens in all official EU languages; urges the Ombudsman to provide guidance to the institutions on how to develop their language policy in such a way that it could enable the production of relevant content and information in the most languages possible;
10. Welcomes the Ombudsman's strategy, which aims to increase the impact and visibility of her mandate among EU citizens;
11. Welcomes the redesign of the European Ombudsman's website, which makes it a more functional and accessible instrument for citizens;
12. Requests that the Council, as co-legislator, aligns its working methods with the standards of a parliamentary democracy as required under the Treaties, rather than act like a diplomatic forum, which is not its intended function; recalls that following her strategic inquiry OI/2/2017/TE, the Ombudsman concluded that the Council's practices with respect to transparency constitute maladministration; urges the Council to immediately implement the Ombudsman's recommendations drawn from her strategic inquiry, including those provided by Parliament in its own report concerning the Special Report; encourages the Ombudsman to continue to follow up on the progress related to her strategic inquiry;
13. Reiterates its call for an update on EU legislation on access to documents and requests that Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents ⁽⁵⁾ be revised so as to facilitate the Ombudsman's work in scrutinising the granting of access to documents by Parliament, Council and the Commission; considers it regrettable that the Council has blocked the revision of the Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 and urges the Council to reopen its discussions based on the position adopted by Parliament in second reading as laid down in resolution of 12 June 2013 on the deadlock on the revision of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 ⁽⁶⁾;
14. Reiterates its call for a revision of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 as it is seriously outdated and no longer reflects the current legal situation and institutional practices implemented by EU institutions, offices, bodies and agencies;
15. Welcomes the formal launch of the fast-track procedure for inquiries on access to documents and acknowledges the positive result it has for complainants;

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43.

⁽⁶⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0271.

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16. Strongly underlines the importance for the Ombudsman to continue to closely monitor and conduct strategic inquiries into the Commission's transparency; expresses that it is aware of the fact that the phenomenon of revolving doors still exists, in particular among top-ranked officials of the institutions; urges the Ombudsman to continue to monitor the implementation of the Commission's revised rules on revolving doors that came into place in September 2018 as a result of her own-initiative inquiry;

17. Stresses that the issue of conflicts of interest is broader than the cases of revolving doors, and insists that further rules and stricter criteria need to be developed in order to firmly guarantee that decisions and legislation are made with the interests of citizens in mind;

18. Recalls that the principles of public availability, openness, and transparency are inherent to the EU legislative process in order to allow citizens to find out about the considerations that underpin legislative actions, therefore ensuring effective exercise of their democratic rights⁽⁷⁾; recognises the need for transparency in the EU decision-making process; supports the development between the services of the three institutions in the establishment of the Joint Legislative Portal, which is aimed at providing a user-friendly channel that enables non-specialists to access information about ongoing legislative procedures;

19. Supports the publication of final trilogue documents; underlines that the Court of Justice ruling in the *De Capitani* case (T-540/15) in March 2018 states that the institutions' views reflected in the 'four-column' documents did not fall under a general presumption of non-disclosure; notes that the sensitive nature of the subject matter reflected in the trilogue documents was not in itself considered to constitute sufficient grounds for refusing access to the public; considers that, in order to achieve transparency in the trilogues, all three institutions should contribute; recognises that the public's right of access to documents of the Union's institutions is the protected and inalienable right of every EU citizen directly emanating from the democratic principle and fundamental right of freedom of expression, so that a corresponding obligation of the Union of compliance and accountability is established; stresses the need to further promote the relevant institutions of transparency, such as the Office of Ombudsman, so that the Union meets its obligation referred to above;

20. Reiterates that the integrity of the European Central Bank (ECB) and its independence from private financial interests must be ensured; stresses that the members of its Executive Board must abstain from being simultaneously members of fora or other organisations, which include executives of banks supervised by the ECB, and must not participate in fora that are not open to the public; welcomes the opinion of the Ombudsman of 5 July 2018;

21. Regrets that the recommended adoption and application of minimum rules for accountability by the ECB has not yet taken place; considers that failing to ensure the transparency of the ECB's activities could lead to its independence from private financial interests being questioned;

22. Supports the Ombudsman's recommendations of 15 January 2018 on the involvement of the President of the European Central Bank and members of its decision-making bodies in the 'Group of Thirty', and urges the ECB to amend the relevant rules in order to ensure that the highest ethical and accountability standards are concretely implemented;

23. Calls on the Commission, in the phase of informal dialogue between itself and the Member States, to ensure a high level of transparency and access to documents and information with regard to the EU Pilot and infringement procedures, particularly on those related to petitions received, and full access by appropriate means to EU Pilot and infringement procedures that have already ended; calls on the Commission to take a different approach with regard to investigations of breaches of EU law and to launch infringement procedures without relying solely on the EU Pilot mechanism;

24. Stresses the importance of the measures taken to enhance the transparency of decisions taken in infringement procedures; recalls that in 2014 the Commission set up a centralised platform with comprehensive information on infringements, on the Europa website; highlights that the Commission provides the European Parliament and the public with information on EU Pilot and infringements files in its annual reports on monitoring the application of EU law;

(7) Joined Cases C-39/05 and C-52/05 P, *Kingdom of Sweden and Maurizio Turco v Council of the European Union*, European Court Reports 2008 I-04723.

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25. Fully supports the Ombudsman's commitment to improving the transparency of EU lobbying; supports the Commission's commitment to implementing the revised horizontal rules on expert groups, including those regarding transparency and conflict of interests; stresses the importance of registering individuals and organisations representing private interests in the Transparency Register, so that appointments can be made in accordance with the horizontal rules;

26. Highlights the need for a tripartite agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and Commission, which would constitute a step towards strengthening the existing rules on lobbying and closing loopholes; considers, however, that the institutions should not stop there, but should continue towards binding legislative measures for all EU institutions and agencies;

27. Stresses the importance of making available all information on the influence of lobbyists free of charge, fully comprehensible and easily accessible to the public, improving the accuracy of data in the EU Transparency Register; underlines that full transparency of the funding of all interest representatives must be ensured and calls for any organisation that breaks the revolving doors rules to be suspended;

28. Highlights the need for the adoption of a legal act in order to make the Transparency Register fully mandatory and legally-binding for all EU institutions and agencies and third parties, thus ensuring full transparency of lobbying; encourages the EU institutions to consider which practical arrangements could lead to a prompt and efficient agreement;

29. Regrets that gender discrimination and gender representation remains an issue within EU institutions; notes with concern the findings in case 366/2017/AMF and strongly urges the EIB to fully comply with the recommendations of the Ombudsman in achieving a balanced representation of all genders in management positions;

30. Welcomes the Ombudsman's inquiry in 2018 into the appointment procedure of the former Commission Secretary General and acknowledges her finding of four instances of maladministration; expresses its regret that, despite Parliament's support for the Ombudsman's recommendations, the previous Commission failed to implement them; notes particular concern over the fact that it did not put in place a specific appointment procedure, and requests that the new Commission set one up, thereby ensuring the highest standards in terms of transparency, ethics and rule of law;

31. Notes with concern the declining compliance rate by the Commission to the Ombudsman's proposed recommendations, suggestions and solutions; calls on the Commission to demonstrate further commitment when it comes to solving all instances of maladministration found by the Ombudsman in its activities;

32. Urges the Ombudsman to monitor the implementation of Parliament's new Rules of Procedure for the hearings of the Commissioners-designate, in particular those set out in Annex VII Article 2 regarding the examination of financial interests, in the spirit of transparency and objectivity;

33. Acknowledges the proposal adopted by the Commission on 31 January 2018 for a new Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission; believes that further reinforcements of the provisions of the Code must be made;

34. Reiterates and strongly believes that strict ethical rules and standards need to be applied throughout the EU institutions with a view to securing respect for the duty of integrity;

35. Strongly believes transparency is an essential component of the rule of law, and that it must be observed throughout the legislative process, since it influences the effective materialisation of the right to vote and the right to stand in elections, in addition to other rights (i.e. the freedom of expression, the freedom of speech and the freedom to receive information); considers that forging an active EU citizenship would require public scrutiny, review and evaluation of the process and with the potential for the outcome to be challenged; underlines the fact that this would help citizens become more and more familiar with the basic concepts of the legislative process and foster participation in the democratic life of the Union;

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36. Welcomes the Ombudsman's continuous efforts to influence change in the EU institutions by participating in public consultations that relate to areas of her work; welcomes her suggestions to improve the transparency of the EU risk assessment model in the food chain, which include recommendations that the European Food Safety Agency publish agendas and minutes of meetings related to risk assessment;

37. Encourages the Ombudsman to continue her own initiative inquiry into the transparency of EMA and pharmaceutical companies' pre-submission applications for market authorisation interaction, and the public consultation that ran until January 2019;

38. Welcomes her inquiry into the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) safety reports, which resulted in the agency changing its practice so that those who report safety concerns receive feedback;

39. Urges the Ombudsman to continue monitoring the compliance of the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme (JSIS) with the UNCPRD; urges the Commission to update the text of the General Implementing Provisions (GIPs), which govern the operation of the JSIS as regards medical expenses and the expenses related to reasonable accommodation at workplace of persons with disabilities or serious illness; calls on the Ombudsman to ensure the full implementation of the UNCPRD by the entire administration of the European Union;

40. Welcomes the Ombudsman's practical recommendations with regard to the accessibility of the selection procedures of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) for visually impaired candidates; calls on the Ombudsman to monitor EPSO's full compliance with the accessibility requirements for the selection procedures online; calls on the Ombudsman to follow up its proposals for assistive technologies during the computer-based tests, which take place around the world;

41. Supports the Ombudsman in raising awareness among the EU institutions regarding the introduction of stronger anti-harassment policies;

42. Supports the Ombudsman's initiative to follow up the #MeToo movement and calls to further monitor what anti-harassment policies the EU administration has in place;

43. Supports the Ombudsman's efforts to facilitate citizen participations in EU policy-making; requests that the Ombudsman continue to follow the use of the European Citizens Initiative (ECI) tool, including the monitoring of the implementation of the revised ECI regulation;

44. Points out that the role of the European Ombudsman has evolved over time since its creation, from preventing maladministration to promoting good administration; considers that the logic evolution of this trend is to continue the efforts of actively promoting better administration and the best administrative practices in a timely fashion;

45. Welcomes the Ombudsman's initiative for an Award for Good Administration, which recognises the efforts of the EU civil service to find innovative ways of implementing citizen-friendly policies;

46. Reiterates its long-standing call to upgrade the current Code of Good Administrative Behaviour into a properly binding regulation for all EU institutions and agencies;

47. Recalls the Ombudsman's commitment to a very high level of transparency from the EU throughout the negotiations on the UK's withdrawal agreement from the European Union;

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48. Encourages the Ombudsman to continue to cooperate with national ombudsmen through the European Network of Ombudsmen; stresses the need to further develop such instances of cooperation between the various national ombudsmen;
 49. Recalls that the new draft Statute of the European Ombudsman that was recently adopted by Parliament contains a cooling-off provision of a 3-year period before a Member of the European Parliament is eligible for the Ombudsman's office;
 50. Reiterates that it is crucially important to preserve the independence and the integrity of the Ombudsman, and ensure that the office is held by persons who are free from obvious party-political affiliations, conflicts of interest and who have a strong sense of ethics;
 51. Expresses its appreciation of the excellent and fruitful instance of cooperation carried out by the Ombudsman and her team with the Committee on Petitions;
 52. Acknowledges the excellent instances of cooperation conducted by the Ombudsman during her mandate and invites the upcoming Ombudsman to such cooperation and structural dialogue with the Committee on Petitions to further improve the quality of the EU's administration and the accessibility and quality of the services it offers to our citizens;
 53. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of the Committee on Petitions to the Council, the Commission, the European Ombudsman, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the Member States' Ombudsmen or similar authorities.
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P9_TA(2020)0017

Institutions and bodies in the Economic and Monetary Union: Preventing post-public employment conflicts of interest**European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2020 on institutions and bodies of the Economic and Monetary Union: preventing post-public employment conflicts of interest (2019/2950(RSP))**

(2021/C 270/13)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 298 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community (Staff Regulations), and in particular to Articles 11(a), 12, 16 and 17 thereof ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 May 2011 on the 2009 discharge: performance, financial management and control of EU agencies ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Special Report No 15/2012 of the European Court of Auditors, entitled ‘Management of conflict of interest in selected EU Agencies’ ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the Commission decision of 29 June 2018 on outside activities and assignments and on occupational activities after leaving the Service (C(2018)4048),
- having regard to the press statement by the European Banking Authority (EBA) of 17 September 2019 on the announcement of Adam Farkas’ resignation from his post as Executive Director of the EBA, effective from 31 January 2020 ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the question to the Commission on the appointment of EBA Executive Director Adam Farkas as Chief Executive of the Association of Financial Markets in Europe (AFME) (O-000031/2019 — B9-0054/2019) and to the replies given by the Commission on 24 October 2019 ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the replies given by the Chairperson of the EBA at a hearing held by the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs on 4 November 2019,
- having regard to the report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) of 23 August 2010 entitled ‘Post-Public Employment: Good Practices for Preventing Conflict of Interest’ ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to Transparency International Working Paper 06/2010 entitled ‘Regulating the Revolving Door’ ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to the draft recommendations of the European Ombudsman in the inquiry into complaint 775/2010/ANA against the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) ⁽⁸⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ 45, 14.6.1962, p. 1385.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 250, 27.9.2011, p. 268.

⁽³⁾ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/News/NEWS1210_11/NEWS1210_11_EN.PDF

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eba.europa.eu/adam-farkas-steps-down-as-eba-executive-director>

⁽⁵⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/O-9-2019-000031_EN.html

⁽⁶⁾ https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/post-public-employment_9789264056701-en#page7

⁽⁷⁾ https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/working_paper_06_2010_regulating_the_revolving_door

⁽⁸⁾ <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/recommendation/en/11089>

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- having regard to the letter from the Ombudsman to the Director of the European Chemicals Agency of 13 June 2017 on the implementation of Article 16 of the EU Staff Regulations ⁽⁹⁾,
 - having regard to the letter from the Ombudsman to the Director of the EBA of 13 June 2017 on the implementation of Article 16 of the EU Staff Regulations ⁽¹⁰⁾,
 - having regard to the report of the European Ombudsman of 28 February 2019 on the publication of information on former senior staff so as to enforce the one-year lobbying and advocacy ban: SI/2/2017/NF ⁽¹¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 12 February 2019 on a draft regulation of the European Parliament laying down the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties (Statute of the European Ombudsman) ⁽¹²⁾,
 - having regard to the political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024 ⁽¹³⁾,
 - having regard to the question to the Commission entitled 'Institutions and bodies of the Economic and Monetary Union: preventing post-public employment conflicts of interest' (O-000048/2019 — B9-0001/2020),
 - having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs,
- A. whereas Article 298(1) of the TFEU stipulates that 'in carrying out their missions, the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union shall have the support of an open, efficient and independent European administration';
- B. whereas Article 68(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010 ⁽¹⁴⁾ stipulates that 'the Staff Regulations, the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants and the rules adopted jointly by the Union institutions for the purpose of applying them shall apply to the staff of the Authority, including its Executive Director and its Chairperson';
- C. whereas in particular, Articles 16 and 17 of the Staff Regulations set out the principles for staff leaving the institutions, including provisions on the prevention of conflict of interest;
- D. whereas the Executive Director of the EBA has accepted his appointment as chief Executive of AFME as from 1 February 2020 and has announced his resignation from his post as Executive Director of the EBA, which will take effect on 31 January 2020;
- E. whereas the EBA Management Board and Board of Supervisors decided that the EBA Executive Director's new employment as CEO of AFME should be approved; whereas the Board of Supervisors has taken a decision to impose fairly light restrictions on its Executive Director, which according to the EBA address the conflict of interest arising from his acceptance of his new position at AFME; whereas these restrictions apply to activities carried out in the service of and after leaving the EBA;
- F. whereas in a hearing before the European Parliament the EBA Chair underlined the difficulty in enforcing restrictions on such post-public employment activities;

⁽⁹⁾ <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/correspondence/en/80697>

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/correspondence/en/80699>

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/report/en/110521>

⁽¹²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0080.

⁽¹³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/political-guidelines-next-commission-2019-2024-union-strives-more-my-agenda-europe_en

⁽¹⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 establishing a European Supervisory Authority (European Banking Authority) (OJ L 331, 15.12.2010, p. 12).

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- G. whereas senior executives leaving supervisory authorities do not currently receive a temporary allowance;
- H. whereas post-public employment and 'revolving door' conflict-of-interest situations are recurring concerns and have been assessed and analysed by international and EU bodies, in particular the EU Ombudsman and the European Court of Auditors;
- I. whereas such 'revolving door' cases give interest groups the opportunity to reward regulators for past behaviour, thereby opening the door to harmful incentives;
1. Underlines the importance of an open, efficient and independent European administration for the EU as a whole, including institutions, bodies and agencies in the Economic and Monetary Union;
 2. Is concerned about the conflict of interest that has arisen as a consequence of the appointment of the EBA Executive Director as AFME Chief Executive as from 1 February 2020; notes that this post-public employment with no cooling-off period constitutes a risk not only to the reputation and independence of the EBA but to all EU institutions and the European project as a whole;
 3. Recalls that unaddressed conflict-of-interest situations might not only compromise the enforcement of high ethical standards throughout European administration, but also jeopardise the right to good administration, thereby threatening the level playing field required for the proper functioning of the single market;
 4. Calls for the effective and consistent application of the Staff Regulations, in particular Article 16 thereof, in order to prevent conflicts of interest, in particular — but not only — concerning senior officials; underlines that Article 16 enables EU institutions to turn down a former official's request to take a specific job if restrictions are not sufficient to protect the legitimate interests of the institutions; stresses that in the case of Mr Farkas, prohibition of a direct move to AFME might have been considered under Article 21(3)(b) of Commission Decision C(2018)4048, in that AFME can be seen as an 'opposing party';
 5. Fears that it is often not possible to enforce conditions imposed upon post-public employment activities; encourages EU institutions and agencies, therefore, to consider the full range of tools made available under Article 16 of the Staff Regulations;
 6. Questions the decision by the EBA Board of Supervisors and the EBA Management Board to allow Mr Farkas to take up the position of CEO of AFME; calls on them to review their decision;
 7. Notes that although experience in the private sector can be valuable for working in the institutions, the 'revolving door' system can also arise as a result of pre-public employment in the private sector, when a direct link between the former employer and the new position in the institution exists, and that this has the potential to compromise the integrity of EU institutions and damage citizens' trust in them; stresses, therefore, the emerging need to evaluate how conflicts of interest could also arise from positions held pre-public employment or pre-appointment to posts carrying regulatory or executive powers and responsibilities, and recommends that this be given further consideration;
 8. Stresses that post-public employment and 'revolving door' conflict-of-interest situations are a problem common to all institutions, bodies, offices and agencies across the EU and its Member States; underlines, therefore, the need for a unified legal framework to efficiently address these issues;
 9. Notes the work done at international level (OECD) to ensure a harmonised framework for post-public employment situations; notes, at EU level, the work carried out to this end by the European Court of Auditors and the EU Ombudsman; notes that a timely implementation of these recommendations could prevent similar issues in the future;
 10. Emphasises that, while experience gained in private-sector employment by members of its staff can be valuable to a regulatory or supervisory body, the Union's bodies and institutions should be suffused with a strong public service ethos so as best to serve Europe's citizens;

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11. Calls on the European Court of Auditors to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the approach of bodies and agencies in the Economic and Monetary Union regarding the management of situations where there are potential conflicts of interest; calls on the European Court of Auditors to identify best practices;
 12. Calls on the Commission to assess current practice in the area of post-public employment at EU and national level with a view to identifying stronger measures for the prevention of conflicts of interest that arise when senior officials of EU bodies leave their posts to take up private-sector employment or when individuals coming from the private sector are appointed to senior positions in an EU body, and to take into account its findings in the consideration of a harmonised legal framework for the prevention of post-public employment conflicts of interest;
 13. Recalls the commitment made by the Commission at the plenary debate of 24 October 2019 to review the post-employment legal framework; calls on the Commission to put in place a harmonised legal framework for the prevention of post-public employment conflict-of-interest situations in order to ensure high ethical standards; stresses the need to align EU practice with international standards; underlines that the same standards should be applied at EU and national level;
 14. Calls on the Commission to define in its review of the post-public employment framework specific risk areas which might require strengthening, including the expansion of the possibility to block professional moves, and to consider a possible extension of cooling-off periods of senior officials, proportionate to the specific case, to ensure equal treatment in line with Article 15 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; stresses that the requirement for ex-ante disclosure of conflicts of interest set out in Article 11 of the Staff Regulations should be implemented in a way that ensures that a candidate's potential conflicts of interest are revealed well before taking up employment in an EU body; further stresses that all EU bodies should publish their internal rules for dealing with conflicts of interest on their websites and heed the European Ombudsman's 2017 recommendations concerning the publication of the annual information required under Article 16(4) of the Staff Regulations;
 15. Calls on the Commission to extend this review to pre-public employment conflicts of interest and to consider strengthening existing measures, such as mandatory divestment of interests in undertakings that are subject to the authority of the institution to which a newly appointed official belongs or which have dealings with that institution, and also to consider new types of preventive measures, such as mandatory recusal when dealing with matters that affect a former private-sector employer;
 16. Considers that prohibition of a professional move where the person concerned currently holds employment and where the prohibition is sufficiently targeted and justified does not constitute violation of the right to employment;
 17. Points out that if longer cooling-off periods for senior officials who leave an agency are introduced, the possibility of granting them an appropriate temporary allowance might also be considered; underlines that such temporary allowances should end if new employment is taken up during the cooling-off period;
 18. Calls on the Commission to assess whether it is appropriate that the EU agencies concerned decide for themselves on the enforcement of the rules on the prevention of conflicts of interest and how consistent application of the rules can be ensured; considers the independent ethics body envisaged by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to be the body best suited to taking decisions related to conflicts of interest concerning EU staff members in the future;
 19. Suggests to all Members of the European Parliament and all representatives of the European Commission and the Council of the European Union that they refrain from contact with the current Executive Director if and when he takes up his position as CEO of AFME for a two-year period; calls on the services responsible for delivering permanent access passes ('brown badges') to Parliament's premises to thoroughly consider Mr Farkas' case, taking into account the possibility of not granting such a badge for the same time period (two years), in order to avoid a potential conflict of interest;
 20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Court of Auditors and the European Ombudsman.
-

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III

(Preparatory acts)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

P9_TA(2020)0001

Numerical strength of committees**European Parliament decision of 15 January 2020 on the numerical strength of the standing committees (2020/2512(RSO))**

(2021/C 270/14)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Conference of Presidents,
- having regard to its decision of 15 January 2014 on the powers and responsibilities of the standing committees ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Rule 206 of its Rules of Procedure,

1. Decides that the numerical strength of the standing committees and subcommittees after the UK withdrawal from the EU shall be as follows:

- I. Committee on Foreign Affairs: 71 members,
- II. Committee on Development: 26 members,
- III. Committee on International Trade: 43 members,
- IV. Committee on Budgets: 41 members,
- V. Committee on Budgetary Control: 30 members,
- VI. Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs: 60 members,
- VII. Committee on Employment and Social Affairs: 55 members,
- VIII. Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: 81 members,
- IX. Committee on Industry, Research and Energy: 78 members,
- X. Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection: 45 members,
- XI. Committee on Transport and Tourism: 49 members,
- XII. Committee on Regional Development: 43 members,
- XIII. Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development: 48 members,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 482, 23.12.2016, p. 160.

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XIV. Committee on Fisheries: 28 members,

XV. Committee on Culture and Education: 31 members,

XVI. Committee on Legal Affairs: 25 members,

XVII. Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs: 68 members,

XVIII. Committee on Constitutional Affairs: 28 members,

XIX. Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality: 35 members,

XX. Committee on Petitions: 35 members,

Subcommittee on Human Rights: 30 members,

Subcommittee on Security and Defence: 30 members;

2. Decides, with reference to the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 30 June 2019 relating to the composition of committee bureaux, that the committee bureaux may consist of up to four vice-chairs;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this decision to the Council and the Commission, for information.
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P9_TA(2020)0002

Protocol between the EU, Iceland and Norway to the Agreement concerning the criteria and mechanisms for establishing the State responsible for examining a request for asylum lodged in a Member State or in Iceland or Norway regarding the access to Eurodac for law enforcement purposes ***

European Parliament legislative resolution of 15 January 2020 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol between the European Union, Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway to the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the criteria and mechanisms for establishing the State responsible for examining a request for asylum lodged in a Member State or in Iceland or Norway regarding access to Eurodac for law enforcement purposes (15791/2018 — C9-0155/2019 — 2018/0419(NLE))

(Consent)

(2021/C 270/15)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (15791/2018),
 - having regard to the draft Protocol between the European Union, Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway to the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the criteria and mechanisms for establishing the State responsible for examining a request for asylum lodged in a Member State or in Iceland or Norway regarding access to Eurodac for law enforcement purposes (15792/2018),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 87(2), point (a), Article 88 (2), first subparagraph, point (a) and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C9-0155/2019),
 - having regard to Rule 105(1) and (4) and Rule 114(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (A9-0053/2019),
1. Gives its consent to the conclusion of the protocol;
 2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway.
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Wednesday 15 January 2020

P9_TA(2020)0003

EU-China Agreement on certain aspects of air services ***

European Parliament legislative resolution of 15 January 2020 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion on behalf of the Union of the Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the People's Republic of China on certain aspects of air services (11033/2019 — C9-0049/2019 — 2018/0147(NLE))

(Consent)

(2021/C 270/16)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (11033/2019),
 - having regard to the draft Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the People's Republic of China on certain aspects of air services (09685/2018),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 100(2) and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C9-0049/2019),
 - having regard to Rule 105(1) and (4) and Rule 114(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A9-0041/2019),
1. Gives its consent to the conclusion of the agreement;
 2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the People's Republic of China.

Wednesday 15 January 2020

P9_TA(2020)0004

Common system of value added tax as regards the special scheme for small enterprises *

European Parliament legislative resolution of 15 January 2020 on the draft Council directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax as regards the special scheme for small enterprises and Regulation (EU) No 904/2010 as regards the administrative cooperation and exchange of information for the purpose of monitoring the correct application of the special scheme for small enterprises (13952/2019 — C9-0166/2019 — 2018/0006(CNS))

(Special legislative procedure — renewed consultation)

(2021/C 270/17)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Council draft (13952/2019),
 - having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council (COM(2018)0021),
 - having regard to its position of 11 September 2018 ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to Article 113 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, pursuant to which the Council consulted Parliament again (C9-0166/2019),
 - having regard to Rules 82 and 84 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (A9-0055/2019),
1. Approves the Council draft;
 2. Calls on the Council to notify Parliament if it intends to depart from the text approved by Parliament;
 3. Asks the Council to consult Parliament again if it intends to substantially amend the text approved by Parliament;
 4. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the national parliaments.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 433, 23.12.2019, p. 203.

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