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On 23 June 2014, the Council adopted the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2013, as set out in Annex.

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An EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy

THEMATIC REPORT

Preface

When I introduced the first annual report on democracy and human rights, back in 2009, I vowed ed to do more and do better in promoting and defending human rights around the world. Since then we have worked hard to ensure that people around the world can enjoy the same dignity and freedoms we often take for granted. The EU is built on a commitment to safeguard these values within our Union and throughout the world. I believe that this is what EU citizens expect from us.

At a time, when democratic values are being challenged in many parts of the world, defending human rights is not an easy task. During the past few years we have seen momentous developments, in the Middle East, North Africa, and more recently in our Eastern Neighbourhood, as people rose up to demand their rights. It has been a challenge to respond strategically to this rapidly-changing environment. Yet the EU persevered in providing crucial support to those who are struggling for their rights, their dignity and for peaceful democratic reform. We have encountered setbacks, and progress has stalled in some of the countries concerned, but there have been notable successes too.

Today we remain as determined as ever to advance the human rights agenda in the neighbourhood and the wider world. We have reformed and reinforced the EU's policies, procedures and instruments to promote human rights, and to ensure that they have a positive impact on the ground. And we have certainly come a long way. The adoption of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Democracy and Human Rights in June 2012 was a landmark event.. In implementing the Action Plan, we have upgraded our working methods, set up a network of human rights focal points in EU delegations and at headquarters, and adopted guidelines to support EU policies in key human rights areas. We have developed nearly 150 human rights country strategies and continue to engage in human rights consultations with many countries.

In 2013 we accomplished a number of key objectives. We have adopted EU guidelines in the area of freedom of religion and belief, as well as to support the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. We have also taken significant steps towards fully integrating human rights in all of our external policies, including trade, development and the Common Security and Defence Policy. This ensures that human rights are the silver thread that runs through all our actions.

Respect for human rights is a core principle for the EU. Wherever I go, whomever I meet human rights are an integral part of the discussion. Stavros Lambrinidis, whom I appointed as EU Special Representative for Human Rights, has also gone to great lengths to engage with our main partners and promote our values around the world.

This Annual Report charts our work on human rights across the full range of the EU's external relations during 2013. It tells the story of our consistent efforts to advance internationally the very values and principles upon which our Union is built.

Overview

The EU continued to actively promote respect for human rights across the world in 2013. In public statements and discreet diplomatic contacts, bilateral discussions and multilateral meetings, and in its development assistance programmes, the EU mainstreamed and prioritised human rights. The guiding reference for all of this work remains the Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy[1], adopted in June 2012, which aims to improve the effectiveness and consistency of the EU's human rights policy and to place human rights and democracy at the core of its foreign policy and external action, including in policy areas such as trade, investment, and development, as well as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the external dimensions of justice and home affairs and employment and social policy.

This Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World covers the EU's work and achievements during the year 2013, including the progress achieved on the implementation of the 97 specific tasks in the Action Plan. In the interest of clarity, the Report follows the structure of the Action Plan; each section of Part A of the Report comprises a summary of the implementation of the corresponding part of the Action Plan to date.

In 2013 human rights have consistently been high on the agenda of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) Catherine Ashton. Throughout 2013 the HR/VP steered the EU's action for the promotion of human rights, focusing on effective mainstreaming of human rights issues in all areas of external policy.

[1] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf

Human rights are a natural topic of political dialogues and high level visits. The HR/VP discusses human rights issues with the EU's strategic partners as well as during her extensive travels to the EU's neighbourhood and countries in transition. In 2013, for instance, during the EU-Myanmar Task Force the HR/VP, she agreed with Myanmar/Burma Authorities to launch an EU-Myanmar/Burma human rights dialogue which first meeting is scheduled to take place in mid-2014. . In Bahrain she called for the release of those arrested for peaceful political activities. In Egypt, the HR/VP repeatedly called for full respect for human rights as an indispensable condition for a transition towards democracy. The HR/VP and her Spokesperson made a large number of statements offering the EU's unwavering support for human rights and democracy, and those who defend them.

2013 also marked the first full year of the mandate of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights, Mr Stavros Lambrinidis. EUSR Lambrinidis focused primarily on strengthening the EU's human rights engagement with EU strategic partner countries; on addressing human rights challenges with countries in transition in pivotal world regions; on elevating the EU's visibility and engagement with multilateral and regional human rights mechanisms (United Nations, Council of Europe, OSCE, ASEAN, African Union, OIC); and on heightening EU cooperation with and empowering civil society throughout the world. Thematically, the EUSR continued to focus on protecting NGOs and human rights defenders and expanding the space in which they operate; advancing the universality of human rights; raising the effectiveness of EU human rights dialogues; and promoting key EU thematic priorities, including those reflected in recently adopted human rights guidelines.

Through his work, including through visits to over a dozen countries (including China, Russia, the United States, Egypt, Bahrain, Myanmar/Burma, Indonesia and South Africa) and principled engagement with hundreds of key stakeholders, the EUSR has significantly furthered the coherence, effectiveness and visibility of the EU's human rights policy; endeavoured to support the important work of existing EU and Member State human rights structures; and created conditions for further in-depth dialogue and results-oriented engagement with foreign governments, international organisations, and civil society throughout the world. The EUSR works under the authority of the HR/VP and the guidance of the Council's PSC Ambassadors, and in coordination with the EEAS, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

The adoption of human rights country strategies, which identify the priority human rights issues on which the EU will take action in every country in which it is represented, was almost completed in 2013. 146 strategies were drafted, and 123 were given final endorsement by the Political and Security Committee.

All EU Delegations and CSDP missions and operations had appointed a human rights and democracy focal point by the end of 2012. The human rights focal points play a crucial role in implementing the human rights country strategies, liaising with local civil society organisations, and coordinating the work of EU missions on human rights issues. The training of EU staff on human rights and democracy policies continued throughout the year.

The EU Council Working Party dealing with the human rights aspects of external relations (COHOM) further improved its performance in 2013, as it began to hold regular meetings of its recently-established complementary formation (made up of EU Member State diplomats based in Brussels). With a view to enhancing consistency between the EU's domestic and external human rights policies, COHOM intensified exchanges and co-operation with the Working Party on Fundamental Rights, Citizens' Rights and Free Movement of Persons within the EU (FREMP). The Commission's Inter-Service Group on Human Rights, bringing together the EEAS and Commission services, met regularly to discuss the implementation of the Action Plan. The EEAS-European Parliament Contact Group on Human Rights, established in 2012, also met during the year to review Action Plan implementation.

In 2013 the EU held human rights dialogues and consultations with 30 partner countries and regional groupings. A human rights dialogue with South Africa and consultations with the Republic of Korea were held for the first time; the EU and Myanmar/Burma agreed to launch a Human Rights Dialogue in 2014. In addition, many of the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries that are party to the Cotonou Agreement engaged in a dialogue with the EU. Most human rights dialogues were preceded by consultation meetings with civil society organisations (CSOs) in Brussels and the countries concerned, and followed by debriefings for CSOs. Efforts were made to improve the impact and effectiveness of the dialogues, including by establishing links between the dialogues and other policy instruments, developing follow-up mechanisms and covering individual cases in the discussions. Besides public declarations on human rights delivered by the HR/VP or her Spokesperson, confidential démarches were used in a number of instances.

During the year, the EU repeatedly expressed concern at the trend of increased restrictions on freedom of association and on the activities of civil society organisations. Smear campaigns, restrictions on access to funding from abroad, and the use of intimidation and violence against activists are just a few examples of the grave challenges faced by many human rights defenders in their daily work. The EU raised cases involving human rights defenders during its contacts with many third countries and issued declarations in support of their work, including in cases where activists were detained, harassed or assassinated. EU diplomats on the ground attended the trials of human rights defenders, and made efforts to secure their release.

In 2013, the EU upheld its support for civil society. Civil society continued to be the main recipient of funding from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). More than 530 new EIDHR initiatives were launched, adding to the more than 2500 ongoing EIDHR projects already being implemented in the field. Moreover, the EIDHR small grant scheme was activated in more than 50 cases, providing emergency assistance to hundreds of at-risk human rights defenders. EU delegations in 107 countries opened calls for proposals for projects by grassroots CSOs in the fields of human rights and democratisation, conflict resolution and political participation.

During the year, the new EIDHR proposed by the European Commission for the period 2014-2020, has been negotiated with the European Parliament and the Council. The EIDHR's budget has been strengthened to 1.33 billion€ and will enable the EU to provide more support for the development of thriving civil societies and their specific role as key actors for positive change in support of human rights and democracy. This will include increasing the EU’s capacity to react promptly to human rights emergencies and more support for international and regional human rights protection mechanisms. Support will also be given to carrying out electoral observation missions, following up their recommendations and improving democratic and electoral processes. The instrument will also have a stronger focus on the most difficult countries and emergency situations where human rights and fundamental freedoms are most endangered.

During 2013, the EU continued to promote respect for civil and political rights, and human rights guidelines were adopted in a number of fundamentally important areas. The Foreign Affairs Council adopted Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (LGBTI) persons in June 2013. The Guidelines set out the EU's approach to targeting discriminatory laws and policies, promoting equality and non-discrimination, and combating violence against LGBTI persons. In parallel, the EU continued to be actively engaged in regional and multilateral efforts to tackle discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Bilaterally, the EU expressed its position on LGBTI issues, including its stance against homophobia and in favour of the decriminalisation of homosexual relations, both in public statements and in private diplomatic contacts. The EU has been monitoring and addressing worrying trends in the area of LGBTI rights, most notably in a number of African countries, and in Russia.

Also in June, the EU adopted guidelines on freedom of religion or belief, following consultations with a wide range of stakeholders including civil society organisations, churches, religious associations or communities, and philosophical and non-confessional organisations. In the guidelines, the EU recalls the international human rights standards in this area, and reaffirms its determination to defend freedom of religion or belief as a right to be exercised on the basis of the principles of equality, non-discrimination and universality. The guidelines will further support EU action in support of religious freedom, against the background of a worrying trend of violations around the world. In particular, the situation of persons facing severe discrimination or violence in Syria, Egypt, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Kenya, Libya, the Maldives, Tanzania and the Central African Republic has been under close scrutiny. The EU raised its concerns through bilateral diplomatic action, public statements, Foreign Affairs Council conclusions, and in multilateral and regional human rights forums.

Throughout 2013, the EU repeatedly condemned restrictions on freedom of expression and on internet access, as well as arrests of journalist and bloggers. In the guidelines on freedom of religion or belief the EU established a specific link between that freedom and freedom of expression, due to the interdependence and mutually reinforcing nature of both rights. The EU also took the position that fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law need to be protected on the internet in accordance with the same norms, principles and values that the EU upholds offline. Accordingly, the EU continued work on the preparation of guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline, which will be finalised in 2014. In this context, in June the EEAS carried out a public internet consultation of civil society throughout the world on how to better engage and protect journalist and bloggers.

The EU continued to push for the abolition of the death penalty, building on the momentum that followed the December 2012 adoption of the UNGA Resolution calling for a global moratorium. The EU targeted retentionist countries and territories at bilateral level and multilateral level, with a particular focus on Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Japan, India, Taiwan and the USA. The Guidelines on Death Penalty, originally adopted in 1998, were updated in the course of 2013, and the new text is a consolidation of the EU's experience in its activities towards abolition. The EU continued to raise its opposition to the death penalty in all relevant forums, in particular at the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and the EUSR for Human Rights led the EU's engagement in the June 2013 World Congress against the death penalty in Madrid.

The EU carried forward the implementation of the Guidelines on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and continued to raise individual cases of torture and ill-treatment during the human rights dialogues with third countries. The EU made a number of statements, including within multilateral forums such as the UN and the OSCE, and considered ways to better coordinate with the UN Convention against Torture (CAT) and the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture. Finally, the EU provided significant financial support to civil society organisations around the world. In the framework of the EIDHR *Fighting Impunity* programme, 25 new initiatives in support of at-risk human rights defenders were launched, with a total value of EUR 20 million.

The EU took an active stance in defence of women's rights during the 57th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2013. The EU and UN Women continued to implement their partnership agreement, including by jointly organising the High-Level Conference on Women's Leadership in the Sahel Region, in collaboration with the UN Special Envoy for the Sahel in April 2013. The EU took further steps to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, notably by including gender consideration in all CSDP missions and operations. More than half of the CSDP missions and operations currently deployed have at least one gender adviser adviser and the EU continued to implement the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development.

In 2013 the EU continued efforts to promote child rights around the world. Following a joint effort between the EU and UNICEF, a toolkit for child rights mainstreaming in development cooperation has been completed and launched through regional training organised for EU delegations and other donors. In autumn 2013, the EU in partnership with the African Union organised a workshop in Addis Ababa on children affected by armed conflict. Via the EU Children of Peace initiative, a legacy of the EU's Nobel Prize, the EU committed an additional EUR 4 million to education of children in crisis situations. The final electronic version will be officially launched during the first half of 2014. As regards child labour, the Commission issued a Staff Working[2] document on Trade and the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The EU participated in the October 2013 Third Global Conference on Child Labour held in Brasilia and was actively engaged in the negotiation of the tripartite declaration on child labour.

[2] Document SWD(2013)/173

The EU actively promoted respect for the rights of persons with disabilities, including by consistently advocating for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which the EU itself ratified in 2011, and by raising disability rights issues in human rights dialogues with partner countries. The EU was strongly engaged in the High Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Disability and Development (HLMDD), which took place in New York in September 2013, with the European Commission having hosted a European regional consultation meeting on the HLMDD in April. The EU continued to protect and promote the rights of disabled persons outside the EU, by systematically considering disability rights issues in development cooperation programmes, and by implementing projects to advance the rights of persons with disabilities.

Throughout the year, the EU repeatedly stated its position that the fight against terrorism must be conducted with respect for the rule of law and in full conformity with applicable international law. In October 2013 the EU and many Member States participated in the Istanbul International Conference on National and International Coordination in Counter-Terrorism. The EU continued to implement its Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016, with EU delegations in priority countries playing an active role, and work began on the development of an inventory that will map anti-trafficking funding instruments and projects operated by the EU and its Member States in priority countries and regions.

In 2013 the EU supported electoral processes across the world by deploying Election Observation Missions (EOMs) and Electoral Expert Missions (EEMs) as well as providing technical assistance to elections bodies and financial support to domestic observers. In total, the EU deployed 11 EOMs and 8 EEMs in the course of 2013. These missions supported democratic transition in the EU's neighbourhood (Jordan and Kosovo[3]), oversaw the consolidation of fragile democratic institutions (Kenya and Pakistan), witnessed the transfer of power to the opposition (Nepal) and contributed to the consolidation of democracy in countries emerging from conflict (Mali and Madagascar). In addition, as the follow-up to EOM recommendations is a priority, Heads of Delegation began regular reporting on the implementation of recommendations, and work began on the development of follow-up guidelines for EOMs and delegations. First follow-up missions have been sent to Malawi, Bolivia and Mozambique. The EU also sought to intensify its work on democracy support. The EU reported on the implementation of the democracy support action plans in nine pilot countries and has proposed a tentative list of second-generation pilot countries for democracy support.

During 2013 the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) became operational as a private foundation under Belgian law and started its operations. Funding is provided by the EU and by about half of the EED member states. By the end of 2013, a total of 425 proposals had been received; of which 28 had made it to funding decisions The EED has a mandate of providing support for actors who currently have only limited access to support from the EU.

[3] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

The EU continued to promote economic, social and cultural rights, working in close cooperation with UN Special Rapporteurs, and violations of these rights were regularly raised in human rights dialogues with third countries. On the occasion of World Water Day on 22 March, the HR/VP underlined that access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a human right, derived from the right to an adequate standard of living. The annual NGO Forum (5-6 December 2013) was largely devoted to ensuring accountability for the respect and full achievement of economic, social and cultural rights. The EU consistently encouraged partner countries to ratify and implement International Labour Organisation conventions, and strengthened its cooperation with the ILO in order to promote labour standards.

The EU continued to work during the year to incorporate human rights in its trade, development, and other external policies. Further steps were taken in the direction of incorporating a rights-based approach in development cooperation, including by developing a toolbox. The legislative package on the EU's external instruments that was adopted by the European Parliament in December 2013 focused greater attention on human rights, democracy and good governance, and the EU followed a human rights-based approach in the preparation of the first outlines of the 2014-2020 strategy papers, multi-annual indicative programmes and budget support programmes. In parallel with the programme planning exercise, the EU worked intensively on the follow-up to Rio+20 and the post-2015 development agenda, and consistently emphasised the need to integrate human rights, governance, democracy and rule of law into the post-2015 framework.

In the area of trade policy, the EU lifted the suspension of GSP preferences for Myanmar/Burma, which was originally imposed in 1997, in response to substantial improvements in the area of human and labour rights in that country. Preparations continued for the application of the new GSP Regulation, including a review of the first group of applications for GSP+ status. Impact assessments including assessments of human rights were carried out for all trade negotiations launched in 2013.

The EU continued to mainstream its human rights and gender equality policies within the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). New crisis management procedures were adopted in June 2013, stipulating that a gender and human rights analysis should always be conducted during the planning cycle for new missions and operations. The conflict early warning system, which includes many human rights-related indicators, was piloted in the Sahel in 2013, and will be gradually rolled out to other regions.

In 2013 the EU maintained its commitment to the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which were endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2011. The EU has worked to ensure that the Guiding Principles are fully adhered to by European businesses, while also promoting their implementation in other countries. In 2013, the Commission published human rights guidance for three business sectors: employment and recruitment; information and communication technology; and oil and gas. The guidance is intended for the use of enterprises operating in the three selected sectors both inside and outside the EU.

In 2013, the European Investment Bank drew guidance in order to further advanced its commitment to human rights and disclosed its revised Environmental and Social Standards which effectively integrate human rights and promote robust and comprehensive human-rights-responsive due diligence processes.

The EU continued to work to promote the universality of human rights and to question – including in the Human Rights Council, the UN Third Committee, and the Commission on the Status of Women – the introduction of concepts that undermine the respect for universality. On a bilateral basis, most notably during human rights dialogues, the EU regularly encouraged third countries to ratify and effectively implement the UN human rights instruments, and to reconsider or withdraw reservations. In particular, the EU continued to promote the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and encouraged those countries that have ratified the Statute to honour their legal obligations. The EU remained committed to the preservation of the integrity of the Rome Statute, including during the ICC Assembly of States Parties, which was held in The Hague on 20-28 November 2013. The EU continued to be a major advocate for international humanitarian law (IHL); and IHL is embedded in its External action,, including development cooperation and humanitarian aid. All EU Member States signed the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), regulating the international trade in conventional arms, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in April 2013.

In 2013 the EU remained active and engaged in Geneva, New York, and worldwide with the United Nations, the vital forum for the advancement and protection of human rights. In 2013, the Human Rights Council in Geneva saw the EU succeed in achieving all its objectives, including by extending the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs for Myanmar/Burma, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Belarus, Iran and freedom of religion or belief, as well as supporting the mandate renewal of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria. Likewise, in New York, at the UN General Assembly Third Committee, all four EU initiatives were adopted. EU resolutions on Myanmar/Burma and the DPRK passed without a vote, enjoying broad, cross-regional support. Resolutions on Iran and Syria were also passed, again with strong EU and cross-regional backing.

The EU continued extensive co-operation with a broad range of regional partners. It remained a strong supporter and leading contributor to the work of the OSCE, and continued to promote the OSCE's work on the human dimension. Similarly, human rights, rule of law and democratisation were at the heart of EU co-operation with the Council of Europe (CoE), and significant progress was made towards EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The EU continued to finance joint programmes and activities with the CoE in the fields of rule of law, democracy and human rights, reaching the figure of over EUR 100 million a year.

I Human Rights and democracy throughout EU policy

1. Incorporation of the human rights in all impact assessments

An Impact Assessment is carried out before the Commission proposes any major policy initiative, including a regulation or proposal to open a trade negotiation. A more detailed Sustainability Impact Assessment is carried out during the negotiation process. The human rights dimension is part of these assessments, such as in the case of the Impact Assessment for trade negotiations launched in 2013 ,including those between the EU and the US. The Operational Guidance on Fundamental Rights in Commission Impact Assessments in 2011 are applied *mutatis mutandis*.to human rights assessments.

In the spring of 2013, the Council prepared several measures to consolidate and improve the use of impact assessments in the context of Council work. A revised checklist was made available to Council working party chairs for this purpose. The checklist includes, inter alia, a section on impact assessments for Commission proposals in the area of fundamental rights and protection of particular groups. An updated impact assessment handbook for Council working party chairs is planned for 2014.

In 2013, the European Investment disclosed the revised and updated Environmental and Social Handbook. It comprises its environmental and social standards. This revision was prompted by the Bank's endeavour to effectively and explicitly integrate human rights considerations in its due diligence across its lending, as mandated by the Lisbon Treaty and reflecting global developments in the field of business and human rights. Said development confirmed that respect of human rights is understood by the Bank to be an integral part of promotion of sustainable development. The Handbook outlines the Bank's approach to appraising, managing and monitoring environmental and social impacts, risks and opportunities in proportion to their significance. It describes the steps for determining the scope of the environmental, social and monitoring activities the EIB shall carry out for all operations in all regions throughout the project cycle. Central therein is a human rights mitigation hierarchy premised on the principle of remedy, a focus on the materiality of risk to affected persons, and considerations of likelihood, severity and frequency of human rights impacts anticipated, thereby ordering the prioritisation of mitigation measures accordingly.

The European Parliament's Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value was established in 2012 in response to the Niebler report on guaranteeing independent impact assessments. It is responsible for strengthening the Parliament's institutional independence and its capabilities by helping in identifying, quantifying and justifying its general policy priorities, and by improving its capacity for forward policy assessment, thus supporting the overall objective of better law-making. To take position, the Parliament takes account of Commission impact assessments but also carries out complementary and alternative impact assessments or impact assessments of its own substantive amendments, in line with the *Impact Assessment Handbook*. In 2013, the Parliament revised its impact Assessment Handbook. It now explicitly states that all impact assessments must respect the Treaty obligations in respect of fundamental rights, non-discrimination, as well as an adequate level of social protection, the fight against social exclusion and a high level of education. Impact assessments must also include the impact of proposed legislation on developing countries, as well as impacts outside the Union, including on international trade. In 2013 also, the Directorate for Impact Assessment produced a range of assessments relevant to EU external action.

2. Partnership with civil society (including freedom of association and assembly)

Civil society, including social partners, plays an indispensable role in empowering people to understand and claim their rights, and in scrutinising the action of public authorities. In 2013, the EU continued to strengthen its interaction with civil society, both as a key partner that is consulted on EU human rights policy developments, and as a particular target of political and financial support.

Furthermore, the EU believes that a functioning democracy depends on the right of citizens to freely exercise their right to peaceful assembly and association. During the UN General Assembly Third Committee meeting in October the EU expressed concern over the fact that in many countries, civil society actors, including social partners, face intimidation, harassment, and even violent attacks. The EU strongly rejected the limiting of civil society space and the attempts to hinder the work of human rights defenders.

The EU has made it systematic practice to hold consultations with civil society in Brussels and in the country before human rights dialogues, and to carry out debriefings afterwards. In addition, formal civil society organisation (CSO) seminars bringing European and international NGOs into contact with their counterparts from the countries concerned were organised in 2013 in the framework of the official human rights dialogues held with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, the Palestinian Authority, Tajikistan, Ukraine and the African Union. The recommendations of these CSO seminars feed into the official EU human rights dialogues with these countries. Likewise, civil society's input was sought in the preparation of the Human Rights Country Strategies, locally and/or at EU headquarters. Civil society was consulted on several policy developments in 2013, including on the elaboration or revision of guidelines. Civil society representatives regularly engage with the Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM) and are systematically debriefed on its conclusions. The EU empowered civil society in Myanmar/Burma by ensuring the full and equal participation of civil society representatives during the first EU-Myanmar Task Force held in November 2013 in the country.

The EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), the overarching framework for the EU's external migration and mobility policy, highlights the role of civil society in its implementation. CSOs are systematically engaged in migration dialogues as well as in the specific cooperation frameworks and mobility partnerships, and will be included in the future common agendas for migration and mobility. Similarly, the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016[1] highlights the role of civil society organisations, and their participation in national and transnational referral mechanisms. More specifically, the EU Strategy provides for the establishment of an EU Platform of CSOs and service providers working on protection and assistance for trafficking victims, both in Member States and in selected third countries.

In 2013 civil society organisations continued to be the main recipient of support from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. Building on its key strength, which is the ability to operate without the need for host government consent, the EIDHR is able to focus on sensitive issues and innovative approaches, and to cooperate directly with isolated or marginalised CSOs.

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/crime/docs/trafficking_in_human_beings_eradication-2012_2016_en.pdf

In 2013, more than 530 new EIDHR initiatives were launched, with a budget of more than EUR 150 million and covering more than 135 countries. This adds to the more than 2500 ongoing EIDHR projects deployed in the field, including a large number in support of human rights defenders (see section 18). The EIDHR is designed to be a flexible and responsive tool, and it is a specialised part of the EU response to crises. In 2013, the EIDHR was used for EU initiatives in countries such as Mali, Myanmar/Burma, Somalia and Syria. A global call entitled “Fighting Impunity”, worth EUR 20 million, led to 20 new key initiatives dedicated to a comprehensive and holistic approach to the fight against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Local calls for proposals were implemented by EU Delegations in 107 countries with a total budget of approximately EUR 70 million. These projects supported the work of grass roots civil society on the ground in promoting human rights and democratic reforms, in facilitating the peaceful reconciliation of group interests and in consolidating political participation and representation. The EIDHR has also enabled support for key human rights processes in 2013, in particular supporting civil society's input into more than 20 EU Human Rights Dialogues with third partners.

As regards new EU policies *vis à vis* civil society, and building on the Communication entitled "Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations", in early 2013 the European Council adopted the Conclusions "EU Support for Sustainable Change in Transition Societies" in which the EU underlined the crucial role of civil society.[4]

[4] http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/development-policies/documents/communication_transition_en.pdf

The 15th annual EU-NGO Human Rights Forum, held in Brussels on 5 and 6 December 2013, focused on the issue of accountability in the fight against impunity and the role of human rights defenders in defending economic, social and cultural rights. The forum, which was opened by the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, was attended by over 200 civil society participants from around the world, along with representatives from international and regional human rights mechanisms, and officials from EU institutions and Member States. The Forum was a key occasion for civil society to discuss and provide input into the EU's policies in this area, including the EU's efforts to ensure that victims of human rights violations have access to justice and redress and the EU's support for regional mechanisms in the fight against impunity.

The EUSR for Human Rights underscored the EU's support for a vibrant civil society on many occasions: as a key note speaker of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in September, at the FIDH Congress in Istanbul in May, at the Frontline Defenders Annual Conference in Dublin in October, at the ILGA Europe Annual Conference in Zagreb and at numerous other seminars, lectures and roundtables throughout the year. The EUSR also met with hundreds of representatives of international and local NGOs and human rights defenders both in Brussels and during his trips. In Egypt, Bahrain and Myanmar/Burma, among others, the EUSR addressed concerns surrounding draft NGO laws by engaging extensively with government officials, civil society, parliamentarians and human rights institutions.

Policy forums and dialogues were complemented by many technical meetings with CSOs throughout the year, in which the EU shared information on activities and policies and facilitated access to funding and support.

The EU continued to send a clear message against unjustified restrictions on freedom of association and assembly, and publicly condemned restrictions to these rights in several public statements. Most recently, on a statement on the 30 November 2013, the EU called on Ukraine to fully abide by its international commitments to respect the freedom of assembly. As another example in July 2013 during the OSCE Permanent Council, the EU issued a statement calling on Russia to fulfil its commitments towards freedom of association. In 2013, Council conclusions and HR/VP statements also repeatedly raised the EU's concerns about freedom of association in Egypt.

The EU has continued to collect suggestions and to build internal coherence and multilateral cooperation on how best to engage on this issue. In December 2012 the EEAS held consultations with Heads of Delegation in countries where civil society is at risk, notably concerning rights to freedom of association and assembly. Recommendations were also collected at the EU-NGO Forum's December 2012 round table on restrictions faced by civil society organisations.

3. Regular assessment of implementation

The EU continues to report on its progress and main achievements in implementing the provisions of the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy in the framework of the annual report on human rights and democracy. The structure of the present thematic report reflects the Action Plan provisions. The purpose of the Action Plan, which mainstreams human rights in all aspects of EU foreign policy including development and trade, is to put human rights and democracy at the centre of foreign policy.

The Action Plan is jointly implemented by the EEAS, the European Commission and EU Member States, under close scrutiny from the European Parliament and civil society. Since the adoption of the Strategic framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy in June 2012[5] significant progress has been made in implementing the 97 measures set out in the Action Plan.

[5] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131173.pdf

II Promoting the universality of human rights

4. Universal adherence

In line with Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union and the Human Rights Strategic Framework and Action Plan, universal human rights standards were further promoted in 2013 as the basis for the EU's engagement with third countries and regional organisations. In the year of the 20th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the EU paid particular attention to the promotion of the universality of human rights, in its statements and explanations of votes as well as public events, conferences and publications. The universalisation of human rights instruments continued to be a strong objective of EU action. In its bilateral engagement, notably in human rights dialogues, the EU regularly pressed for the ratification and effective implementation of UN human rights instruments and the reconsideration or withdrawal of reservations.

Concerning the International Criminal Court (ICC), in line with Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP and the 2011 Action Plan to follow up on that Decision, the EU continues its efforts and outreach to encourage further countries to ratify the Rome Statute. The EU maintained its systematic démarche campaigns in support of the ICC, and its policy of including ICC clauses in agreements with third countries (such as the EU-Singapore Partnership and Co-operation Agreement initialled on 14 October 2013 and the EU-Thailand Partnership and Co-operation Agreement initialled on 7 November 2013). Since 2003, after the Rome Statute came into force, the EU, under the EIDHR, has also provided funding of more than EUR 30 million to the global ratification campaigns undertaken by civil society organisations and to ICC projects (*see section 27*).

Likewise, cooperation with UN mechanisms and the implementation of recommendations from UN Treaty bodies and special rapporteurs, and of States' own commitments under the Universal Periodic Review, have now become standard elements of the EU's bilateral engagement on human rights with third countries. In its bilateral contacts, the EU also routinely advocated for the extension of standing invitations to UN special rapporteurs.

The EU also strengthened its engagement in 2013 with partner countries and organisations on freedom of religion or belief. The EU sought to uphold a human rights focus, based on universal standards, in the resolutions presented at the UN Human Rights Council and in the UN General Assembly, along the lines of the EU guidelines on freedom of religion or belief. The EU also engaged in the fight against all forms of intolerance and discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, and the implementation of the relevant UN resolutions in that field, as well as initiatives in the field of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

5. A culture of human rights and democracy in EU external action

As in the previous year, the EEAS provided training on human rights and democracy throughout 2013, notably through the human rights series of training sessions, which were organised three times during the year for a full week (in March, June and November 2013). Those three general sessions on human rights and democracy policy and operations in EU external relations were followed by specialised modules on non-discrimination (freedom of religion or belief, the rights of persons with disabilities and LGBTI rights), gender equality, children's rights, democracy support and election observation, human rights in the UN context, and the Council of Europe. For some of these courses, the EEAS called upon the expertise of academics, representatives of NGOs from the Human Rights and Democracy Network, and officials from UN agencies and the Council of Europe. These training modules were attended by staff of the European Institutions, Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission and operation staff and Member State diplomats. The mapping exercise of human rights training programmes run by Member States is ongoing.

A number of other training courses on human rights and democracy took place as part of pre-deployment sessions for delegation staff, seminars for Member States' diplomats, the EEAS induction series, DG DEVCO regional seminars and the annual conference with the UNDP on democracy and electoral assistance. A presentation on human rights and democracy is now systematically included in all pre-posting training courses.

In addition to regular debriefings with the PSC, COHOM and other geographic working groups, and the European Parliament, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights addressed all EU Heads of Delegation as well as all human rights and gender advisors in ESDP missions on best practices for mainstreaming human rights throughout the EU's external action. He attended the annual regional meeting of EU HoDs in the Middle East and North Africa region, in Beirut, to discuss in greater depth the mainstreaming of human rights in the EU's diplomacy in the region, and has had several meetings with individual HoDs to discuss the human rights situation in their host countries and the EU's coordinated response.

In 2013, the EU also continued to support human rights education in the world through a variety of financial instruments, including the EIDHR. Projects promoted by academic institutions and NGOs in various regions targeted a wide range of people, from schoolchildren to community leaders and police authorities, including the most vulnerable groups. The European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation (EIUC) and the Global Campus of Regional Masters in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Latin America are examples of successful projects in this field. Comprising more than 80 universities worldwide, the network provides an interdisciplinary centre of excellence offering post-graduate training on human rights for hundreds of students and future leaders. The trainers are from a variety of backgrounds, including the private sector, CSOs, and the civil service, as well as EU delegation staff. In 2013, the EIUC continued negotiations to establish an additional Regional Master's programme in the southern Mediterranean region.

- By the end of 2013 all EU delegations and CSDP missions and operations had nominated human rights focal points. In most delegations, specific liaison officers on human rights defenders have been nominated, and contact details have been published on their websites. Human rights focal points play a central role in coordinating the local implementation of human rights country strategies. They had an opportunity to share best practices at the first annual meeting of human rights focal points, which took place in Brussels on 28 February 2013.

- Respect for human rights is a key principle in the EIB's lending operations. This is reflected in the Standards guiding its social due diligence. Implementation of the standards by the Bank is made in close consultation with the EEAS' Human Rights focal officers across EU delegations

III Pursuing coherent policy objectives, internally and internationally

6. Effective support for democracy

The EU continued its work on strengthening democracy and democratisation across the globe in 2013. The main instruments used were political dialogues, backed up by electoral observation missions and development cooperation measures.

The pilot work on increased coherence for democracy support in the EU's external relations, initiated in Council conclusions from 2009 and 2010[6], and embedded in the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy in 2012, was concluded in nine EU delegations. A consolidated final report was presented to Council working parties in March 2013. The delegations produced "democracy profiles" and "democracy support action plans". Lessons learnt are being used to prepare a more structured second generation of pilots. The principles outlined in the EU Agenda for Action on Democracy Support (country-specific approach, dialogue and partnership, coherence and coordination, mainstreaming, international cooperation and visibility) were the bases for the implementation. The process demonstrated the need for further development of tools, both in terms of staff development and training, and in terms of guidelines and templates for analysis, identification of actions and implementation and assessment of activities in support of democracy.

[6] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/111250.pdf and http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/118433.pdf

Work in practice continued in some of the countries, in particular in Bolivia where a high-level working group has been established between the EU and the government to pursue efforts to deepen democratisation. Bolivia was also a pilot for an EU election observation follow-up mission in February-March intended to explore wider links to democracy support. Work to launch a second generation of pilots for democracy support was initiated in late 2013, building on the experiences from the first generation. Training components were developed during 2013, both in existing regular training courses and as stand-alone modules for democracy support. The ultimate ambition is to produce tools that will be globally applicable.

In 2013, the EU continued to support electoral processes around the globe by sending election observation missions (EOMs) and electoral expert missions (EEMs). EOMs were deployed to Jordan (legislative elections on 23 January), Kenya (general elections on 4 March), Paraguay (general elections on 21 April), Pakistan (parliamentary and provincial elections on 11 May), Mali (presidential elections on 28 July and 11 August, further deployment for legislative elections on 24 November and 15 December), Guinea Conakry (legislative elections on 28 September), Madagascar (presidential & legislative elections on 25 October and 20 December), Kosovo[7] (municipal elections on 3 November), Nepal (constitutional assembly/legislative elections on 19 November), and Honduras (presidential & legislative elections on 24 November). EEMs were sent to Bhutan, Cambodia, Togo, Swaziland, Rwanda, Maldives, Zimbabwe and Mauritania. In addition, follow-up to EOM recommendations is a high priority (as per the Human Rights Action Plan): so far, regular reporting by HoMs has started, guidelines for EOMs and Delegations are being developed; follow-up missions have been sent to Malawi (December 2012), Bolivia (March 2013) and Mozambique (May 2013).

[7] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

In addition to election observation missions, which are very visible instruments in support of credible electoral processes, democracy support activities are funded through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), implemented in partner countries through cooperation with civil society organisations[8].

Support for democracy also takes place on a larger scale in the form of support to various public sector institutions intended to increase services to citizens and foster the implementation of economic and social rights. Support is provided to parliaments and citizens' organisations and decentralisation measures are fostered, with the aim of expanding the political space, ensuring that citizens have a voice and are represented. Capacity building and institutional support are carried out mainly through the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) and the European Development Fund (EDF). New budget support guidelines were developed during the year, emphasising respect for fundamental values, and new policies for support to non-state actors/civil society and local authorities were adopted[9]. All have a bearing on democratisation processes.

[8] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF

[9] http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/civil-society/documents/com_2013_280_local_authorities_in_partner_countries_en.pdf

7. A standing capability on human rights and democracy in the Council of the EU

The Council working party dealing with all human rights aspects of the external relations of the EU (COHOM) brings together the EU Member States, the European Commission and the European External Action Service. COHOM is responsible for the strategic development and implementation of EU policy in the field of human rights and democracy, including the various EU guidelines on human rights, the human rights dialogues and consultations with third countries and the mainstreaming of human rights in EU external action. A key task is to identify the EU's strategic priorities in multilateral human rights forums, in particular at the UN Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly. COHOM oversees the overall implementation of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.

During 2013, COHOM continued to have periodic exchanges of views with the Chair of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights and with civil society representatives. Several other high-level guest speakers, including UN Special Rapporteurs and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, also addressed COHOM on specific topics.

The usual meetings in the capitals formation, attended by the human rights directors of EU Member States' ministries of foreign affairs, are now complemented by the regular meetings of the Brussels-based representatives, which was established in November 2012. The main objective is not only to address COHOM's increased workload given the expansion of EU human rights policy, but also to allow it to react more quickly to developments and to ensure close interaction with the Political and Security Committee and others, in particular the Council working parties dealing with geographic areas. This is a clear illustration of the EU's determination to promote human rights and democracy throughout its external action.

COHOM has established task forces to support COHOM's work in specific priority areas through in-depth preparation and discussion of several topics, in particular the implementation of EU guidelines in the field of human rights. These task forces are a practical way of bringing the relevant experts together from the EEAS, Commission services and the Member States and sharing the burden in an informal way. In 2013, the various task forces covered the following themes: the death penalty, torture, rights of the child, children and armed conflict, human rights defenders, violence against women and girls, democracy support, freedom of religion or belief, rights of LGBTI persons and freedom of expression.

Informal burden-sharing arrangements have proven an effective means of ensuring broad political support and allowing good use of the expertise and capabilities of the EU Member States, the EEAS and the European Commission. They exist in the UN human rights forums (Third Committee of the General Assembly and Human Rights Council) and in other multilateral organisations, such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE, as well as in bilateral settings.

8. Achieving greater policy coherence

The EU and its Member States are committed to ensuring respect for human rights within the EU's borders. Outside its territory, the EU is determined to promote human rights and democracy through all its external actions in line with Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union.

Efforts were made in 2013 to continue addressing issues of coherence and consistency between the EU's internal and external human rights policies. Cooperation between the Council Working Party on Fundamental Rights, Citizens' Rights and Free Movement of Persons within the EU (FREMP) and the Working Party on Human Rights in external action (COHOM) was intensified in 2013 through periodic exchanges. COHOM also had an exchange of views dedicated to the implementation of human rights treaties, focused on following up on the concluding observations of UN treaty bodies.

The interplay between international standards and EU law and policies as regards economic and social rights was also addressed in 2013 in the framework of the cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Council of Europe.

9. Respect for economic, social and cultural rights

EU is committed to supporting economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), including by advocating for the signing and ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol, and by affording practical support to organisations that work to advance ECSR, including the right to an adequate standard of living and core labour standards. Various tools were again employed in 2013 to promote, protect and respect these rights, including high-level advocacy, EIDHR funding, and public diplomacy.

ESCR continues to be an important area of funding under the EIDHR's Country Based Support Scheme which promotes human rights through support to mainly local civil society organisations.

In intergovernmental negotiations, the EU advocated the recognition of the links between the implementation of human rights standards and sustainable development and poverty eradication. In line with EU Council conclusions on the overarching approach to the post-2015 framework, the EU called for a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights. ESCR were also discussed with a number of partners in the EU's human rights dialogues during 2013. Issues related to compliance with ECSR, including labour rights, land rights, business and human rights and extractive industry transparency, were addressed in many human rights dialogues. In the EIDHR funded civil society seminar held just prior to, and with recommendation feeding directly into the formal 2013 EU-African Union dialogue, ESCR were among the few chosen focus areas with sessions on land issues and on the situation of domestic workers.

Throughout the year, the EU actively supported and cooperated with several UN Special Rapporteurs working on ESCR, such as the mandate holders for the right to food and the right to water and sanitation.

The EU has continued to hold discussions on how to step up its action on ESCR. Part of the annual NGO Forum focussed on how to improve accountability for the respect, protection and realisation of ESCR.

IV Human rights in all EU external policies and instruments

10. Working towards a rights-based approach to development cooperation

The Agenda for Change, the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy and the Communication towards a Post–2015 Development Framework were calling for a move to a Rights Based Approach (RBA). The negotiation on the DCI has introduced a RBA as a key objective of the Regulation for the period 2014 - 2020.

To this purpose, the EU has been mandated to develop a toolbox for working towards a rights-based approach, encompassing all human rights, to development cooperation.

The EU started preparing the first outlines of the 2014-2020 strategy papers, multi-annual indicative programmes and budget support programmes. A human rights-based approach will be used to ensure that that the EU strengthens its efforts to assist partner countries in implementing their national development policies in line with the international human rights obligations to which they have committed themselves. Furthermore, the legislative package on the EU's external instruments, adopted by the European Parliament on 11 December 2013, confirms a greater focus on human rights, democracy and good governance.

In 2013, the European Commission held several rounds of consultation with donors including international organisations such as UNOHCHR, UNESCO, UNICEF, academics and CSOs. Among other things, the European Commission organised in November 2013, a Brainstorming Seminar on "*How to work towards a Rights Based Approach, encompassing all Human Rights, for EU development cooperation*", and co-organised with OHCHR, at the occasion of the European Development Days on 27 November 2013, a dedicated panel *Will a rights-based approach make development more human?*.

In parallel with the programming exercise, the EU contributed to the formulation of the EU position and strategy for the follow-up to Rio+20 and the post-2015 development agenda. Council conclusions on the overarching post-2015 agenda, adopted in June 2013, as well as the European Commission's Communication *A Decent Life for All: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future* (February 2013), confirmed the prominent role of justice and equality, human rights, democracy and other aspects of good governance as well as decent work including rights at work, social protection and social dialogue in the new post-2015 framework.

11. Make trade work in a way that helps human rights

EU Free Trade Agreements are linked through "passerelle" clauses to the corresponding political framework agreements, which include human rights clauses. If there is no Association or Framework Agreement in force, a separate human rights clause is inserted in Free Trade Agreements. The principal value of a human rights clause is to demonstrate the shared commitment of the parties to human rights, while it also constitutes the legal basis for appropriate measures, including the suspension of the agreements, in the event of grave human rights violations.

An openness to trade, combined with good governance and sound domestic policies, is a major contributor to inclusive growth and sustainable development, and thus to improved human rights conditions. In line with the Communication on *Trade, Growth and Development: Tailoring trade and investment policy for those countries most in need* (COM(2012) 22, the EU continued in 2013 to help developing countries, notably least-developed countries (LDCs) and other countries most in need, to integrate into the global trading system and benefit as much as possible from trade. This is notably based on the EU's Aid for Trade policy, its unilateral trade preferences and its bilateral and regional trade agreements.

The staff working document on *Trade and the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, issued by the Commission in April 2013 (SWD(2013)173), recognises that trade generally benefits growth and development and can indirectly improve human rights. The document further concludes that only a small portion of international trade is linked to child labour and that the elimination of the worst forms of child labour is best undertaken through a holistic approach using a broad spectrum of instruments.

The EU Human Rights Action Plan covers areas of activity in relation to trade policy-making, where the contribution to human rights can be of particular relevance, such as the EU generalised scheme of preferences (GSP). In 2013 the EU lifted the suspension of GSP preferences for Myanmar/Burma that was imposed in 1997, in response to substantial improvements made by Myanmar/Burma in the area of human and labour rights.

During 2013, preparations continued for the application of the new GSP Regulation, that entered into force on the 1st of January 2014, including a review of the first group of applications for GSP+. The new regulation reinforces monitoring mechanisms for compliance with international conventions (including core human rights conventions) by GSP+ beneficiaries, and the Commission will report every two years on the implementation record of GSP+ beneficiaries to the Council and the European Parliament.

In 2011 the European Commission added sodium thiopental and similar substances used in lethal injections to the list of goods subject to export controls under Regulation 1236/2005 on trade in goods which could be used for capital punishment or torture[10]. In 2012 and 2013, US media reported that one US State planned to start using propofol, a medicinal product which is not on the control list, for executions. The EU producers supplying the US market have reacted with proactive steps to ensure that their product is not used for capital punishment, and no executions with propofol were reported by the end of the year. Responding in particular to calls from the European Parliament, the Commission has carried out, with the assistance of a group of experts, a general review of Regulation 1236/2005 and plans to present a proposal for amending the Regulation to the Council and European Parliament in early 2014.

[10] Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1352/2011 of 20 December 2011

The Commission carried out consultations regarding the possibility of adapting certain provisions of the existing Export Control Regulation 428/2009 so as to control exports of certain sensitive technologies that could be used in violation of human rights in conflict zones and by authoritarian regimes. The Commission began to prepare a Communication on a review of export control policies, which should be published in early 2014. Following the progressive deterioration of the situation in Syria, the Council decided in May 2013 to prolong the ban on the export of equipment or software intended primarily for the monitoring or interception of internet and telephone communications by the Syrian government, which was originally imposed by Regulation No 36 of 2012.

The Arms Trade Treaty, supported by the EU and its Member States, was adopted by the UN General Assembly in April 2013. It requires in article 7 that the risk of arms being used to commit or facilitate serious violations of human rights or international humanitarian law including acts of gender-based violence, must be assessed in arms export decisions. Such risk assessment comes in addition to the prohibition of arms exports under article 6 if they could be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva convention, attacks directed against civilians or other war crimes as defined by relevant international conventions.

12. Reflect human rights in conflict prevention and crisis management activities

The EU continued to mainstream its human rights and gender equality policies within the CSDP, in line with the recommendations of the Council's 2010 report "Lessons and best practices of mainstreaming human rights and gender into CSDP military operations and civilian missions" and the commitments in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.

Human rights and gender considerations are being integrated into the planning, implementation and evaluation of CSDP missions and operations. New crisis management procedures were adopted in June 2013, stipulating that a gender and human rights analysis should always be carried out during the planning cycle for new missions and operations, and integrated into key planning documents. In July 2013, the human rights advisers and gender advisers of CSDP missions and operations held their annual meeting. The meeting allowed them to discuss challenges and best practices, in particular with regard to mission start-up and drawdown, and particular attention was also given to the implementation of EU's human rights and gender policies in predominantly Islamic societies. Seventy percent of civilian missions, and all military operations, included a human rights and/or gender adviser or trainer as part of their staff in 2013.

Training modules on human rights, child protection and gender, corresponding to the EU's minimum training standards, were piloted during the year in cooperation with training institutes from EU Member States and civil society groups. These training modules are intended for the use of Member States in the pre-deployment training of all mission and operation personnel. Dedicated training sessions to familiarise EU and Member States' staff with the EU's human rights and gender commitments in the field of CSDP were organised, notably as part of the European Security and Defence College and EEAS training programmes.

The EIDHR is designed to be a flexible and responsive tool with a specific role in the EU response to crises. The EIDHR was utilised in EU initiatives in 2013 in several countries such as Mali, Myanmar/Burma, Somalia or Syria. In Myanmar/Burma, for example, an additional €1,65 million was allocated to fund initiatives for electoral assistance, support to the peace process, the eradication of forced labour and capacity-building of independent media outlets. In Mali, during the 2013 conflict, the EU funded a civil society initiative aimed at reporting human rights violations committed by all armed groups.

In the first half of 2013, the new conflict early warning system was piloted in the Sahel, before being gradually rolled out to other regions. The tools and methodology developed for the early warning system include many human rights-related indicators, such as respect for the international human rights framework, press freedom and respect for civil and political freedoms.

Work continued on the EU's comprehensive approach to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security. The annual EU Member States' seminar on the implementation of resolution 1325, which took place on 27 May 2013, focussed on impunity reduction and support for women's participation in gender-sensitive transitional justice processes. The seminar was addressed by Ms Zainab Hawa Bangura, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The second indicators report on the EU's comprehensive approach to the implementation of the two resolutions was under preparation during the year, with a view to publication in 2014.

In terms of cooperation with international organisations, the EU-UN steering committee on crisis management discussed gender and human rights, including gender training, at its April 2013 meeting, and in subsequent staff-to-staff talks. There were also regular staff-to-staff contacts with NATO and with the OSCE on human rights and gender issues. Civil society organisations were closely involved in the EU's work in this field, including through participation in the annual human rights and gender advisers' meeting, and by means of regular dialogue in Brussels and at the level of missions and operations.

13. Entrench human rights in counter-terrorism activities

The EU is fully committed to the protection of human rights in the context of the fight against terrorism, in line with its 2005 Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and the updated Action Plan on combating terrorism. The EU's approach is to promote respect for the rule of law, fundamental rights and freedoms, and the use of criminal justice system to combat and prevent terrorism. Effective counter-terrorism policies and the promotion and protection of human rights are mutually reinforcing.

The EU fully supports the key role of the UN in multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation, and the EU cooperates with third countries in their efforts to implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted by the UNGA in 2006. The protection and promotion of human rights is a cornerstone of that strategy. The EU conducted an assistance project with a number of Central Asian countries in support of their implementation of the UN Strategy, establishing regional action plans on implementation which had a specific focus on the protection of human rights while countering terrorism. A second assistance project was launched at the end of 2013.

The EU and many Member States participated in the "International Conference on National and International Coordination in Counter-Terrorism" (Istanbul, 24-25 October). The Conference brought together experts and policy-makers from the Member and Observer States of the Council of Europe, the United Nations, the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. They discussed legal and policy issues related to counter-terrorism coordination and examined the role of coordination bodies in the preparation and implementation of national counter-terrorism strategies. The Conference aimed to identify good practices in counter-terrorism coordination at national and international level and explored ways of improving coordination between intergovernmental, regional and supranational organisations in the field of counter-terrorism.

High-level UN and EU officials, senior legal, policy and military advisors and leading academics in the fields of international humanitarian and human rights law met at the European University Institute (EUI) on 22 February 2013, under the auspices of the EUI's Global Governance Programme (GGP), to discuss the direction and development of EU policy in response to the practice of targeted killing using unmanned aerial vehicles. The GGP High-Level Policy Seminar tackled the controversial practice of targeted killing using unmanned aerial vehicles from a range of legal and policy perspectives.

The EU supports third countries in their criminal justice reforms, most particularly in their efforts to move away from a confession-based approach towards an evidence-based approach. EU projects provide training to judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers. For example, the EU provided EUR 3 million in support in 2013 for the UN global initiative on effective counter-terrorism investigations and prosecutions, while respecting human rights and the rule of law, in the Maghreb. Similar support for criminal justice reform efforts linked to counter-terrorism has been provided to Pakistan.

14. Ensure human rights underpin the external dimension of work in the area of freedom, security and justice (FSJ)

The EU continued to implement the Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016 and the 2009 Action Oriented Paper (AOP) on strengthening the external dimension on action against trafficking, with EU delegations in priority countries playing an active role. Work has begun on the development of an inventory that will map funding instruments and projects operated by the EU and Member States in priority countries and regions. In March 2013, the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator organised a side event on the occasion of the 57th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), where the CSW recognised for the first time that the trafficking of women and girls is a form of violence against women.

In April 2013, the Commission published the first statistical data report on trafficking in human beings in the EU, covering the years 2008-2010. The report showed that more than half of the victims (61%) were from countries within the EU, with Nigeria and China as the most common countries of origin outside the Union. The vast majority of victims (80%) were women and girls. Also in April 2013, the Commission published an overview of the rights of victims of trafficking in the EU. This will help to inform victims, including those from third countries, of their rights, and assist state authorities and civil society organisations in Member States in their daily work of delivering assistance and protection to victims. On 6 April 2013, the deadline expired for the transposition of the 2011 Directive on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims (2011/36/EU, which includes provisions relating to the treatment of victims from third countries and the prosecution of criminal groups involved in trafficking outside the EU.

In line with the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), human rights were systematically included in bilateral and regional dialogues and cooperation frameworks on migration and asylum with third countries, including mobility partnerships. In addition, migration and mobility related aspects were frequently discussed in human rights dialogues with third countries.

Numerous projects were carried out under the GAMM that focus on protecting migrants, including asylum seekers, from abuses and human rights violations, and the EU continued to fund projects through the thematic programme for migration and asylum (TPMA), which was originally established for a period of 7 years (2007-2013). The total TPMA allocation for 2013 was EUR 60.89 million, which supported 22 projects in third countries, including the Civil Society Action for Promoting Migrants' Rights, which has a specific focus on vulnerable groups such as migrant domestic workers and victims of trafficking. In total, 187 projects have been financed through the programme, with an overall EU contribution of EUR 296 million. The programme has focussed on fostering the links between migration and development; promoting well-managed labour migration; fighting irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking in human beings; protecting migrants against exploitation and exclusion; and promoting asylum and international protection. The thematic programme on migration and asylum remains one of the key components of the overall thematic programme entitled “Global Public Goods and Challenges” in the 2014-2020 budget cycle.

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/Legislation+and+Case+Law/EU+Legislation/Criminal+Law/EU_Directive

15. Ensure promotion of human rights in the external dimension of employment and social policy

The core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are embodied in its eight fundamental conventions. The EU promotes the ratification and effective implementation of these conventions through cooperation with the ILO, including participation in an ongoing discussion on labour standards and in the work of the ILO supervisory bodies. At the same time, in the external dimension of its employment and social policy, the EU promotes the principles of decent work, including respect for the ILO fundamental conventions, in relations with partner countries, by means of bilateral and regional policy dialogues and implementation of development assistance projects.

In 2013, the ILO launched a discussion on establishment of a new standard supplementing the Forced Labour Convention (No 29), i.e. one of the eight ILO fundamental conventions. The new standard, envisaged for discussion and adoption by the International Labour Conference (the ILO supreme decision making body) in June 2014, will take a form of a Protocol and/or a Recommendation and should address implementation gaps by helping to improve prevention of forced labour, protection of victims, access to justice and compensation measures, as well as enforcement, including through international cooperation and/or assistance. The EU and its Member States have been participating in the preparatory work on the new standard. The EU Member States, like all ILO members, were requested to provide, by the end of 2013, replies to a questionnaire as a basis for a comprehensive ILO report to be issued in March 2014 and subsequent discussion at the International Labour Conference in June 2014.

The EU contributed to promote decent work for domestic workers and seafarers, in the context of the entry into force of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention and the Maritime Labour Convention, through financing of projects on migrant domestic workers and adoption of proposals and legislation to facilitate implementation of these conventions by the EU Member States. The Commission presented a proposal for a Council Decision authorising Member States to ratify ILO Convention No 189 on Domestic Workers, which entered into force on 5 September 2013. The Commission urged Member States to ratify the Convention as part of the EU Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings.

At the regional level, the EU-CELAC (Latin America and Caribbean) Summit held on 26-27 January 2013 in Santiago de Chile saw the participating States reiterate their commitment to respect human rights as enshrined in the international conventions. They acknowledged the need to improve practical application of labour standards and working conditions, including health and safety at work, in line with the principles of the ILO conventions. They expressed their commitment to prevent and to fight against trafficking in human beings and highlighted the need to prioritise social development, health and education, and to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, while ensuring an inclusive, fair and equitable society and healthy environment.

The ASEM Seminar on Promotion of Youth Employment on 20-21 November 2013 in Chongqing City in China, organised jointly by China, the EU and Poland, provided a forum for sharing best practices and experiences in dealing with youth unemployment.

In bilateral relations, in 2013, the EU discussed labour rights and effective implementation of the ratified ILO fundamental conventions with countries such as Bolivia (ILO conventions No 138 and No 182 on elimination of child labour) and Peru (forced labour, as well as freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining). In relations with Georgia, a dialogue on conventions No 87 on freedom of association and No 98 on the right to collective bargaining brought about long awaited amendments to the Labour Code adopted in June 2013, in response to recommendations by the ILO supervisory bodies. A dialogue with Uzbekistan with regard to convention No 182 on the worst forms of child labour supported the ILO's work on monitoring the cotton harvest and steps to improve implementation of the convention.

In relations with Bangladesh, the EU, in cooperation with the ILO and the country's government, launched on 8 July 2014 the joint statement "Staying engaged: A Sustainability Compact for continuous improvements in labour rights and factory safety in the Ready-Made Garment and Knitwear Industry in Bangladesh". The statement represents an initiative outlining time-bound and concrete actions to improve respect for labour standards, such as freedom of association and working conditions, as well as factory safety. The US associated itself with the Compact on 19 July 2013.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) underlined the need for further efforts to ratify and/or effectively implement the ILO fundamental conventions. The second UfM (Union for the Mediterranean)-EuroMed Social Dialogue Forum held on 13 November 2013 in Barcelona stressed the importance of addressing informality and further building the capacity for social partners in the region. In its regular dialogue with Morocco, the EU strongly encouraged the country to ratify as soon as possible ILO fundamental convention No 87. In relations with Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, association agreements, including provisions on a deep and comprehensive free trade area (DCFTA), were initialled in November 2013. They include commitments to effective implementation of the ratified ILO fundamental conventions.

The EU also actively participated in the post-2015 development agenda and Rio+20 follow-up process thereby demonstrating its support for productive employment, decent work for all, including job creation, guarantees of rights at work, social protection and social dialogue as well as addressing inequalities.

Effective implementation of the ILO fundamental conventions has also been promoted through development assistance. In 2013, the EU continued implementation of the BEST project with a total budget of EUR 15 million for actions designed, *inter alia,* to improve working conditions in the ready-made-garment and textile sector in Bangladesh. There was support for policy development and dialogue in developing countries in the fields of decent work indicators, social protection, occupational health and safety and the effects of trade on employment, through four joint management projects concluded in 2012 / 2013 amounting to a total of EUR 8.5 million. These included support for policy dialogue platforms, as well as capacity-building for governmental stakeholders and social partners.

The European Investment Bank's social due diligence is founded on ILO's core labour standards. The Bank standards explicitly exclude practices such as child labour, bonded or forced labour. Where the host country does not protect workers' association and collective bargaining rights, Borrowers are nonetheless expected to strive towards allowing for the introduction of alternative acceptable mechanisms to express grievances and protect workers' rights regarding the working environment and terms of employment. In either case, or where the law is silent, borrowers are required to not restrict workers from, or discriminate or retaliate against workers, who seek to participate in collective organisations and bargaining. Borrowers are required to address adherence to core labour standards in their supply chains, ensuring that their primary contractors and first-tier suppliers equally apply these and duly reflecting these standards in their procurement documents, contracts and monitoring arrangements.

Civil society organisations working to promote the implementation of labour standards and decent work were supported through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

V Implementing EU priorities on human rights

16. Abolition of the death penalty

The EU holds a strong and principled position against the death penalty and is a key actor in the fight against the death penalty worldwide. Throughout 2013, the EU continued to reaffirm its opposition to the death penalty and used all diplomatic tools at its disposal to advance the cause of worldwide abolition. The movement towards abolition is one of the priorities identified in the Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.

The EU Guidelines on Death Penalty, the first ever document of their kind when adopted in 1998, were updated in the course of 2013. The new text is a consolidation of the EU's experience in its leading role worldwide in advocating the abolition of the death penalty, and provides the basis for the Union's action in the field.

The revised version gives a prominent position to the EU's position on the abolition of the death penalty and adds relevant language from the Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy adopted in June 2012. It includes reference to all recent UNGA resolutions on the moratorium of executions, including the latest UNGA 67, which was adopted on 21 December 2012 with an unprecedented number of votes in favour. It also makes reference to the EIDHR funding of abolitionist projects as well as the Regulation (EC) No 1236/2005, which governs the export controls on certain goods which could be used for capital punishment. The new text instructs EU Heads of Mission to report regularly on the application of the death penalty in third countries and update Human Rights Country Strategies accordingly. Finally, it updates the minimum standards paper, in the light of latest UN resolutions, reports and opinions.

To mark the European and World Day against the Death Penalty on 10 October, the EU and the Council of Europe issued a joint statement reaffirming their opposition to the use of capital punishment in all circumstances, and their commitment to the abolition of the death penalty worldwide. The EU welcomed the announcement of the abolition of the death penalty in the US State of Maryland on 2 May 2013. The EU also welcomed Bolivia's accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on 12 July 2013. On the other hand, the EU deplored the continuing extensive use of the death penalty in other parts of the world. Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Japan, India, Taiwan and the USA were a particular focus of attention, but statements were issued and démarches were carried out in many other countries/territories, based on the minimum standards defined by international law and the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty.

The EU continued to raise its opposition to the death penalty in all relevant forums, in particular at the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The High Representative represented the EU and actively participated in the UNGA High Level Ministerial Meeting, co-organised by France, Benin, Costa Rica and Mongolia, on the "Role of regional organisations in the fight against the death penalty".

As already identified under the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, the EU participated actively in the World Congress against the Death Penalty, which took place in Madrid in June 2013. It was organised by ECPM (Ensemble contre la peine de mort), under the sponsorship of Spain, Norway, Switzerland and France and in partnership with the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and with the support of Germany, Sweden, Luxemburg and the EU. It proved to be a unique contribution to the abolitionist objective, since it brought together representatives of governmental organisations, civil society, academics, lawyers and individuals working in the field. The EU was represented at a high level by the EUSR for Human Rights, Mr Stavros Lambrinidis, who addressed the closing ceremony of the event on 15 June.

The EU issued five statements on the death penalty at the Permanent Council of the OSCE during 2013. Three of these statements criticised death sentences that had been passed in participating States (in Belarus and the US). Another statement praised the abolition of the death penalty in Maryland, USA. Furthermore, the EU issued a statement on the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty on 10 October. It praised the growing momentum towards the abolition of the death penalty worldwide, including the adoption of the 2012 UNGA Resolution calling for a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty, but regretted that in practice, executions continued to take place. Finally, the EU co-organised – together with Andorra, Norway, San Marino, Serbia and Switzerland – a side event on the abolition of the death penalty during the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, on 2 October.

The EIDHR is an essential tool in the EU's efforts towards the abolition of the death penalty. Through the EIDHR, the EU is the leading donor supporting the efforts of abolitionist CSOs in retentionist countries. Since 2007, the EIDHR has allocated nearly EUR 20 million to support such actions, including nine key multiannual initiatives launched in 2012, aimed at promoting the restrictive use of, the establishment of a moratorium on, and the abolition of the death penalty. Activities include supporting the reform of Criminal Codes; promoting the signing, ratification and effective implementation of international and regional related instruments; advancing an environment conducive to abolition through advocacy, lobbying and awareness-raising campaigns; and monitoring current conditions of the use of the death penalty. The EIDHR ensures a comprehensive coverage of countries/territories where the death penalty has not yet been abolished such as the USA, African countries, China, India and Taiwan.[11]

[11] The report "Delivering on the Death Penalty" offers a comprehensive picture of EIDHR-funded actions in support of the fight against death penalty worldwide: http://www.eidhr.eu/files/dmfile/EIDHRDeliveringonDeathPenalty.pdf.

17. Eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

In line with the EU guidelines on torture (revised in 2012), the European Union continued its policy of upholding the absolute prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The EU used all available tools of diplomacy and development assistance to eradicate torture, and provided very substantial financial support to civil society organisations around the world that are working to prevent torture and to provide assistance to victims of torture. During 2013, the EU continued to confidentially raise concerns regarding individual cases of torture, notably in the framework of human rights dialogues, and issued several public statements condemning the use of torture or welcoming the signing of the relevant international instruments. The EU publicly condemned the sentencing of an underage victim of sexual abuse to corporal punishment in the Maldives, called for a thorough investigation into a video published on the internet containing graphic evidence of torture in Fiji, welcomed the signing of the UN Convention Against Torture (CAT) by Vietnam, and continued to speak out on torture in multilateral forums such as the UN and the OSCE. EU delegations actively promoted accession to the CAT and the Optional Protocol to the CAT (OPCAT), and supported the development of national anti-torture mechanisms.

On 9 December 2013, the EU Delegation to Indonesia organized jointly with the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission and the Association for the Prevention of Torture a seminar on the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) and the establishment of a National Preventive Mechanism in the country.

In its annual statement on the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June 2013, the EU called upon all states to introduce an absolute and unconditional prohibition of torture, and stressed the need to adopt a gender-sensitive approach in the fight against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, paying special attention to gender-based violence. The EU urged all states to become parties to the UN CAT and OPCAT. The statement also stressed the importance the EU attaches to the role of the UN, Council of Europe and the OSCE in fighting torture and supporting victims, and paid tribute to the persistent efforts by the many NGOs and individuals working tirelessly for the prevention of torture and to alleviate the suffering of victims.

During the 22nd session of the UN Human Rights Council, EU Member States co-sponsored a resolution condemning, among other things, all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and stressing the importance of providing redress to victims of torture, with specific focus on the right to rehabilitation. The resolution calls upon States to ensure that rehabilitation activities are tailored to the needs of victims and include medical and psychological treatment, as well as community and family-based care, along with social, educational and vocational services.

The EU's commitment to fight against torture and ill treatment is being complemented by funding of anti-torture projects implemented by civil society actors worldwide. Indeed, eradicating torture and ill treatment is a key objective of the EU Human Rights Policy and a major priority under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. In line with the EIDHR strategy, a global call for proposals was launched in 2012 with the objective to support civil society activities contributing to making the absolute prohibition of torture a reality for all. It ultimately aimed at ensuring accountability for torture and other ill treatment in third countries. The priorities selected under the call reflect the evolution of our methodology and promote an integrated approach encompassing all factors of the fight, such as prevention; denunciation, investigation, prosecution, punishment of perpetrators; and rehabilitation of victims and their families. This victim-centered perspective allows for a more comprehensive response to the eradication of torture and ill treatment without leaving out any crucial areas of support in that fight. As a result of this process, nineteen global and regional projects were selected and started their activities in the course of 2013 for a total amount of 20M€.

In parallel, on a national level, we observed an increased number of EU representations in third countries that included the fight against torture and ill treatment as a priority in their local call for proposals. This tendency, mostly reflected in ENPI countries, not only strengthen the work carried out at a regional and global level but reinforces as well the implementation of the EU Guidelines on Torture and Ill treatment on a national level.

Finally, this year again, the substantial EIDHR funding of projects has facilitated an increased global knowledge about the root causes of torture, brought the obligations under the Convention Against Torture (CAT) to the country level, build accountability and increased victims' access to remedies and reparation, including comprehensive rehabilitation of victims of torture and their families. Moreover, it has also helped amongst others activities, providing capacity building to civil society organizations or networks of NGOs in third countries to carry out activities to fight against torture and impunity and strengthing the capacity and motivation of NHRIs in Africa and in the Asia Pacific to prevent torture.

18. Effective support for human rights defenders

Human rights defenders are key partners of the EU in its policy of protecting and promoting human rights worldwide. In line with the 2004 EU Guidelines on human rights defenders, the EU is a staunch supporter of all those who courageously monitor the state of human rights and endeavour to address violations. This is all the more important at a time when the environment in many countries is becoming increasingly hostile to the work of human rights activists. Slander campaigns against NGOs, restrictions on access to funding from abroad, and acts of intimidation and violence against activists are just a few examples of the challenges faced by many human rights defenders in their daily work.

The EU Guidelines have therefore continued to be a central reference point in contacts with partner countries at all levels, most notably during human rights dialogues, as well as in multilateral human rights forums. Throughout the year, the EU consistently raised individual cases involving human rights defenders during contacts with third countries and issued statements confirming support for their work, including in cases where defenders were detained, harassed or assassinated. The EU issued numerous local statements, HR/VP statements and démarches specifically focusing on the situation of human rights defenders.

From Brussels and through EU delegations on the ground, the EU has worked to secure the release of activists who have been unfairly detained, monitored the trials of human rights defenders, consulted with them on how the EU can help improve the human rights situation in their countries, sensitised local communities and the wider public to the work of human rights defenders, provided financial support for their activities, and devised ways to circumvent censorship against them. Regular, annual meetings between human rights defenders and EU diplomats have become an established practice. Throughout the year, the EU cooperated closely with strategic partners, international organisations and UN mandate-holders working on the issue of human rights defenders. In particular, the EU contributed to the preparation of Recommendations on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the OSCE Region, elaborated by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Under the EIDHR substantial funds are being allocated to support human rights defenders. Most of this support is channelled to HRD through specialised NGOs, including in emergency situations. In 2013, 25 new projects in support of HRDs were launched, worth EUR 20 million. These new, additional actions add to the already on-going 130 specific projects defending human rights and their defenders where they are the most at risk, already worth EUR 100 million. Implemented by CSOs, they were selected through the nine calls for proposals launched from HQ since 2007 and at least 14 local calls with HRDs as a priority. Furthermore, a new call was launched in 2013 (selection on-going) worth EUR 15 million. It will bring a new set of projects for spring 2014. Its priorities are (i) civil and political rights in a shrinking space for NGOs and criminalisation of HRDs,(ii) economic and social rights, including environment, natural resources and land issues, (iii) challenges faced by HRDs living in remote areas, (iv) women's rights and gender issues. Furthermore, the European Commission keeps at its disposal a financial envelope that enables it to provide ad-hoc grants of up to EUR 10 000 directly to human rights defenders in cases of urgent need. By the end of 2013, over 140 grants amounting to a total sum of EUR 1.1 million had been disbursed. This type of support can cover different kinds of support to defenders (individuals and/or organisations), including medical aid, legal expenses, purchasing security material for offices or homes, urgent relocation of activists at risk, support to families of imprisoned or deceased defenders, etc. The report "Delivering on Human Rights Defenders", available at www.eidhr.eu/library, offers a comprehensive picture of EIDHR-funded actions in support of defenders worldwide.

In parallel, the European Parliament has been an outspoken supporter of human rights defenders. The Subcommittee for Human Rights (DROI) often invited human rights defenders to its sessions. Established in 1988, the European Parliament’s Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is intended to honour exceptional individuals who combat intolerance, fanaticism and oppression in particularly difficult circumstances. In October 2013 the prize was awarded to Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani campaigner for girls' education.

19. Promotion and protection of children's rights

In 2013 the EU continued to promote children's rights around the world. Following a joint effort between the EU and UNICEF, a toolkit for mainstreaming children's rights in development cooperation has been completed and launched through regional training organised for EU delegations and other donors. The main aim is to support the integration of children's rights in development cooperation, not only for the EU but for all donors.

The EU supports the UNICEF programme *Breaking with Broken Systems: Partnership for the Legal Identity of African and Asian Children (Investing In People*), providing a total of EUR 5.4 million over the 2012-2014 period. The overall objective of the programme is to trigger the transformation of civil registration in eight selected countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, ensuring an immediate, universal registration service is delivered to all citizens.

In 2013, the EU issued a EUR 5 million call for proposals for projects on combating female infanticide.

In December 2012, the Investing in People thematic programme launched a EUR 41 million global call for proposals to help eradicate violence against children. This led to the selection of 38 projects that directly or indirectly address child labour. Some projects focus on conflict-affected countries (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan).

More than 28 000 Children in Armed Conflict have benefited from the decision in late 2012 to use the Nobel Prize money that was awarded to the EU to assist children in conflict situations. This EU Children of Peace Initiative was turned into multi-annual assistance programme on education in emergencies (EUR 2 million committed in 2012, EUR 4 million committed in 2013). The nine new EU Children of Peace Initiative projects, benefitting an additional 80 000 children, were announced at a public event on Universal Children's Day, 20 November 2013, by Commissioner Georgieva.

On 12 February 2013, the High Representative issued a joint statement with the newly appointed UN Special Representative Leila Zerrougui on the occasion of the International Day against the use of Child Soldiers, where they raised their concerns over a growing number of persistent perpetrators of grave violations against children during conflicts. Ms Zerrougui visited Brussels on 26-27 June 2013 and held a series of meetings with representatives of the EU institutions and Member States.

The EU organised as part of a broader programme of training on human rights and international humanitarian law, a seminar on children and armed conflict in Addis Ababa in September 2013, in cooperation with the African Union, the World Bank and the UN. The seminar formulated a number of recommendations for further cooperation.

The EU took further steps to mainstream child protection in its crisis management operations. The EU Training Mission in Mali has provided training for the security forces on child protection issues. The EU and Belgium worked in cooperation with Save the Children to test the EU pre-deployment child protection training module, which should be rolled out for all new CSDP mission and operation staff in 2014.

The Commission issued a Staff Working Document SWD(2013)173 on *Trade and the Worst Forms of Child Labour* in early 2013 which recognises that trade generally benefits growth and development and can indirectly improve human rights. The Staff Working Document further concludes that only a small portion of international trade is linked to child labour and that the elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour is best addressed through a holistic approach using a broad spectrum of instruments.

The EU actively participated in the Third Global Conference on Child Labour in Brasilia on 8-10 October 2013. The main goal of the conference was to evaluate the progress made globally since the adoption of ILO Convention No 182 and on the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016, agreed at the Second Global Conference on Child Labour in The Hague in 2010. The "Brasilia Declaration on Child Labour" was adopted. It acknowledges the efforts made to date and outlined measures which countries should put in place to eliminate child labour. Although the 2016 target for eliminating worst forms of child labour will not be achieved, the EU remains fully committed to implementing the 2010 The Hague roadmap".

Through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the European Commission has earmarked an indicative amount of EUR 13.2 million for the years 2007-2013 to support civil society throughout the world in implementing projects on children.

20. Protection of the rights of women, and protection against gender-based violence[12]

In 2013 support for women's empowerment and gender equality remained a core issue for the EU's external relations work. Matters addressed ranged from women's political participation and economic empowerment to various initiatives against gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. Gender issues are mainstreamed in all the EU programmes and included in public messages, political dialogues with governments, and dialogues with civil society. The EU continued to provide specialised training to diplomats on how to take into account women's issues in their day-to-day work during their postings in third countries.

The EU actively engaged in the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that took place in March 2013. The CSW is the UN's main policy-making body on gender equality and the advancement of women. Its priority theme in 2013 was the *Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*. The EU started preparations for the 58th session of the CSW, where the priority theme is *Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls*.

The EU has been an active partner in the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, a G8 priority initiative aiming to address impunity for sexual violence in conflict. In November 2013 the EU adopted a Communication on 'Zero tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation'. The communication sets out a series of actions to work towards the elimination of FGM, including better understanding of the phenomenon, prevention of FGM and victim support, more effective prosecution by Member States, protection of women at risk on EU territory and working to eliminate FGM at global level.

In the 2013 Communication on the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Commission and the High Representative reaffirmed the need for further efforts to advance women's rights. In particular, the EU encouraged more gender balance in institutions, considering the positive effect of a wider representation of women for democratic and peaceful societies. The Union for the Mediterranean's ministerial conference on strengthening the role of women in society was held in September 2013 in Paris.

[12] This section also covers gender equality.

In December 2013, the third report on the implementation of the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 was published. The report covers the period from July 2012 to June 2013 and deals in particular with the implementation of the indicators in this period.

In November 2013 the EU hosted the European Development Days in Brussels. A special panel was dedicated to discussing the question 'How can the post-2015 architecture ensure progress towards gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment?' and debating the role of women in unlocking the drive for sustainable development.

The UN has continued to be the platform upon which the EU advances its strategic priorities. The EU supported the work of UN Women, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and the UN Special Representative on Conflict-related Sexual Violence. During 2013, the EU and UN Women continued to implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in April 2012. A Work Programme was agreed and implemented. The MoU forms the basis of a partnership aiming to achieve key international commitments in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment. Key achievements were made in the fields of communication, policy dialogue and joint advocacy, training, and planning of joint EU–UN Women programmes. The EU and UN Women currently have eight ongoing joint programmes in various fields and countries, covering areas such as political leadership, violence against women, economic empowerment, gender-responsive planning and budgeting, and women's participation in peace-building. In April 2013, for example, the EU and UN Women co-organised an event on women's leadership in the Sahel Region, in collaboration with the UN Special Envoy for the Sahel. The event, which brought together civil society leaders, government officials and representatives of international organisations, focussed on the importance of advancing gender equality and women's leadership in response to the crisis in the region.

The EEAS held regular meetings of the Informal Task Force on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The annual meeting of EU Member States on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which took place in May 2013, addressed transitional justice and gender, and the reduction of impunity. The Second Report on the EU-indicators for the Comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security, which covers the period from October 2010 to December 2012, was prepared in 2013. The report is based on the EU commitment under the Comprehensive Approach and the 17 indicators adopted by the Council in 2008. It highlights many encouraging developments, including progress on the adoption and implementation of National Action Plans by EU Member States and the deployment of gender advisers in more than half of CSDP missions and operations.

In its commitment to continued and systematic deployment of women's protection advisers within peacekeeping and political missions, the EU supported the swift deployment by the African Union and the United Nations of human rights observers in Mali. The European Union provided financial support to the deployment of independent human rights observers from civil society organisations. The European Union Training Mission in Mali included training on gender and human rights, provided by the mission's only civilian trainer, deployed under the UK's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative.

The EU supported the inclusion of gender experts in mediation efforts, alongside the participation of women throughout such processes. A number of actions have already been undertaken by the EU to promote women's equal and full participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. In April 2013, the EU hosted the UN Mediation Support Unit's second pilot course on gender and inclusive mediation processes, a high level seminar for envoys, mediators and mediation experts. In Cote d'Ivoire the EU contributed EUR 1 million to informal work on peace negotiations, including the awareness campaigns by women's organisations supporting the role of women in the peace process and in reconciliation. The network of women in the West Africa Peace and Security Network has received help from the EU to promote dialogue and exchange. In Guatemala, the EU supported a project which trained 386 indigenous women in mediation and negotiation skills, resulting in the resolution of 100 land tenure conflicts. 4181 women participated in this process. The Guinea Bissau EU delegation recently started to provide support for women mediators in local conflicts through the Peace Building program. In the Maldives, the EU supports a local conflict mediation project through the UN, in which 23 out of 37 trainees (62%) are women.

In July 2013 the EU adopted the Commission Staff Working Document Gender in Humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance (SWD (2013)290final), which outlines the Commission's approach to gender and gender-based violence in humanitarian aid. It aims to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance through actions that effectively respond to the specific needs of women, girls, boys and men. This will be achieved through gender integration, participation and protection. In order to support policy implementation and coherence, a gender-age maker was designed to foster and track gender- and age- sensitive programming and will be applied to all funded actions in 2014.

The EU continued to be an active partner in the Equal Futures Partnership initiative established in September 2012, which aims to break down barriers to women's participation in political and economic life.

Gender issues gained importance in relations between the EU and other international partners. The "EU-LAC (Latin America and Caribbean) space of dialogue for gender issues" has been established to act as a base from which issues relating to gender can be discussed and highlighted as part of the partnership between the EU and the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Gender has been prioritised in the Work Programme between EU and the League of Arab States Secretariat.

In 2013, additional efforts were made to increase the representation of women within the EEAS. Overall, 29.0 % of HQ staff and 19.2 % of EU Heads of Delegation are women. Two of the eleven EU Special Representatives are women. The EEAS Annual Staffing Report issued on 26 July 2013 confirms the clear improvement in the presence of women in key management positions in delegations and improvement of gender balance at headquarters in Brussels. In 2013 the EEAS Women network was established under the leadership of the EEAS Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs. The network focused on a number of activities – from informal talks with women Ambassadors, UN Special Representatives and other inspiring role models to coaching sessions and a mentoring scheme so that everyone can profit from the experience and advice of women diplomats in senior management positions.

21. Compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL)

The EU is a major advocate for international humanitarian law (IHL) and humanitarian principles. The European Union has a twofold approach to IHL: an internal and an external policy approach. In the framework of its external action, the EU continued to support IHL dissemination to all warring parties, including armed non-state actors, and made more systematic use of political dialogue and démarche campaigns to encourage third countries to ratify core IHL instruments and implement IHL obligations. The EU continued to implement the Guidelines on IHL, adopted in 2005 and updated in 2009, which serve as a tool to promote compliance with IHL by third states and non-state actors.

The EU indicated its readiness to participate in the Advisory Forum of Montreux Document Participants for the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers' Association (ICoCA), an independent oversight mechanism launched in Geneva in September 2013. The European Union also participated in the International Conference on the Montreux Document, which was convened by Switzerland and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 11-13 December 2013.

The EU continued to enhance its advocacy for compliance with international humanitarian law in the framework of humanitarian aid in 2013. Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva denounced international humanitarian law violations in situations of armed conflict, and in particular in Syria. In her speech at the Kuwait Pledging Conference for the Syria Crisis on 30 January 2013, she insisted that all parties must respect international humanitarian law and uphold and protect the most basic principles of humanity: sparing innocent civilian lives and the relief workers who are there to help.

In December 2013, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), HR/VP Ashton issued a statement paying tribute to the ICRC's tireless and invaluable work in protecting the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict worldwide. The EU accompanied ICRC in a full year of commemorative events, with Commissioner Georgieva recognizing the indispensable role of the organisation for the humanitarian world, its proud history and record of achievements. The EU and its Member States combined provided the largest financial contribution to ICRC in 2013. The European Commission supported the ICRC-led project "Health Care in Danger", aimed at improving the efficiency and delivery of effective and impartial health care in armed conflict and other emergencies, and in 2013 also financed a joint communication campaign with the ICRC, with actions in seven European capitals. The EU continued to fund a project by the Finnish Red Cross to increase awareness of international humanitarian law. The EU's different bodies maintain frequent dialogue with the ICRC on current major humanitarian challenges in various operational contexts. This dialogue focuses, *inter alia*, on the ICRC's response in a number of crises, with the implementation of the EU guidelines on promoting compliance with IHL remaining an important vector of cooperation.

During 2013, the EU provided financial support to a project enhancing the International Committee of the Red Cross's capacity to provide IHL training and dissemination for military/security forces and armed non-state actors in key conflict affected countries, namely Iraq, Colombia and the DRC. The EU also funded the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action and Geneva Call for a project under which trainings of armed non-state actors on IHL take place in Sudan; the action also supported a meeting of signatories of the Deeds of Commitment in order to review and promote the implementation of the Deeds. The EU also continued to fund a project by the Finnish Red Cross to increase awareness of international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles among European humanitarian organisations and their implementing partners working in conflict-prone or post-conflict countries.

Member States made progress on implementing the pledges they made at the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 2011. Lithuania ratified the 2006 Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance on 14 August 2013, and Poland signed the Convention on 25 June 2013. On 2 April 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), regulating the international trade in conventional arms. It has already been signed by all EU Member States.

22. Enjoyment of human rights by LGBTI persons

The EU is strongly committed to the entitlement of all people to enjoy the full range of human rights without discrimination. As a mark of this commitment, in June 2013 the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU adopted the "Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons".[13]

These guidelines aim to provide officials of EU institutions and EU Member States with guidance to be used in contacts with third countries and with international and civil society organisations, using a case-by-case approach, in order to promote and protect the human rights of LGBTI persons within its external action. They seek to enable the EU to proactively promote the human rights of LGBTI persons, to better understand and combat any discrimination they might face, and to react to violations of their human rights. In doing so, they will further contribute to reinforcing and supporting the EU's human rights policy in general.

On 17 May 2013, the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, HR/VP Ashton issued a declaration on behalf of the EU, stating that "The EU campaigns tirelessly for the respect of human rights, irrespective of sexual orientation and gender identity. We raise the issue of LGBTI rights during our Human Rights dialogues, we speak out through public statements, and we work behind the scenes with our Delegations to argue the case for justice and human rights. Through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the EU supports LGBTI human rights defenders across the world."

The EUSR for Human Rights was invited to present the EU's new guidelines on the rights of LGBTI persons at the annual ILGA conference in Zagreb in October. He also visited Nuremberg to present the city's bi-annual International Human Rights Award to Ugandan LGBTI human rights defender Kasha Nabagesera. In dedicated meetings both before and during his Russia visit, the EUSR placed special emphasis on defending LGBTI individuals and HRDs in light of the recently adopted adopted law on the propaganda of homosexualism among minors in the Russian Federation.

[13] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137584.pdf

In 2013, the EU continued to be actively engaged in multilateral efforts, notably within the UN, to tackle discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. In different UN forums, the EU works to ensure that all persons, including LGBTI persons, enjoy all human rights without discrimination.

On 26 September, the cross-regional LGBTI core group, which includes the EU and some of its Member States, organised the first ever Ministerial level meeting on the role of the United Nations in ending violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. All members of the core group, including the HR/VP, signed a ministerial declaration on that occasion. The clear message was that LGBTI persons are entitled to the same rights as all other individuals: no new human rights are created for them and none should be denied to them.

On the occasion of the International Human Rights Day 2013, a coalition of UN Member States, the EU, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Human Rights Watch (HRW), the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), United For Equality in Sports and Entertainment, and Global Action Initiatives (GAI) organised the fifth edition of the traditional LGBTI event at the UN, this year entitled "Sport comes out against homophobia". The event featured a number of famous sports figures.

At the regional level, the EU continued to support the work of the Council of Europe on the human rights of LGBTI people, in particular through the Council of Europe Recommendation on Measures to Combat Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, which were adopted on 31 March 2010.

Bilaterally, the EU continued to use its human rights dialogues with third countries to promote non-discrimination of LGBTI people, and several public statements and démarches were used to demonstrate the EU's position on LGBTI issues, including its stance against homophobia and in favour of decriminalisation of homosexual relations. In this context, the EU has been monitoring and addressing worrying homophobic trends, including in some African countries, in Russia and in the Republic of Moldava.

Through the EIDHR, the EU continued to support several organisations defending LGBTI rights by empowering them to challenge homophobic laws and discrimination against LGBTI people, raising awareness among the general public of the discrimination and violence experienced by persons of different sexual orientations, combating that discrimination, and providing emergency assistance (from psychosocial and medical to mediation and reintegration assistance) to those in need of such support. In August 2013, an EIDHR call for proposals was launched to fund activities to promote and protect LGBTI persons' rights. EUR 5 million have been allocated to it: the procedure for the project selection is ongoing and will be completed in 2014.

23. Freedom of religion or belief

The EEAS actively worked on the elaboration of new EU guidelines on freedom of religion or belief adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council in June 2013, following broad consultations with specialised civil society organisations, as well as churches, religious associations or communities and philosophical and non-confessional organisations.

In the guidelines, the EU reaffirms its determination to defend freedom of religion or belief as a right to be exercised by everyone everywhere, based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination and universality. The guidelines notably explain what the international human rights standards on freedom of religion or belief are, and give clear political guidance to officials of EU institutions and EU Member States, to be used in contacts with third countries and with international and civil society organisations. They also provide officials with practical guidance on how to seek to prevent violations of freedom of religion or belief, to analyse cases, and to react effectively to violations wherever they occur, in order to promote and protect freedom of religion or belief in the EU's external action.

The guidelines build on the universal definition of freedom of religion or belief and focus on eight priority areas for action, which are of equal importance: violence; freedom of expression; promotion of respect for diversity and tolerance; discrimination; changing or leaving one's religion or belief; manifestation of religion or belief; support and protection for human rights defenders including individual cases; and support for – and engagement with – civil society. It was considered particularly important to highlight freedom of expression in the context of freedom of religion or belief: the two are interdependent interrelated and mutually reinforcing as they protect all persons – as opposed to religions or beliefs in themselves – and those persons' right to express opinions on any or all religions and beliefs. The guidelines further recall the tools that the EU can use in order to address freedom of religion or belief bilaterally or in multilateral forums.

The adoption of the guidelines was all the more timely, given that increasing incidents of violations of Freedom of Religion or Belief were occurring across the world. Violent incidents and terrorist attacks targeting individuals and sites on grounds of religion or belief happened in various countries, and were condemned by the EU through diplomatic action, statements and Foreign Affairs Council conclusions. As in previous years, freedom of religion or belief was systematically raised with many partners at different levels of political dialogue, including in human rights dialogues, during which freedom of religion or belief and the situation of persons facing severe discrimination or violence the grounds of their religion or belief was addressed.

In multilateral forums, the EU has been particularly active in strengthening the content of freedom of religion or belief resolutions both in the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) and in the United Nations General Assembly. In the 22nd HRC session in March 2013, the EU-led resolution on freedom of religion or belief was adopted once again by consensus. The resolution extends the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and for the first time has explicit language on the right "not to have" a religion. At the Third Committee of the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly, the EU was successful in improving the human rights aspects of its resolution on Freedom of Religion or Belief. This included, for the first time, a reference to the right to change one's religion or belief. The resolution was adopted by consensus. The EU engaged actively with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the implementation of UNHRC resolution 16/18 on "*Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief*". The EU participated in an experts' meeting on the issue in Geneva in June 2013 which focussed on the implementation of three action points, including one on "adopting measures to criminalise incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief". The EU put emphasis on the action-oriented nature of Resolution 16/18 and called on all participants to come up with specific achievements as examples for others, as well as continuing engagement to change mind-sets and overcome misperceptions.

As far as the EU's financial instruments are concerned, the promotion of freedom of religion or belief remained a funding priority under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). In 2013, a global call for proposals on combating discrimination was launched with a total allocation of EUR 20 million, including EUR 5 million specifically to support projects on promoting freedom of religion or belief and combating discrimination on religious or belief grounds. During the 2013 EIDHR Forum – an annual event focusing on the concrete implementation of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights – Freedom of Religion or Belief was one of the key thematic issues discussed in the parallel sessions. This event brought together CSOs that are beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries of the instrument, allowing exchanges on lessons learnt and best practices, in order to improve EIDHR operational support to CSOs and HRDs in this field of action.

24. Freedom of expression online and offline

The EU is committed to further strengthening its work on freedom of expression online and offline, including freedom of the media. In 2013, the EU repeatedly condemned restrictions on freedom of expression and access to the internet, as well as the arrest of journalist and bloggers in the framework of its bilateral relations with third countries and through public statements.

The EU is committed to promoting the link between new technologies and human rights as important avenues for promoting democracy. Speaking at the launch of the cyber security strategy in February 2013, HR/VP Ashton emphasised the importance of freedom of expression online: "For cyberspace to remain open and free, the same norms, principles and values that the EU upholds offline, should also apply online. Fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law need to be protected in cyberspace. The EU works with its international partners as well as civil society and the private sector to promote these rights globally."

These actions build on work already conducted under the "No Disconnect Strategy", which was created in 2011 with the aim of providing on-going support to activists, political dissidents, bloggers, journalists and citizens living and operating under non-democratic regimes to help them organise, mobilise and exercise their rights through a variety of tools to circumvent arbitrary censorship and fight indiscriminate surveillance.

The EEAS, in accordance with the Action Plan, held informal discussions with the Commission and Member States in preparation for the drafting of guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline, to be adopted in 2014. The aim of those guidelines is to address unjustified restrictions on freedom of expression. Consultations were held with civil society on how to better engage with and protect journalists and bloggers and in June 2013, the EEAS launched a public consultation on the internet.

In June 2013 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on press and media freedom in the world.

The EU continued its efforts to ensure that freedom of expression remains high on the UN agenda, working actively at the multilateral forums to ensure strong cross-regional support for the promotion and defence of freedom of expression. As an example, during the 24th session of the UN Human Rights Council, the EU spoke out against increased restrictions on freedom of expression.

25. Implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council on 16 June 2011, cover the State's duty to protect human rights, the responsibility of corporations to respect human rights, and access to legal remedies. In 2013 the EU maintained its commitment to the implementation of the Guiding Principles and continued, first, to ensure that the Guiding Principles are fully understood and adhered to in the EU, and second, to promote their implementation through its external action.

To support the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights within the EU, in 2013 the Commission published a guide on human rights for SMEs. The guide explains the rationale for respect of companies for human rights , and provides examples as to the kind of impact it may have on SMEs' operations. It presents categories of human rights that are relevant from an enterprise point of view (such as the right to non-discrimination, the right to equal remuneration for work of equal value, the right to privacy or the right to freedom of association) and explains how to respect them. Finally, it provides advice on how to remedy potential risks.

In 2013, the Commission published human rights guidance for three business sectors (employment and recruitment agencies, information and communications technologies, and oil and gas). The guidance is meant for enterprises operating in these sectors both inside and outside the EU. It explains the categories of human rights that are important in contacts with different target groups (e.g. own employees, clients) and provides advice on how to include respect for them in the company's policies and its day-to-day operations.

The Commission is implementing a peer review with Member States on their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, including Business and Human Rights. This peer review was followed up by 7 meetings of 4 Member States each, where Member State shared their CSR experience and held each other to account through questioning. The results are being filtered through the High-Level Group of Member States' representatives on CSR. A compendium outlining Member States' activities on CSR is being prepared.

In the action plan for democracy and human rights, the EU Member States agreed to produce national action plans on business and human rights. In 2013, most members states have been working on such plans.

In April 2013, the Commission presented a proposal for a Directive enhancing the transparency of certain large companies as regards social and environmental matters. The companies concerned will disclose information on policies, risks and results as regards environmental matters, social and employee-related aspects, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery issues, as well as diversity on their boards of directors. The proposal aims to strengthen the existing EU legislation, which already requires the inclusion of environmental and employee-related information in the companies' annual reports. In order to avoid undue administrative burden, companies with fewer than 500 employees will not be required to report environmental and social information.

The second UN Forum on Business and Human Rights took place in Geneva in December 2013, under the auspices of a working group established by the UN to follow up and encourage implementation of the UN Guiding Principles. The Forum attracted 1800 representatives from government organisations, NGOs, trade unions and business organisations. However, business participation decreased as compared to 2012.

The EU was represented at the Forum (by the External Action Service, European Commission and EIB). At the plenary session, it emphasised its commitment to the implementation of the Guiding Principles. The Commission's representative, speaking in a multi-stakeholder panel, presented the EC human rights guidance in the sector of information and communication technology. The EIB presented its engagement with the UNGPs in the panel " Applying the UN Guiding Principles to state-owned financial institutions" dedicated to Public finance

During his visit to China in September, the EUSR for Human Rights organised the first ever EU-China Roundtable on Business and Human Rights, which gathered over 50 participants from EU and Chinese authorities, academia, business and other stakeholders, to discuss the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, exchange best practices and explore possibilities for future cooperation between the EU and China in this field.

Further to a declaration made at the EU–CELAC (Latin America and Caribbean) Summit in Santiago, the first EU-CELAC seminar on CSR was held in October 2013 in Brussels. Experts from the private sector and officials from the EU, the EU Member States, CELAC countries and relevant international organisations discussed the state of play and the latest developments concerning international instruments on CSR. They also had a look at existing national CSR plans, presented challenges which the public and private sectors in Latin American and Caribbean countries face when implementing CSR instruments, and looked at the specificities of SMEs in the context of CSR. Presentations were also delivered with regard to innovative grievance mechanisms for community–company conflicts.

The EU continued promoting CSR practices within the framework of trade and sustainable development chapters of its Free Trade Agreements, including those concluded with the Republic of Korea and with Colombia and Peru.

26. Administration of justice

Throughout the year the EU continued to support a comprehensive approach to the work on rule of law issues at the **United Nations,** submitting views to the UN Secretariat on how to further the linkages between the rule of law and the three main pillars of the United Nations (peace and security, development and human rights) at the UN General Assembly.

The Council working parties on the United Nations and on human rights discussed the EU's follow-up to the pledges it made at the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the Rule of Law at National and International Levels held in New York on 24 September 2012, notably the further ratification and accession to international instruments and increased contacts with the Council Working Party on Fundamental Rights with a view to further improving coherence and consistency between the EU's internal and external human rights policies.

EU Member States have also supported the UN Human Rights Council resolution on "Human rights in the administration of justice", initiated by Austria. The EU also supported the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers.

In its **bilateral relations** with third countries, the EU promoted the rule of law and raised issues pertaining to the administration of justice, including the functioning and resourcing of the justice system, the organisation and independence of the judiciary, the right to a fair trial and rights of defendants. Where relevant, the EU encouraged and supported legislative and institutional reforms, for instance of criminal codes and the penitentiary system, as well as capacity building and activities aimed at improving access to justice, including for women.

Support to the justice sector and the rule of law more broadly is also an important and growing area of cooperation in many countries benefiting from EU assistance. It is closely connected to the promotion of democratic governance, human rights, gender equality, citizen security and socio-economic development.

EU diplomats around the world also engaged in **trial monitoring**, in line with the EU guidelines on human rights defenders, to send a clear and visible signal to the authorities or the partner country and to the general public that the administration of justice in the country in question is under the scrutiny of the international community. In 2013, EU diplomats monitored – among others – trials of four members of a human rights association in Turkey, judicial proceedings in the case of a Philippine human rights defender, and the case of a journalist and defender of the rights of the Talysh minority in Azerbaijan. In some instances, access was not granted to the court room, but presence close to the court building was ensured. The monitoring of judicial proceedings by EU diplomats was usually carried out on a burden-sharing basis, with the involvement of representatives of EU delegations and EU Member States' missions.

27. Responding to violations: ensuring accountability

The EU and its Member States continued to conduct their well-established common policy in support of the International Criminal Court (ICC), including on the preservation of its independence as well as the universality and integrity of the Rome Statute. The Court's mandate to punish the perpetrators of the most inhumane crimes imaginable, in cases where no other recourse to justice is available, makes the ICC an essential contributor to international peace and security.

The EU and its Member States remained committed to preserving the integrity of the Rome Statute, including during the ICC Assembly of States Parties, which was held in The Hague from 20-28 November 2013. In particular, the EU supported the principle that the Rome Statute applies equally to all persons without any distinction based on official capacity. This is a fundamental principle that underpins the Court's work to end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes.

The EU maintained its systematic démarche campaigns in support of the ICC (*see section 4*).

The EU and its Member States continued to stress that the ICC is an independent and impartial judicial institution with no political goals to pursue, and EU Member States continued to be among its major donors. The EU provided additional direct and indirect financial support to the Court by fostering legal cooperation and the exchange of best practice between state parties and non-state parties, and the legal community.

The EU reacted to acts of non-cooperation with the Court and recalled the importance of all Member States of the United Nations abiding by and implementing the resolutions adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter referring situations to the Court. The EU stressed that non-cooperation constitutes one of the most serious challenges to the effective functioning of the ICC.

The EU and its Member States continued to pursue the aim of creating a holistic and integrated approach to complementarity through increased capacity development initiatives at national level, not least by promoting the fight against impunity in development cooperation and technical assistance programmes. To this end, the EEAS and the European Commission drew up an internal joint staff working document on advancing the principle of complementarity, which aims to bridge the gap between international and national justice. It offers operational guidelines to EU staff in EU delegations and at HQ on how to make the principle of complementarity work at the national level, while respecting the Rome Statute. It equally suggests openings for intervention in the area of criminal justice and the rule of law in order to promote the principle of complementarity in country-specific situations.

The EU took the first steps towards developing a policy on transitional justice. Discussions on transitional justice were held in COHOM, including with Pablo de Greiffe, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence. Several sessions of the 2013 Annual EU-NGO Forum on accountability were also devoted to the topic of transitional justice, and provided useful insights into the lessons learned and remaining challenges in this policy field.

28. Promote respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities[14]

The Treaty on European Union explicitly states that the respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities are among the values upon which the EU is founded and which it undertakes to promote in its relations with the wider world. At the international level, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities is the key reference text on the rights of persons belonging to minorities. In Europe, the Council of Europe has adopted the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities[15] and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages[16].

In 2013 minority issues continued to be an important aspect of the EU's external relations, and the EU regularly raised minority issues in its political dialogues with non-EU countries.

The EU worked closely with the enlargement countries to review progress in implementing key commitments undertaken to promote further inclusion of the Roma community.

The EU also actively cooperated in UN forums on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. UN processes include the Forum on Minority Issues and the work of the Independent Expert on minority issues. Also, the EU continued to join forces with other international organisations and multilateral bodies active in this field, such as the OSCE and its newly appointed High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Astrid Thors, and the Council of Europe.

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14 This section includes policies on racism, xenophobia, non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

15 http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/157.htm

16 http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/148.htm

On 21 March 2013, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, High Representative Ashton issued a declaration on behalf of the EU, stating “that we must act more resolutely to tackle all forms of intolerance, racism, xenophobia and other types of discrimination. In times of economic crisis, the dangers of rising racism and xenophobia, fuelled in part by increasing unemployment, and insecurity about the future, are very real. It is in these challenging times that our commitment to combating racism must be relentless.”

In its external action, the EU continued to raiseissues related to racism and xenophobia in its political dialogues with non-EU countries. These issues also continue to be taken into consideration in cooperation strategies. For example, under the European Neighbourhood Policy action plans, the partner countries commit themselves to combating all forms of discrimination, religious intolerance, racism and xenophobia.

In its multilateral relations, the EU also actively cooperated with the UN in tackling racism and discrimination. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) is the universal foundation for efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate racism. The European Union continued to call on all States that had not yet ratified or fully implemented the Convention to do so. At the meeting of the UN General Assembly's Third Committee in November 2013, the EU welcomed the report of the Special Rapporteur, Mutuma Ruteere, on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance.

The EU continued to cooperate with regional bodies such as the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). In the OSCE framework, the EU worked in close cooperation to advance the implementation of the commitments made by the 57 OSCE participating States as regards combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

The EU supported government programmes and policies targeted at persons belonging to minorities and at the fight against discrimination in its international cooperation. Through its European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the EU supported a wide range of civil society actors working on anti-discrimination projects. In 2013 a EUR 20 million call for proposals was issued to reinforce the EIDHR-funded fight against discrimination.

In addition, through the EIDHR, the EU supported the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the implementation of existing international standards on equality and non-discrimination, in particular the ICERD. In a statement made on 8 May 2013, HR/VP Ashton and Commissioner Piebalgs underscored the EU's support for the OHCHR saying "We have decided to make this contribution as this UN Office represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity. Human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace and good governance are common values and a silver thread that runs through the EU's foreign and development policy. We have both the moral obligation and the political will to protect them,".

In 2013, in the context of its social due diligence standards, the EIB has dedicated a Standard to safeguard the rights and interests of vulnerable population groups. Within said standard, premised upon the principles of anti-discrimination and equality of treatment, minorities are explicitly acknowledged as potentially vulnerable groups in that they may be exposed to several risks and adverse impacts at once; are more sensitive to those risks and impacts, having been subject to pre-existing discrimination, financial, socio-economic, cultural and/or gender inequalities and/or limited or no access to justice and decision-making; and, have a weaker adaptive capacity for coping with those risks and recovering from those impacts, due to limited access to necessary assets and/or resources.

29. An enhanced policy on indigenous issues

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007, which advances the rights of indigenous people and ensures their access to continued development around the world, holds the principles of the EU's engagement towards indigenous peoples.

The EU seeks to integrate human rights, including indigenous peoples' rights, into all aspects of its external policies. It does so by in its political dialogues with third countries and regional organisations, at multilateral forums such as the United Nations, and by giving financial support.

On the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People on 9 August 2013 the High Representative issued a statement, joining the world's indigenous peoples "in celebrating their rich cultural heritage", and paying "tribute to the enormous contribution their traditions and knowledge have made to the world's cultural heritage." In addition, many EU delegations all over the world organised events on or around 9 August, including meetings with indigenous leaders, press conferences, press articles, participation in seminars and visits to projects funded by the EU.

The EU continued to participate actively in the United Nations forums dealing with indigenous people's rights, as well as contributing to the cooperation work of UN agencies focused on indigenous peoples. The EU also made a statement on indigenous people in the 68th Session of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, as well as at the 2013 session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), and took part in the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Mr James Anaya. Moreover, the EU renewed its support to the Technical Secretariat of the Indigenous Peoples representatives for the United Nations' organs, bodies and sessions, in relation with Human Rights. Through the Indigenous Peoples' Centre for Documentation, Research and Information (doCip), various services such as training, documentation and information have been provided to the Indigenous Peoples delegates in order to ensure their effective participation in the relevant processes of the United Nations.

Indigenous peoples' rights continued to be mainstreamed in EU development cooperation strategies. The Colombia Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013, for instance, addresses the humanitarian and human rights situation of its indigenous peoples. Its key priorities include peace building through the involvement of marginalised citizens in local governance and the participatory economy, as well as the promotion of human rights, good governance and the fight against impunity. Another example is the explicit inclusion of indigenous peoples in the support for modernisation of the state, strengthening good governance and social inclusion in the Peru Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013.

The EU acknowledges the particular vulnerability and acute repression that defenders of indigenous peoples' rights face in many countries around the world, as shown by numerous international reports, including reports by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders. This was also highlighted in the High Representative's abovementioned statement of 9 August 2013.

The EU directly supports civil society organisations working on indigenous issues, in particular through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Under this funding instrument, there is wide scope for specific actions relevant to indigenous peoples to be implemented at the national, transnational or regional levels. In 2013 the EIDHR provided funding to the ILO to advance the implementation of Convention No 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in three regions of the world: Africa, Asia and Latin America. Furthermore, the EIDHR targeted indigenous peoples in Lot 1 of the 2013 call for proposals on combating discrimination.

Since 2011 the EIDHR has been financing a EUR 1.2 million project aimed at strengthening the network of indigenous peoples' human rights defenders which monitors and documents violations of human rights of indigenous peoples in Asia, to raise awareness at local level and internationally about indigenous peoples' rights and to protect those individuals and groups who promote and protect indigenous peoples' rights in Asia. This project, targeting Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, aims to tackle the lack of legal recognition and adequate policies for the protection of indigenous peoples' human rights in the Asian region, which is home to approximately 200 million of the estimated total of 350 million indigenous peoples worldwide.

The EIDHR signed a project to protect and support indigenous and rural women in Latin America against the impact of mining and other extractive industries. This project covers Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Venezuela in South America, Guatemala and El Salvador in Central America, and Mexico. It offers legal and therapeutic support and training workshops on such topics as human rights, fundraising, computer systems, etc. At the same time, it guides the setting up of protection plans for female activists at risk. A group of female activists visited the institutions of the European Union as part of the project, to give visibility to the issue of business and human rights.

The EU Human Rights Action Plan contains an action point on indigenous peoples: "Review and further develop EU policy relative to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with a view to the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples". Preparations were started in the second half of 2013, inter alia by interservice consultations and by inviting the United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP) to speak at COHOM.

The revision of the EIB's social due diligence standards affirmed the Bank's commitment to the rights and interests of indigenous populations under Standard 7 "Rights and Interests of Vulnerable Groups". Indigenous peoples are explicitly included in this Standard as a distinct social and cultural group. Where EIB operations encounter, affect or threaten the customary rights and interests of indigenous peoples, and where specific actions and outputs are required from Borrowers, particular attention to social due diligence is mandated. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)24 is the guiding document of reference in this respect for the EIB. A gender-sensitive approach endeavouring to promote the rights and interests of women and girls in indigenous communities constitutes a further layer of due diligence required. In all instances involving indigenous peoples across EIB lending, an Indigenous Peoples Development Plan must be prepared, abiding by the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). Requirements and procedures to substantiate the FPIC are being elaborated in detail under EIB's Standard 10.

30. Human rights for persons with disabilities

In its external action the EU is committed to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to which the EU became a party in 2011. The EU action includes mainstreaming across the full spectrum of EU external policies, including dialogue with partner countries, multilateral forums, development cooperation, enlargement, neighbourhood policy, as well as emergency and humanitarian aid. The EU external disability policy is covered in the EU Disability Strategy for 2010-2020, adopted by the European Commission in 2010, and as an area of activity in the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy.

The EU ratification of the CRPD provided an added impetus to raise issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities in political and human rights dialogues with third countries. In 2013, disability rights issues were raised in human rights dialogues with the African Union, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, the Palestinian Authority, Russia, Tajikistan and the US. In particular, the EU called for the ratification and full implementation of the CRPD by all States. The EU also continued to uphold and advocate respect for the human rights of persons with disabilities in the relevant regional and international forums.

The EU continued to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities outside the EU through the systematic inclusion of persons with disabilities in EU development cooperation. The Commission Communication "A Decent Life for All" includes the mainstreaming of the social inclusion and the rights of persons with disabilities in its proposal for a common EU approach to a post-2015 framework to respond to the universal challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

In 2013 the EU actively participated in the preparation of the High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development (HLMDD) which took place in New York on 23 September 2013. In particular, the European Commission hosted a European regional consultation meeting in April 2013 in preparation for the HLMDD. The regional consultation provided an input for the HLMDD's action-oriented outcome document, underlining the importance of ensuring accessibility for, and inclusion of, persons with disabilities in all aspects of development and of giving due consideration to persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development agenda.

In 2013 the annual report of the Disability High-level Group on the implementation of the CRPD focussed on international cooperation and development (Article 32 CRPD). The report offers an overview of approaches, measures and instruments available at EU and Member State level to promote the effective integration of the disability dimension in development cooperation policies and programmes.

Several EU instruments provide funding aimed at persons with disabilities. Some examples are the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Development Fund (EDF), the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). In 2012 the EU funded over 80 projects, in over 50 partner countries (with a budget estimated at over EUR 30 million).

VI Working with bilateral partners

31. Impact on the ground through tailor-made approaches

The EU's human rights country strategies were introduced with the aim of achieving a more targeted and coherent approach to human rights issues in third countries. The strategies, prepared by EU delegations in close cooperation with the embassies of Member States, set out the priorities for EU action in the domain of human rights in each third country. Thanks to the concerted efforts of EU delegations, EU institutions, Heads of Missions and Member States 146 human rights country strategies from all regions of the world were prepared, and discussed by COHOM and the relevant geographical working parties in Brussels. By the end of 2013, the Political and Security Committee had endorsed 123 human rights country strategies. Only four strategies remain to be finalized.

The drafting process and the implementation of the human rights country strategies has led to closer collaboration between the EU delegations and Member States' embassies on human rights.

Engagement with civil society has been encouraged during the consultation process and several delegations have seen their network of contacts in human rights issues grow as the process has helped coordinating the human rights contact lists of Member States and EU delegations.

32. Impact through dialogue

The EU values human rights dialogues with third countries as efficient tools for bilateral engagement and cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights. Formal human rights dialogues, subcommittees or consultations took place with 33 partners in 2013.[17] With human rights being a key part of the Copenhagen criteria, the European Commission engages closely with candidate countries and potential candidates as regards the human rights situation

In addition, the EU continued to engage in dialogue on respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance with many of the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries that are party to the Cotonou Agreement, based on Article 8 of the Agreement or by other means.

In 2013 the EU continued to work to increase the effectiveness of dialogues, notably through:

– developing close links between human rights dialogues and other policy instruments, notably human rights country strategies, and also in other policy areas; e.g. in 2013, the substance and format of the dialogue with Colombia were enhanced.

[17] Human Rights Dialogues or subcommittees with: the African Union, Algeria, Armenia, Chile, China, Colombia, Georgia, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Laos, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova, New Zealand, the Palestinian Authority, South Africa, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. Consultations on human rights took place with: Canada, Japan, Russia, South Korea, the US and candidate countries (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey). It was not possible to hold sessions of the established human rights dialogues with Egypt, Sri Lanka and Tunisia in 2013. The sessions with Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, India, Israel, Kyrgyz Republic, Mexico, Morocco and Pakistan were postponed to 2014. The human rights dialogue with Iran has been suspended since 2006.

– making full use of the recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN Human Rights Council, Treaty Monitoring Bodies and Special Procedures.

– strengthening dialogue and cooperation on human rights with the EU's partners. In 2013 a human rights dialogue with South Africa and human rights consultations with South Korea were held for the first time. The establishment of official human rights dialogues is now an option with Mongolia, Singapore and the Philippines in the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement agreed with the EU. Moreover, the EU and Myanmar/Burma agreed to launch a human rights dialogue early in 2014.

– continuing the roll-out of best practice across the various formats of human rights dialogues, notably by better embedding them in the overall relationship with the third country concerned, and by focusing attention on the follow-up to the dialogues through specific action plans, legislative reforms and projects which the EU can support through its instruments, including cooperation assistance. Human rights dialogues in the context of the ENP continued to constitute best practice in this respect.

– paying close attention to setting the agendas for human rights dialogues, with a focus on the domestic human rights situation, including individual cases, whilst being responsive to requests from partner countries to discuss EU internal human rights issues, in close cooperation with EU Member States. Multilateral issues at the UN and relevant regional organisations are now included as standard items on the agenda for the dialogues.

– increasing the engagement of EU and local civil society organisations in human rights dialogues: in 2013, seven dedicated civil society seminars were held to feed into the official human rights dialogues.

As part of this best practice, consultations with civil society, both at headquarters and in the country concerned, as well as debriefing after the dialogues, were undertaken across the board.

33. Effective use and interplay of EU external policy instruments

The inclusion of a human rights, democracy and rule of law clause (essential elements clause) in EU agreements with third countries is intended to promote the EU's values and political principles which constitute the basis for its external relations. This clause represents the core of EU values and is defined as an essential element of the agreements. The major violation of an essential element allows a party to take immediate measures including, as a last resort, the suspension of an agreement or parts thereof.

In 2013, the EU continued to engage in dialogue with many of the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries that are party to the Cotonou Agreement (*see section 32*). Article 96 contains a dispute settlement clause, on the basis of which consultations and appropriate measures, including (as a last resort) the suspension of the cooperation, can be undertaken with regard to the country in question. In 2013, such appropriate measures remained applicable to Fiji, Guinea Bissau and Madagascar. Appropriate measures under Article 96 with the Republic of Guinea were lifted and the EU resumed full cooperation with the country following the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections in 2010 and 2013 respectively. Appropriate measures were extended but their application suspended in the case of Zimbabwe.

The human rights clause was not used as the basis for new restrictive measures against any third country in 2013.

VII Working through multilateral institutions

34. Advance effective multilateralism

The EU continued to strongly support a robust and effective multilateral human rights system that advances the further development and universal application of universal human rights standards. The EU translated its human rights priorities into action at the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Human Rights Council and UN specialised agencies, such as the ILO. The EU also actively engaged countries from all regions on initiatives that genuinely contributed to the protection and promotion of human rights. The EU continued to use an annual strategic work plan and regular discussions at COHOM capitals meetings, reinforced burden-sharing arrangements and intense EU coordination in Geneva and New York as well as regular discussion in bilateral dialogues and enhanced outreach on EU priorities in order to make its participation in these forums even more effective (cf. Action 34 of the 2012 EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy).

35. Effective burden sharing in the UN context

68th session of the UN General Assembly (Third Committee)

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs) of the 68th session of the General Assembly met from 7 October to 27 November, and its results were confirmed by the UN Plenary in December 2013.

By the end of the session, the Committee had adopted 63 resolutions, 14 following a vote. The EU was successful in achieving its main objectives for the session: all four EU initiatives were adopted by the Third Committee, with positive results.

The resolution on human rights in Myanmar/Burma was adopted by consensus for the second year running, in the context of reforms in the country, and following close EU engagement with the country concerned. It welcomed the progress made, while drawing attention to the remaining human rights challenges in the country, including the remaining political prisoners, the violence and discrimination against Muslim minorities including the Rohingya and the situation in the ethnic areas. It urged Myanmar/Burma to make progress regarding the opening of an OHCHR country office with a full mandate.

A comprehensive text on the persistent human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was initiated jointly with Japan. The resolution welcomed the work of the Independent International Commission, which was established by the Human Rights Council in March and began work in July 2013, and highlighted the alarming situation in the prison camps. It was adopted without a vote, as in 2012, although the country concerned and seven other countries disassociated themselves from it.

Freedom of religion and belief was again brought to the Committee by the EU, and a comprehensive, human rights-based text was adopted by consensus. It stressed the right to change one's religion.

The EU and the Group of Latin American Countries (GRULAC) were able to agree on a comprehensive draft resolution on the rights of the child, which this year looked at the whole range of issues related to this matter. This resulted in a progressive text adopted by consensus with several new elements pertaining to children and armed conflict, administration of justice and health, as well as explicit references to the ICC, the death penalty and the right to peaceful assembly. The EU and Uruguay held a well-attended side-event that brought together all child protection mandate-holders.

The EU also strongly supported country resolutions on Iran and Syria, which were adopted by a vote, although without any no-action motion being called this year. The Canadian resolution on Iran, supported by the EU, was adopted with over 80 votes in favour, reflecting continued support for the initiative. The resolution on human rights in Syria was tabled by a cross-regional group led by Saudi Arabia and adopted with strong support.

The Committee made progress on other EU priorities, for instance gender equality, the advancement of women and the situation of the girl child, adopting without vote a resolution against child, early and forced marriage, a subject which had also been the object of a joint African Group-EU initiative at an earlier session of the Human Rights Council.

The EU was united for the overwhelming majority of votes on resolutions and worked with third countries to improve texts before the Committee, for instance the resolution on racism. The EU's achievements during the UNGA 68th Third Committee again reflected a significant team effort, with nearly all Member States engaging in burden-sharing and many in the presentation of national initiatives. EU missions also united forces for outreach and lobbying, conducting intense New York-based lobbying, supported by capitals-based démarches, follow-up contacts and outreach in Geneva.

EU efforts to build support for LGBT issues were continued through the organisation, together with partners in the LGBT core group, of a cross-regional high-level side event at which sports celebrities added their voices to the United Nations campaign to counter homophobic violence and discrimination.

The United Nations Human Rights Council

During the busiest year since the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the EU was very active in its three regular sessions in 2013 (with a record number of 107 resolutions, decisions and President's statements adopted) as well as in a number of human rights working groups and forums (including on business and human rights, right to development, and racism) and the three sessions of the Universal Periodic Review which it strived to preserve as a universal mechanism of a cooperative nature. Throughout the three sessions, the EU was able to present a united front on most resolutions.

The deteriorating situation in Syria remained high on the HRC agenda throughout the year, with the Council adopting resolutions on Syria at each session, including two at HRC23, which also held an urgent debate in the aftermath of the killings in Al Qusayr. The mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria was extended until March 2014.

At the Council's March session, the EU tabled resolutions on Myanmar/Burma and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK (with Japan) to extend the mandates of the respective Special Rapporteurs and, in the case of the DPRK, to create an international independent commission of inquiry. The EU also pursued initiatives on freedom of religion or belief (extending the Special Rapporteur's mandate by consensus) and the rights of the child (with GRULAC) which focussed on the highest attainable standard of health. As in previous years, the EU supported a resolution extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Iran.

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights participated in high-level panel discussion dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and a side event on policies against the death penalty. The EU co-organised a cross-regional high-level side event on the power of empowered women and hosted a side event on freedom of religion or belief. The EU also expanded its public diplomacy activities more generally, and increased its use of social media.

In 2013, the EUSR held official meetings with UNSG Ban Ki Moon and UNDSG Jan Eliason, met repeatedly with HCHR Navi Pillay, and also met with a number of UN Special Rapporteurs and Representatives, to exchange priorities and to promote even closer cooperation between the EU and the UN on human rights matters.

In *June*, the EU successfully initiated the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation in Belarus with stronger cross-regional support. This mandate holder and the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea held first inter-active dialogues with the HRC and reported to the UNGA Third Committee in October. The Council also considered country situations and, with EU support, renewed the mandates of the independent experts on Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire and Somalia. The Council also adopted its first resolution on the situation in the Central African Republic, paving the way for the creation of a mandate of a special rapporteur at the September session.

The EU also supported the important thematic work of the HRC. The EU actively supported resolutions regarding gender issues (on the elimination of violence against women, on discrimination against women and on the role of freedom of expression and opinion in women's empowerment). Moreover, the EU and the African group presented a joint statement on child, early and forced marriage supported by more than 100 countries. The EU further supported an African-led statement on female genital mutilation, and a cross-regional statement on the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity that was delivered by Norway.

The EU participated in discussions with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants whose report focused on the management of the EU's external borders and its impact on the human rights of migrants. European Commission and Fundamental Rights Agency representatives engaged constructively in a discussion at an OHCHR side-event on the implementation of the Special Rapporteur's recommendations in his latest report.

In *September*, with EU support, HRC24 adopted a resolution on Syria with a strong plea for accountability, a strong condemnation of massacres and the use of chemical weapons, a call for access for the Commission of Inquiry and a demand for safe humanitarian access. African situations, including CAR, DRC, Somalia and Sudan, were again prominent on the agenda, and there were also resolutions on Cambodia and Yemen.

At the initiative of several EU Member States, individually or in cooperation with third countries, EU policy priorities such as protection of journalists and human rights defenders, the protection of civil society space, the death penalty and the right to privacy were successfully addressed. Moreover, the EU continued to defend the participation of NGOs in UN meetings and spoke out against the intimidation and harassment of persons who cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms.

The EU engaged with third partners on potentially problematic initiatives, in order to ensure that the Human Rights Council maintains its focus on human rights issues and does not undermine achievements in other forums. The EU intervened actively on the resolution on the impact of arms transfers on human rights to ensure that it would not undermine the recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty, strongly supported by the EU and many others across regions, which contains strong parameters on international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The EU annually allocates an un-earmarked voluntary contribution to the OHCHR for its targeted actions; in 2013, the amount was EUR 10 million. This higher-than-usual ad hoc contribution allowed the Office to face the unforeseen increased workload in Northern Africa and Asia, and to mitigate the decrease of the UN membership's financial contributions at a key moment.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), a tripartite UN agency established in 1919, plays a key role in monitoring economic and social rights. The core labour standards are embodied in its eight fundamental conventions. The EU promotes the ratification and effective implementation of these conventions through cooperation with the ILO, including participation in an ongoing discussion on labour standards and to the work of the ILO supervisory bodies. At the same time, within the external dimension framework of its employment and social policy, the EU promotes the principles of decent work, including respect for the ILO fundamental conventions, in relations with partner countries, by means of bilateral and regional policy dialogues and implementation of development assistance projects. See chapter 15, "Ensure promotion of human rights in the external dimension of employment and social policy" for more details.

36. Enhanced regional mechanisms for human rights

The 10th African Union (AU) - European Union (EU) Human Rights Dialogue took place in November 2013 in Brussels. The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in areas such as the death penalty, migrants' rights, business and human rights, and on protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. In addition, the two sides welcomed and took note of the recommendations presented by African and European civil society representatives, which resulted from the fourth AU-EU civil society seminar that took place in advance of the dialogue meeting.

Cooperation on human rights with the League of Arab States was initiated on the basis of the EU-LAS Cairo Declaration of 13 November 2012. The joint work programme adopted on the same date focuses on dialogue, the exchange of know-how on the implementation of international human rights standards, the development of LAS human rights mechanisms, and the mainstreaming of human rights in LAS activities. A Memorandum of Understanding on concrete cooperation activities in the field of human rights for the period 2013-2015 was formally agreed at the November 2013 senior officials' meeting and a number of its elements are already being implemented.

In its bilateral dialogues with Latin American countries, the EU reiterated the importance of independent regional mechanisms and the need to safeguard the acquis and integrity of the Inter-American Human Rights System.

The EU has been working with ASEAN human rights bodies/committees on promoting exchanges of expertise, best practices on specific human rights treaties and UPR process, the implementation of international human rights treaties, specific thematic priorities, the role of regional human rights mechanisms, and the provision of institution strengthening and capacity building through technical assistance, including through the ASEAN-EU Human Rights Programme (which will include human rights cooperation activities under the READI Facility for the year 2014-2015). The EU Special Representative for Human Rights was invited to official talks with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission for Human Rights (AICHR) during AICHR's annual meeting in Jakarta in May 2013. During the visit, the EUSR emphasised the importance of working together to strengthen the universal application of human rights and strengthening cooperation with civil society.

Concrete cooperation on the ratification of international human rights instruments continued with the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat through a project financed by EIDHR.

Finally, strong encouragement was given and useful exchanges of experience on the implementation of universal human rights standards by regional mechanisms took place in Brussels in December at the 15th annual EU-NGO forum (see section 2). The role of regional mechanisms in the fight against impunity was discussed, with specific attention devoted to the articulation and reinforcement of the tools/mechanisms that facilitate access to justice, reparation and right to truth for victims of gross human rights violations. The forum saw the participation of representatives from a number of regional human rights mechanisms, including the UN, HCHR, CoE and OSCE.

The Council of Europe

The EU pursued its close cooperation with the Council of Europe (CoE) in 2013. In line with the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding, both organisations maintained regular contacts at both political and working levels, with cooperation on human rights, rule of law and democratisation issues being at the heart of their relationship. The Commission President, the HR/VP, and Commissioners held meetings with senior Council of Europe officials, including the Secretary General and the President of the CoE Parliamentary Assembly (PACE). Cooperation between the EU and the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights continued to work well, and the EUSR for Human Rights maintained regular direct contact with the CoE.

The EU followed closely the work of the CoE expert bodies in monitoring and advising CoE Member States on human rights standards. The EU held its annual consultations on its enlargement package with the Council of Europe. In October 2013, the EU also held consultations with the CoE and its monitoring bodies during the preparation of the annual ENP progress reports.

In order to foster the protection of fundamental rights within the EU, the Lisbon Treaty mandated the EU to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Negotiations for EU accession reached an important milestone in April 2013 with the agreement reached at negociator's level on a draft package of legal instruments setting out the arrangements for the EU Accession to the ECHR. The Court of Justice of the EU is now considering the compatibility of the draft accession agreement with EU Treaties.

The EU continues to make a major contribution to CoE activities by financing joint programmes and activities. The EU and CoE continue to implement a large number of joint programmes within the fields of rule of law, democracy and human rights, with a financing volume of over EUR 100 million a year. The Council of Europe Eastern Partnership Facility, which was launched in 2011, achieved positive results on justice reform, elections, cybercrime and anti-corruption, and an extension of this programme is under preparation. In 2012, the EU launched the EU-CoE "Programme for Strengthening Democratic Reform in the Southern Mediterranean" (EUR 4.8 million over 30 months), which promotes progress on human rights, rule of law and democratisation in the Southern Mediterranean countries, in the spirit of the EU's revamped European Neighbourhood Policy. Although the focus of the programme remained on Tunisia and Morocco, increased contacts and cooperation with other partners in the region were recorded in 2013, in particular with Jordan, Egypt and Algeria.

The OSCE

The EU remained a major supporter and strong contributor to the work of the OSCE in 2013. The EU continued to support the OSCE's efforts to enhance security through all three of its 'dimensions': the politico-military dimension, the economic and environmental dimension, and the human dimension.

As regards the human dimension, the year 2013, under Ukrainian Chairmanship in Office (CiO), yielded modest results. Following two years without any decision in the human dimension, the Ministerial Council in Kyiv in December 2013 reached a consensus on a Ministerial Council decision on freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief; a Ministerial Council decision on enhancing efforts to implement the OSCE action plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area, with a particular focus on Roma and Sinti women, youth and children; and on the Addendum to the OSCE action plan to combat trafficking in human beings. Despite this progress, and major efforts from the CiO and the EU, it proved impossible to reach a consensus on a decision on the protection of journalists, mainly because certain participating States opposed any reaffirmation of existing commitments or strengthening of the OSCE's work in the field of media freedom. Despite constructive engagement by the EU, agreement on a Draft decision on freedom of movement proved elusive.

The EU continued to use the OSCE's weekly Permanent Councils and the monthly OSCE human dimension committees to review the human rights commitments of the 57 OSCE participating States and to trigger debates about their implementation. A number of EU concerns with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms, inter alia on freedom of expression including safety of journalists, freedom of assembly and association, and tolerance and non-discrimination, including LGBTI rights, were highlighted in these forums. Several EU Member States participated in voluntary reporting on the implementation of the human dimension commitments in the Human Dimension Committee through the year. On 5 November, an EEAS expert presented the EU guidelines on freedom of religion and belief to the Human Dimension Committee.

The EU also participated in the OSCE human dimension seminar organised in May on the legal framework for media freedom (Warsaw, 13-15 May) and the three supplementary human dimension meetings on freedom of movement and human contacts (Vienna, 25-26 April), on rule of law in the promotion and protection of human rights (Vienna, 11-12 July), and on the implementation of the Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti (Vienna, 7-8 November). It attended the Chairmanship in Office conference on strengthening the OSCE response to trafficking in human beings (Kyiv, 10-11 June) and the high-level conference on tolerance and non-discrimination (Tirana, 21-22 May). This allowed the EU to support and shape certain topics that constituted the EU's priorities within the OSCE in 2013, such as freedom of the media, rule of law and tolerance and non-discrimination issues.

The annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting took place in Warsaw between 24 September and 4 October. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights delivered the keynote speech at the opening session and took the opportunity to liaise with his counterparts as well as with a number of civil society organisations, whose presence at the HDIM makes this forum unique. The EU participated actively in the working sessions, which allowed participating states and civil society to review their commitments in the human dimension and to formulate recommendations. Furthermore, the EU co-sponsored two side events (on the abolition of the death penalty and on LGBTI rights).

Finally, through the EU Delegation in Vienna and dedicated exchanges involving headquarters, the EU maintained a close interaction with OSCE institutions and other executive structures, in particular on election issues with the ODIHR, with the Representative on Freedom of the Media as well as with the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE secretariat.

European Parliament contribution to the 2013 - EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World

The European Parliament remains committed to the advancement of human rights and democratic principles. During 2013 breaches of human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles were debated regularly in Parliament's plenary part-sessions, targeted in various parliamentary resolutions, and raised in the meetings of committees and inter-parliamentary delegations. Human rights are also an integral part of the work of the President of the European Parliament, who raised relevant issues in public statements as well as in the course of his high-level meetings.

Parliament's scrutiny of EU human rights policy

At the level of the committees of the European Parliament, issues relating to human rights in the world are specifically dealt with by the Committee on Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI). The Subcommittee maintains close working relations with the European External Action Service (EEAS), other EU institutions and human rights NGOs, as well as multilateral human rights institutions. Through *in camera* briefings and debriefings, the Subcommittee on Human Rights has continued to follow the human rights dialogues and consultations conducted by the EEAS with third countries. DROI drafted several parliamentary reports in 2013, including the Annual Report on Human Rights as well as reports on other major issues of importance, such as the impact of the economic crisis on human rights, the situation of human rights in the Sahel region, and the impact of corruption on human rights. Work on the parliamentary report on torture also began in 2013. Over the course of the year DROI hearings, often arranged jointly or in association with other relevant committees or inter-parliamentary delegations, welcomed several UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights, and other representatives of UN human rights bodies as well as prominent human rights defenders.

In 2013, the European Parliament reiterated its appreciation of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy as an important milestone in integrating and mainstreaming human rights across all EU external policies. However, in its annual report on human rights, Parliament also underlined the need for a general consensus and enhanced coordination of the EU‘s human rights policy between the EU institutions and the Member States, and called on the EEAS to step up its efforts to increase the sense of ownership of this Action Plan among Member States. The vital importance of efficient and credible implementation of the stated commitments, both in the Strategic Framework and in the Action Plan was also stressed. The report noted that the current Action Plan will be concluded at the end of 2014, and called for the EU High Representative and the EEAS to engage in a timely review and consultations with the Member States, the Commission, Parliament and civil society, leading to the adoption of a new Action Plan to take effect from January 2015.

In 2013, DROI established a solid working relationship with the new EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights, including through the holding of regular public exchanges of views regarding EU human rights policy. In its annual report, Parliament recognised the importance of the mandate given to the first-ever EUSR for Human Rights, and particularly encouraged the EUSR to enhance the visibility, mainstreaming, coherence, consistency and effectiveness of EU human rights policy, and to strike the right balance between silent and public diplomacy in carrying out his mandate. Parliament also repeated its earlier recommendation that the EUSR provide it with a regular report on his activities as well as thematic and geographic priorities. The fact that cooperation with the EUSR for Human Rights was included in the mandate of the geographic EUSR for the Sahel was welcomed by Parliament, and the Council and the High Representative were urged to adopt this as the best practice model to be used with regard to the mandates of future geographic EUSRs

Parliament's annual report stressed the importance of credible mainstreaming, and encouraged the EU Foreign Affairs Council to introduce the practice of adopting Council Conclusions on human rights, including strategic partners. Regarding the EU's development cooperation activities, the report reiterated Parliament's view that the Commission and the EEAS should be accountable for the adoption of a rights-based approach in the future programming exercise. Moreover, Parliament underlined the fact that the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation called on the international community to adopt a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to international cooperation in order to boost the effectiveness of development efforts. In this context, the Commission was called on to conduct extensive impact assessments of EU development cooperation projects, which should include an assessment of their impact on the human rights situation.

In April 2013 Parliament adopted a resolution on the basis of a report on the impact of the financial and economic crisis on human rights. It stressed that in times of economic crisis, too, governments must stand up for the human rights obligations to which they have subscribed. As developing and least developed countries are disproportionately affected by the crisis, Parliament called for EU action to create a Global Fund for Social Protection and favoured the introduction of a financial transaction tax, a financing mechanism for development. In line with the relevant UN position, the resolution also called for strong human rights standards to be included in the post-2015 development agenda.

In its report and resolution on the impact of corruption in the public and private sectors on human rights in third countries, adopted in October 2013, Parliament detailed the relationship between corruption and violations of human rights, and called for an ambitious EU policy in this area. The report stressed that the money lost through corruption each year would be enough to keep the world's hungry fed 80 times over. Although welcoming, in this regard, various initiatives taken at European level including the renegotiation of the Savings Taxation Directive, which would significantly limit banking secrecy, Parliament considered that these actions are not sufficiently ambitious. The report called on the Commission to draw up an action plan, with a view to creating a mechanism for listing and imposing similar targeted sanctions against officials of third countries (including police officers, prosecutors and judges) involved in grave human rights violations, as well as with regard to judicial manipulations against whistle-blowers, journalists and human rights activists in third countries, who have exposed cases of corruption.

Regarding the EU's policy tools, Parliament, in its report on the situation of human rights in Sahel, welcomed the European Commission's support for the deployment of dedicated human rights observers, financed through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), to monitor the human rights situation and possible violations in the Mali conflict. Parliament urged the EU to learn lessons from this experience and to explore appropriate ways to make available pools of trained experts, who could be deployed on the ground without delay in urgent situations to verify facts on the ground and give professional advice to EU policy-makers if required. Parliament also drew attention to the urgent need to enhance compliance with the international human rights and humanitarian law norms in armed conflict situations, and called on the High Representative to draw lessons from the tragic events in Mali and other recent conflicts in order to review the EU guidelines on international humanitarian law (IHL). With respect to the human rights dialogues, Parliament's annual report warned against diverting human rights discussions away from high-level political dialogues, and called on the EU to draw clear political conclusions when a human rights dialogue is not proving constructive: and, in such cases or in cases of persistent human rights violations, it should place emphasis on political dialogue, démarches and public diplomacy.

Mainstreaming human rights in the parliamentary committees

Apart from the work done within the Subcommittee on Human Rights, the European Parliament also seeks to achieve mainstreaming of human rights in its work, in accordance with the Articles in the EU basic treaties, which define universal human rights and democracy as the founding values of the Union and as the core principles and objectives of the Union's external action. In line with Parliament's resolutions on human rights, mainstreaming includes the challenge of internal/external coherence in human rights policy, as well as ensuring that human rights compliance is reflected in, for example, such priority policy areas as trade, migration and interactions with strategic partners. This priority task has many dimensions within the European Parliament, covering the work of parliamentary committees and inter-parliamentary delegations.

Human rights issues are debated in the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) in its parliamentary reports on EU foreign policy or on different types of international agreements which include human rights clauses. Commercial and trade agreements including human rights clauses are dealt with by the Committee on International Trade (INTA). The Committees on Development (DEVE), and Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM) also deal regularly with human rights aspects of the EU's external relations in their respective spheres of competence, and have regularly drafted formal opinions to support the preparation of human rights-related parliamentary reports in the Subcommittee on Human Rights. Moreover, the FEMM Committee concluded work as the lead committee on two important reports on women with disabilities, and on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Chairs of the Committees on Foreign Affairs and on Development co-chair the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) that has expanded its mandate beyond election observation to cover also follow-up to elections and democracy support activities in general.

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) is the key actor on fundamental rights within the European Union, and it has major responsibilities concerning external aspects of the EU's internal policies, for example in the areas of migration and asylum policy. Constitutional and legal questions are dealt with by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) and the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI), which consider, among other areas, EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights, which will also have implications for/an impact on EU external relations.

Human Rights in the CFSP, Enlargement and Neighbourhood reports

In the parliamentary report (adopted in October) drafted in AFET on the High Representative's Annual Report on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Parliament expressed its concern about Russia's lack of commitment to the rule of law, pluralist democracy and human rights. It also reiterated the need for the EU-China human rights dialogue to be strengthened and expressed concern about the situation of human rights and democratisation in the Neighbourhood, both South and East.

In the Enlargement area, AFET adopted its annual progress reports, based on the Commission's progress reports, where different issues concerning the protection and promotion of human rights are raised, including the rule of law, the judiciary, media freedom, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and freedom of expression. Furthermore, an ad hoc delegation of Members of the European Parliament travelled to Albania during the elections in May 2013, and observed the local elections in Kosovo (including northern Kosovo) in November 2013. AFET's work on the European Neighbourhood Policy included a parliamentary resolution adopted in October, reflecting the progress in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood, encouraging the countries to advance their commitment to the values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Human rights in the EU financial assistance instruments

In 2013 the European Parliament negotiated the External Financial Assistance Instruments for 2014-2020, leading to the adoption of the legislative acts in December. Notwithstanding the specific instrument for the promotion of human rights (EIDHR), Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs succeeded in ensuring the inclusion of strong references to human rights in most instruments as a cross-cutting issue, in particular in the Common Implementing Regulation (CIR). The implementing regulation, applicable to all External Financial Assistance Instruments, states clearly that the principles of democracy, the rule of law, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms need to be integral elements in the implementation of all the Financial Instruments. Furthermore, it establishes that one of the key determinants for the decision on the use of budget support will be an assessment of the commitment, record and progress of partner countries with regard to democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Negotiations on the next European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (2014-2020) continued throughout 2013 and concluded in December with a new Regulation which makes the instrument, as Parliament wished, more flexible and responsive to emerging situations, not only to established organisations but also to individual human rights defenders in need. Parliament also succeeded in securing an increase in funding, and the inclusion in the new EIDHR for 2014-2020 of a provision on the automatic mid-term revision of the EIDHR by a delegated act which would modify the annex currently listing the priority areas for assistance. Parliament also strengthened its scrutiny role in the programming of the EIDHR (multi-annual and annual), as well as with regard to the implementation of EIDHR work. Parliament's EIDHR Working Group, chaired by the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, met and discussed issues pertaining to the implementation of the EIDHR Regulation 2007-2013, and also heard from the European Commission regarding confidential EIDHR grants.

AFET negotiated on the inclusion of a specific Human Rights Mechanism in the Instrument for Stability and Peace. The Commission is requested to develop operational guidance to ensure that human rights are taken into consideration in the design and implementation of measures in relation to the fight against terrorism and organised crime: equally, the human rights perspective should be taken in addressing cyber-security and the fight against cybercrime. Furthermore, under the Mechanism, the Commission is tasked with monitoring and reporting annually on the implementation of these measures to ensure compliance with human rights obligations. Finally, it also includes a provision allowing for urgency measures under Article 3 of the regulation to be triggered for the protection of human rights.

In the course of the negotiations on the European Neighbourhood Instrument (2014-2020), AFET strengthened the human rights dimension of its implementation, in particular through the insertion of a new article stating that funding under the ENI shall comply with the values and principles enshrined in art. 21 TEU; and through the definition of the implementation mechanisms of the "more for more" principle with a strong human rights component (attribution of additional funds to partner countries will be decided primarily on the basis of progress towards a deep and sustainable democracy, which encompasses respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms).

In the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (2014-2020), protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is set both as an objective and as one of the indicators to be considered in the monitoring and assessment of progress. Furthermore, establishing and promoting the rule of law and human rights is one of the thematic priorities for assistance.

International agreements, trade preferences and human rights

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament has increased powers regarding issues pertaining to the EU's international agreements, including giving consent to the conclusion of agreements with third countries. Both the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and the Committee on International Trade (INTA) have important roles regarding the conclusion of agreements in their respective areas of competence.

In 2013 AFET continued monitoring the negotiation of international agreements between the EU and third countries, ensuring that human rights issues are properly included. The EU is in the process of concluding a dozen international agreements with countries in Central, South, Southeast and East Asia. The first of these Agreements is expected to be the Framework Agreement on a Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation with the Republic of Indonesia. This Agreement entered into the Parliament's consent procedure end of 2013 and, following Parliament's consent expected to be granted in March 2014, it should enter into force soon after that.

Moreover, AFET adopted a recommendation on the Strategic Partnership Agreement with Canada in which it insisted that the Agreement should contain a human rights clause with a possible suspension effect in cases of serious breaches of human rights, in line with the EU’s policy on the issue. It also underlined, once more, that this should be the practice followed in all international agreements negotiated by the EU.

Human Rights also formed an important part of many of the debates on trade issues in the Committee on International Trade, both with regard to autonomous trade instruments as well as to several international trade agreements.

Following the adoption of the new Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) Regulation, Parliament has been actively following the implementation of the Regulation. Through the Generalised System of Preferences, developing countries pay lower duties on some or all of what they sell to the EU, the aim being to contribute to the growth of their economies. The GSP+ scheme gives further benefits to countries which show credible commitment to implementing 27 important conventions in the fields of labour, human, environmental and good governance rights and rules. In 2013 ten countries obtained the GSP+ beneficiary status following Parliament's scrutiny and after having committed to improving their respect for the 27 international conventions. Parliament will now be involved in monitoring their respect for these commitments. The Subcommittee on Human Rights considered GSP+ one of the key instruments in the trade sphere to incentivise the respect for human rights of partner countries, and sought to engage further with the Committee on International Trade in the scrutiny of delegated acts for the granting of GSP+ under the new Regulation.

Parliament co-decided with Council in favour of reinstating Myanmar/Burma's access to GSP Preferences in the light of significant steps taken by the government, encouraging it to continue this process as a matter of urgency so that full democratisation, consolidation of the rule of law and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are made both permanent and irreversible; Parliament also called on the Commission to closely monitor how well European companies are respecting CSR commitments, and to make full use of the conditionality of the GSP+ Regulation.

When updating the Dual Use Regulation, the European Parliament demanded, among other things, additional vigilance as regards the export of certain information and communication technologies (ICT) that can be used in connection with human rights violations.

Eradication of child and forced labour remained an important issue for Parliament. Already back in 2011 Parliament decided to withhold its consent to the EU-Uzbekistan textile protocol of the EU-Uzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, insisting on an ILO monitoring mission to the country following on from reports of the use of forced and child labour during the cotton harvest. In 2013 Parliament kept up the pressure, and the Uzbek government finally agreed to receive such a mission during its harvest in the autumn. In various resolutions, including one on sustainability in the global cotton value chain, Parliament also continued to push for a legislative proposal on an effective traceability mechanism for goods produced through child or forced labour. In response, the Commission adopted the Staff Working Document on Trade and Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Parliament's follow-up regarding transportation and illegal detention of prisoners in European countries by the CIA

On 10 October 2013, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the alleged transportation and illegal detention of prisoners in European countries by the CIA. The resolution followed on from two oral questions (one to the Commission and one to the Council) where the European Parliament forcefully asked Commission and Council to follow up on previous resolutions on the same matter.

In the new resolution the European Parliament deeply deplored the failure, notably by the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the candidate states and the associated countries, NATO, and the United States authorities,to implement the recommendations contained in its resolution of 11 September 2012, especially in the light of the serious fundamental rights violations suffered by the victims of the CIA rendition programmes. Members considered that the climate of impunity regarding these programmes has enabled the continuation of fundamental rights violations in the counter-terrorism policies of the EU and the United States, as further revealed by the mass surveillance programmes of the United States National Security Agency and surveillance bodies in various Member States, which are currently being investigated by Parliament.

Parliament professed itself highly disappointed by the Commission's refusal to respond in substance to Parliament's recommendations, and it reiterated its specific recommendations to the Commission from its previous resolution. It also reiterated its specific recommendations to the Council, and called on both institutions to include, in their respective multiannual programmes succeeding the Stockholm Programme, specific measures to ensure the rule of law and accountability for fundamental rights violations, especially by intelligence services and law enforcement authorities.

Members called on the next Parliament (2014-2019) to continue to implement the mandate given by the Temporary Committee (TDIP) and, consequently, to ensure that its recommendations have been followed up.

Parliament also stated that it expected its inquiry into the U.S. National Security Agency surveillance programme and surveillance bodies in various Member States to propose measures for effective democratic parliamentary oversight of intelligence services, considering that democratic scrutiny of these bodies and their activities, through appropriate internal, executive, independent judicial and parliamentary oversight, was imperative.

Parliament finally called on the United States Government to cooperate with all requests from EU Member States for information or extradition in connection with the CIA programme. It urged the United States to stop using draconian protective orders which prevented lawyers acting for Guantánamo Bay detainees from disclosing information regarding any detail of their secret detention in Europe. Member States were asked to step up their efforts to resettle non-European detainees released from Guantánamo who cannot be repatriated to their home states because they are under threat of death, torture or cruel and inhumane treatment.

Business and Human Rights

The European Parliament once again took an active interest in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in 2013. The Subcommittee on Human Rights delivered an opinion to the Legal Affairs Committee on the legislative proposal to amend the Directive on disclosure of non-financial information by certain large companies and groups. The Subcommittee on Human Rights hosted a hearing on Indigenous People and Extractive Industries and, and a hearing on the impact of Free Trade Agreements between the EU and third countries, with a specific focus on Colombia. Business and human rights was also the subject of an exchange of views with Ombudsmen from the Eastern Partnership countries, organised by the Subcommittee in February 2013.

European Parliament monitoring mission to Ukraine

The European Parliament monitoring mission to Ukraine was launched on the basis of an agreement reached between the President of the European Parliament and the Prime Minister of Ukraine on 16 May 2012 and of a subsequent exchange of letters. The mandate covered inter alia the observation of "the approaching appeal process and future trials of Yulia Tymoshenko, with complete access to all documentation and proceeding of the Court and assisted by professional staff of the European Parliament". It was later extended to the observation of the cases against former Ministers Yuriy Lutsenko and Valery Ivashchenko, to the humanitarian conditions of their detention, and more broadly to the consideration of the on-going judicial reforms in Ukraine.

Overall, the mission undertook 27 official visits over the course of 18 months and the duration of the mandate was extended 4 times by the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament (in October 2012, February 2013, April 2013 and October 2013). The visits usually included meetings with President Yanukovych, Prime Minister Azarov, Yulia Tymoshenko, and leading politicians from both the ruling party and the opposition.

While the mission originally concentrated on the monitoring of criminal cases, its focus progressively shifted towards the elaboration of possible solutions to the main stumbling blocks in the relations between Ukraine and the EU. This was particularly the case after progress in addressing the issues of selective justice and preventing their recurrence was set as one of the three key conditions to be met before the signing of the Association Agreement between the European Union, its Member States and Ukraine.

The mission succeeded in gaining the necessary trust and confidence of all sides, from the highest political authorities to the prisoners themselves, their families and lawyers. This enabled the mission to open lines of communication between various parties inside Ukraine, thus creating favourable conditions that led to significant steps being taken with regard to the cases and judicial reforms being monitored during the course of the mission.

Evolution of the monitored cases

Former Acting Minister of Defence Valery Ivashchenko was released on 14 August 2012 and his travel ban lifted. He currently resides in Denmark;

Former Minister of Interior Yuriy Lutsenko was pardoned by President Yanukovych from serving his primary sentence on 7 April 2013 and released immediately. This happened on the basis of requests by the Ombudsperson and our mission;

Former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko: A number of improvements in her detention conditions were achieved. In particular, she was able to remain in hospital care, without video monitoring and attended only by female guards. As to her state of health, a team of doctors of the Charité clinic (Berlin, Germany) is overseeing her treatment. On 1 July 2013, an assessment of Tymoshenko's medical situation concluded that she urgently required appropriate surgical treatment, which she would be willing to undergo abroad, as she publically stated on 4 October 2013.

Evolution of the monitored judicial reforms

A new Criminal Procedure Code, endorsed by the Venice Commission, entered into force on 20 November 2012.

The new Law on Bar and Legal Practice entered into force on 15 August 2012, which should enable the defendants to have access to professional and effective legal assistance.

On 10 October 2013, the Verkhovna Rada approved the amendments to the Constitution strengthening the independence of judges at the first reading. The second reading is pending.

The new Law on the Public Prosecutor`s Office was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada on 30 October 2013, and approved at the first reading on 8 November 2013. The second reading is pending. This law would constitute a significant step forward, as it endeavours to abolish the heavily criticised general supervision function of the prosecution and to provide further guarantees regarding the independence of the institution.

The law on electoral reform was adopted on 21 November and elections were re-organised in the five disputed constituencies on 15 December 2013, although they were marred by reports of irregularities.

Democracy support

The European Parliament, as the only directly elected EU institution, is strongly committed to developing the EU's policies in support of democracy in the world, as already indicated in the report and resolution on *'EU external policies in favour of democratisation'* of July 2011.

In 2012 Parliament enlarged the Election Coordination Group (ECG) mandate to include, besides election observation, democracy support policies in general. The ECG thus became a Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG). In 2013, under the guidance and impetus of the DEG co-Chairs, the Group has been actively seeking to increase the European Parliament's role in the area of election observation, with regard to both EU Election Observation Missions (EU EOMs) and the International Election Observation Missions (IEOMs) within the OSCE area. Another focus has been to better link election observation with follow-up, democracy support activities and human rights actions.

Moreover, nine Members of the European Parliament are members of the Board of Governors of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), which is also chaired by the Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and have been contributing actively to the establishment and launch of the EED. The EED has been fully set up, and the first funding transactions for selected projects were disbursed in September 2013.

European Parliament's election observation activities in 2013

In 2013 the European Parliament continued to be fully engaged in election observation activities. It sent eleven delegations to observe elections in different countries over four continents: Jordan, Armenia, Kenya, Paraguay, Pakistan, Mali, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Nepal, Honduras and Madagascar. The primary objective was to assess if electoral procedures were conducted in agreement with the national legislation of the host country and its international commitments on democratic elections.

For a long time the EU, including the European Parliament, has been focusing its election observation activities on the pre-election and election periods, and had tended to view election observation missions and delegations as one-off events, as isolated democracy support instruments. Parliament's resolution on *'EU external policies in favour of democratisation'* and several follow-up events organised by Parliament in recent years have highlighted the need to focus on the follow-up phase of election observation and implementation of the recommendations with the same priority that is applied to the preparation and conduct of elections, in order to maximize the contribution of election observation to broader democracy-building efforts.

In 2013 the EEAS has for the first time organised specific visits to follow-up on recommendations from previous EU EOMs, including a visit to Mozambique in May 2013, led by the former Chief Observer to the country.

The DEG also held a debate on reviewing the follow-up to recommendations of the past year's EU election observation missions and decided to repeat this review annually. In addition, the DEG held debates on European Parliament election observation in the OSCE area and on the complementarity between EU election observation and electoral assistance as an integral part of the EU's democracy support agenda in partner countries.

European Parliament Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy

In 2013 the principal focus of the European Parliament's Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy (OPPD) continued to be on the strengthening of parliamentary institutions by providing assistance to parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in newly emerging democracies. This was achieved through a range of activities, in particular the organisation of training events. The OPPD operated within the larger Directorate for Democracy Support, which had been established the previous year within the secretariat of DG EXPO.

During 2013 the OPPD's training events involved almost 200 participants from 33 countries. The main focus of the OPPD's activities was on the EU Neighbourhood. A substantial support programme for Tunisia's Parliament was implemented, despite the country's difficult political situation. The European Parliament was closely involved in the work of the Steering Committee of the UNDP parliamentary support programme in Tunisia, which is supported by the EU. Thirteen management and senior staff members from five different services of the Tunisian Parliament received training in Brussels. The European Parliament's Protocol Service also offered its assistance to the Tunisian Parliament and a workshop on parliamentary communication was organised in Tunis. Training events were also held for the parliaments of Morocco and other Arab countries or organisations.

Another focus issue for the OPPD in 2013 was capacity-building for the parliament of Myanmar/Burma. Two MPs representing the upper and lower chambers of the Burmese Parliament made a study visit to the European Parliament to determine areas in which EP assistance would be most effective. The European Parliament/OPPD subsequently hosted a study visit for a group of ten parliamentarians from Myanmar/Burma.

Raising human rights during delegation visits

The European Parliament's committees as well as the standing inter-parliamentary delegations conduct official delegation visits to third countries. In 2011 Parliament's Conference of Delegation Chairs adopted specific guidelines on integrating human rights in delegation visits.

In 2013 the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) organised delegation visits to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Myanmar/Burma, Ethiopia (including the African Union), Pakistan and Serbia. DROI delegations also visited the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and the UN General Assembly in New York. In November the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights visited Saudi Arabia on behalf of Parliament's President.

DROI delegation visits the African Union and Ethiopia

In July 2013 a delegation of three MEPs and the DROI Chair visited Addis Ababa as well as the Commission of the African Union (AU). Whilst acknowledging the AU's achievements in the field of peace and security, the DROI Delegation underlined that governments must be held accountable for what they have signed up to at AU level and should ensure a proper implementation of human rights mechanisms at national level so as to have a real impact on citizens' rights.

Another salient point raised by the delegation both at AU level and with Ethiopian interlocutors referred to the need to ensure an enabling space for civil society organisations (CSOs), especially at a time when governments in numerous African countries are restricting CSO activities by burdensome regulatory obstacles and/or by limiting access to national and foreign funding.

DROI delegation to Pakistan

In August 2013 a delegation of the Subcommittee on Human Rights visited Pakistan to assess the human rights situation. The visit also provided an opportunity to explain to the new authorities the priorities and concerns of the European Parliament particularly regarding gender discrimination, children rights and rights of persons belonging to minorities, freedom of expression, religious freedom and the fight against radicalism. Extensive discussions on the death penalty took place and Parliament's delegation urged the Government to extend the moratorium on the death penalty. The acute situation of women and girls was repeatedly raised and the Government asked to take decisive action to combat and eliminate all forms of discrimination, intimidation and violence against women and to enable them to take an active part in the country's public life. Violent extremism, including against girls seeking access to education - as illustrated by the case of Sakharov Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai - is threatening the future of the country, and Parliament has called for a comprehensive strategy to combat impunity.

Pakistan has recently made progress towards improving governance and the rule of law. The UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was ratified and a decision was taken to establish a National Human Rights Commission. The 11 May 2013 general elections, marking a peaceful transfer of power between civilian governments, were a vote of confidence in democracy. However much remains to be done to address the serious human rights concerns that still exist and to further strengthen the democratic process, not least as regards women's participation.

Parliament, and particularly the Subcommittee on Human Rights, has paid close attention to the process of democratisation and the human rights situation in Pakistan. It has repeatedly warned against human rights abuses being committed in the name of fighting against terrorism or religious belief, and adopted two relevant urgency resolutions in 2013 on attacks against medical aid workers and on cases of violence and persecution against Christians.

Inter-parliamentary Delegations

The European Parliament also engages with parliaments worldwide through its standing delegations dedicated to inter-parliamentary co-operation with third countries and by participating in joint parliamentary assemblies. Human rights issues are often an integral part of missions to third countries: programmes tend to include meetings with the respective national human rights commissions and with NGOs and civil society organisations active on human rights. Human rights issues are also on the agenda at official meetings of the standing delegations taking place in Brussels and Strasbourg.

Inter-parliamentary meetings can serve as an opportunity to follow up on Parliament's resolutions and reports. This was the case regarding the delegation visit to Laos (November), which was dominated by the case of Mr Sombath Somphone, whose case had been the subject of an urgency resolution of the European Parliament in February 2013. The statements made by the delegation received considerable attention in the media and more generally. In a similar vein, the Delegation for relations with the Arabian Peninsula visited Bahrain in April, following an urgency resolution in January, and reiterated in its statement the European Parliament's calls for the government to demonstrate clemency towards peaceful activists and to release all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.

The situation of Parliament's Sakharov Prize Laureates is of particular concern. The Delegation for Relations with Iran met with the 2012 Sakharov prize laureates during its visit to Teheran in December 2013, one of whom, Nasrin Sotoudeh, had been released from prison earlier in the year. Before its mission to Iran, the Delegation also held a joint hearing on Iran with the Subcommittee on Human Rights as well as holding meetings with representatives of ethnic and religious minorities and with the international human rights NGO network active in Brussels.

The standing delegations have also taken up issues related to elections, although their work in this area needs to be distinguished from the role of the official election observation missions conducted by Parliament. The Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia focused its efforts on the serious electoral crises in the Maldives and Bangladesh, as well as on the elections in Nepal and Bhutan.

Human rights in conflict and post-conflict situations were highlighted during a joint mission of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence and the standing inter-parliamentary delegation to Afghanistan (October), notably the situation of women and girls. The crucial importance of ensuring that the April 2014 presidential and provincial elections would be inclusive, transparent and credible was also underlined. The issues of post-conflict accountability and reconciliation process were raised during the inter-parliamentary mission to Sri Lanka.

During a visit to India (April-May), the Delegation for relations with India focused in particular on the situation of women, following the much publicised case of the gang-rape and killing of a student in Delhi in December 2012. The issue was discussed with the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment and with representatives of civil society. The Delegation also expressed deep concern at the resumption of executions after a *de facto* moratorium. Capital punishment was also raised in numerous occasions in meetings of the Delegation with Japan with their counterparts.

The Delegation for relations with China raised the issue of human rights and Tibet during its mission in July in a meeting with the director for Tibet and Ethnic minorities of the Party School of the Chinese Communist Party. Some Members of the Delegation met with the Chinese civil rights activist Mr Chen Guangcheng in late May.

The standing delegations to the EU-Azerbaijan and EU-Russia parliamentary cooperation committees noted an increasingly worrying situation regarding human rights in the respective partner countries during the year 2013. However, due to a lack of bilateral meetings or of mutual understanding, no joint statements or recommendations were adopted on human rights issues. Parliament's Delegation for relations with Belarus made two attempts in 2013 to travel to Belarus – without success – in order to meet with human rights defenders and representatives of the opposition and civil society in Belarus.

The joint parliamentary assemblies bring together Members of the European Parliament and parliamentarians from third countries to discuss common challenges, including human rights and democracy issues. These assemblies are currently the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

In its resolution of 29 May 2013 the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly called for the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in the countries of the region, and considered that the protection of human rights and the rights of persons belonging to minorities are fundamental European values, and that any threats or violations thereof should be prevented as these may also represent risk factors for destabilisation.

Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought and the Sakharov Prize Network

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought honours exceptional individuals who combat intolerance, fanaticism and oppression to defend human rights and freedom of expression. It is named in honour of the Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov and has been awarded annually by the European Parliament since 1988 to individuals or organisations that have made an important contribution to the fight for human rights or democracy.

The 2013 Sakharov Prize was awarded to Malala Yousafzai on 20 November during a plenary session of the European Parliament and in the presence of her fellow Laureates.

Malala Yousafzai is a 16-year old girl from Pakistan who in 2012 was shot in the face by the Taliban to stop her and other girls from going to school. She recovered from her injuries and went on to take her campaign for children's education to the world stage. The President of the European Parliament emphasised that her commitment reminds us that "giving access to education and knowledge is the best investment a society can make in the fight against intolerance, isolation, violence and poverty".

In 2008, the Sakharov Prize was complemented by the launch of the Sakharov Prize Network. The Network came together at the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 2013 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Sakharov Prize. Sixteen Laureates and four Laureate representatives debated human rights issues with the President of the European Parliament, two of its former Presidents and other MEPs as well as the Commissioner for humanitarian aid, the EUSR for Human Rights, and representatives of the EEAS, Unicef, the European Court of Human Rights, Council of Europe, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and civil society.

All members of the Network commit themselves to acting together as a global human rights violations alert system. The EU is urged to make a substantial diplomatic commitment to the Network's Members through its representations worldwide, in particular for the protection of Sakharov Prize Laureates and human rights defenders at risk. The members of the Network also pledged their support to international campaigns to promote fundamental rights, including the campaign to end violence against children and promote child education. The three-day conference culminated in the launch of a Declaration which pledges to undertake concrete actions in favour of human rights.

The European Parliament is keeping in close contact with the Laureates, has established a permanent monitoring of their political situation and follows political developments in their respective countries. A newly-launched Sakharov Prize Network website serves to keep the European Parliament and Laureates updated on relevant recent developments. In 2013 a series of Sakharov Lectures by Laureates was launched to raise awareness of human rights issues in Member States.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Annual Action Programme
ACC	Audiovisual Coordination Council
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AFCO	Committee on Constitutional Affairs
AFET	Committee on Foreign Affairs
AHB	Anti-Homosexuality Bill
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia Europe Meeting
ATIDE	Association Tunisienne pour l'Intégrité et la Démocratie des Elections
AU	African Union
BICI	Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry
BSSC	Budget Support Steering Committee
CAAC	Children and Armed Conflict
CAT	Convention against Torture
CBSS	Country Based Support Scheme
CD	Community of Democracies
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CELAC	Latin America and Caribbean
CENI	Independent National Election Commission
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CICIG	International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala
CiO	Chairmanship in Office

CoE	Council of Europe
CNDH	National Human Rights Commission
CNES	Conseil National Economique et Social
COHOM	Council working party on human rights
CONAC	National Anti-Corruption Commission
CoNI	Commission of National Inquiry
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CTC	Counter-Terrorism Coordinator
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CV	Cape Verde
CVJR	Commission Vérité Justice et Réconciliation
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DE	Germany
DEG	Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group
DEVCO	European Commission Directorate General for Development and Cooperation
DEVE	Committee on Development
DIDH	Délégation interministérielle aux droits de l'homme
DK	Denmark
DP	Democratic Party
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea

DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DROI	Subcommittee for Human Rights
DVB	Democratic Voice of Burma
EaPIC	Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation programme
EAT	Election Assessment Team
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECG	Election Coordination Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EEA	European Economic Area
EEAS	European External Action Service
EED	European Endowment for Democracy
EEM	Election Expert Mission
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EIUC	European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EMPL	European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EOM	Election Observation Mission
EP	European Parliament

ESC	Economic, social and cultural (rights)
ESCR	Economic, social and cultural rights
ESDC	European Security and Defence College
ESG	Environmental, social and governance
EU	European Union
EUJUST LEX	EU Rule of Law Mission for Iraq
EUMS	European Union Member States
EUNIC	European Union National Institutes for Culture
EUPOL AFGHANISTAN	European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan
EUPOL COPPS	EU Coordination Office for Palestinian Office Support
EURONEST	Euronest Parliamentary Assembly (Eastern Partnership)
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
EVAW	Elimination of Violence against Women Law
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FEMM	Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
FFM	Fact-Finding Mission
FM	Foreign minister
FoRB	Freedom of Religion or Belief
FPI	Foreign Policy Instruments
FREMP	Council Working Party on Fundamental Rights, Citizens' Rights and Free Movement of Persons within the EU
FSJ	Freedom, security and justice
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GAMM	Global Approach to Migration and Mobility
GBAO	Gorno-Badakshan Province
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council

GCS	Gender Co-ordination mechanism
GCTF	Global Counter-Terrorism Forum
GGDC	Good Governance and Development Contract
GoI	Government of India
GPA	Global Political Agreement
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
GSP	Generalised Scheme of Preferences
HDIM	Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HoM	Head of mission
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human rights
HR/VP	High representative / Vice-president
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRD	Human rights defenders
HRDO	Human Rights Defender's Office
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICHR	Independent Commission for Human Rights
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDP	Internally Displaced People

IEC	Independent electoral commission
IEOM	International Election Observation Missions
IfS	Instrument for Stability
IHCHR	Independent High Commission for Human Rights
IHL	International humanitarian law
IHRL	International human rights law
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INTA	Committee on International Trade
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JLS	Justice, Freedom and Security
JPA	Joint Parliamentary Assembly
JURI	Committee on Legal Affairs
JWF	Joint Way Forward
LAS	League of Arab States
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
LIBE	Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
MDG	Millennium development goals
MEC	Malawi Electoral Commission
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MEPP	Middle East Peace Process
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Member States
NAPWA	National Action Plan for Women

NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NEEDS	Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NSA	Non State Actors Advisory panel
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NHRI	National Human Rights Institute
OAS	Organization of American States,
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Co-operation
OMCV	Associação Organização das Mulheres de Cabo Verde
OPCAT	Optional Protocol to the convention against Torture
OPPD	Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PA	Palestinian Authority
PAJED	Projet d'Appui à la Justice et à l'Etat de Droit
PALOP	Portuguese-speaking African countries
PAREDA	Projet d'Actions pour le Renforcement de l'Etat de Droit et des Associations
PASTAGEP	Programme d'appui au développement du système statistique national pour la promotion de la gouvernance et le suivi/évaluation de la pauvreté
PA	Parliamentary Assembly
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PDO	Public Defender's Office
PEC	Permanent Electoral Council

PIDCP	Pacte International relatif aux Droits Civils et Politiques
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
PM	Prime Minister
PMSC	Private military and security companies
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PSC	Political and Security Committee
REM	Results Measurement Framework
RENAPDDHO	National network for the protection of human rights defenders
RTL	Re-education Through Labour
SDH	Brazilian Human Rights Secretariat
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SIA	Sustainable Impact Assessments
SPRING	Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth
SR	Special Rapporteur
SSMB	Same Sex Marriage Bill
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TMAF	Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UDP	United Democratic Party
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan

UNASUR	Union of South American Nations
UN CAT	United Nations Committee against torture
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSG	Secretary-General of the United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
US	United States of America
WIMSA	Working Group on Indigenous Minorities of Southern Africa
ZGF	Zambian Governance Foundation

Country and Regional Issues

Country and regional issues

I Candidate countries and potential candidates

The Copenhagen criteria reflect the values on which the EU is founded: democracy, the rule of law, respect for fundamental rights, and the importance of a functioning market economy. As the 2013-2014 EU enlargement strategy[18] sets out, a key lesson from the past is the need to address the fundamentals first, amongst which the protection of fundamental rights plays a crucial role. The December 2013 Council conclusions[19] also highlight the importance of this area.

In a number of enlargement countries, the key challenges include ensuring smooth functioning of the rule of law, the functioning of institutions guaranteeing democracy, political inclusiveness, fundamental and human rights, including freedom of expression, rights of persons belonging to minorities, and tackling discrimination against vulnerable groups such as Roma people and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. These vulnerable groups also face hostility that can descend into hate speech, violence and intimidation. It is important to consolidate a coherent framework to combat racist and xenophobic behaviour and expression in areas such as audio-visual media, sport, politics, education and the internet.

In this year's enlargement strategy, the Commission places particular emphasis on freedom of expression, the situation of Roma people, and the position of LGBTI people. The Commission works closely on these issues with relevant international and regional organisations, in particular the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Commission proposes that candidate countries participate, as observers, in the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), to support their efforts to ensure full respect for fundamental rights.

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18 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/strategy_paper_2013_en.pdf.

19 http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2017952%202013%20INIT.

Albania

In 2013, the EU provided financial support to 10 projects and launched contracting procedures for another seven under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), totalling almost €2.4 million. Implemented throughout the country by civil society organisations, these projects focus on rights of persons belonging to minorities, monitoring of the penitentiary system and promotion of restorative justice, children's rights, gender equality, rights of persons with disabilities and LGBTI, as well as women's empowerment and the fight against domestic violence. The EU also provided financial support under EIDHR to the 2013 International Human Rights Film

Festival in Tirana, organised by a local non-profit organisation. In November 2013, the EU contracted 10 projects to be implemented by civil society organisations under the Civil Society

Facility (under the IPA 2012 programme) for a total value of €1.5 million, aiming at improving access to justice, respect of human rights in prisons, freedom of expression and media freedom, as well as social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian children in five Albanian regions. In addition, a €1.5 million project launched by the EU in July 2012 under the IPA 2011 programme continued to be implemented throughout 2013 in support to the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities in the country.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/albania_2013.pdf

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In 2013, assistance under the IPA programme focused on children's social protection and inclusion (€1.9 million); sustainable return of migrants (in December, a €7 million project was launched to implement Annex VII to the Dayton Agreement, on refugees and displaced persons); and support for implementing the Roma strategy action plans (in May, a €2.5 million project was launched to support the socio-economic inclusion of Roma people).

Ongoing projects under the EIDHR in 2013 (€6.1 million) addressed the protection of minorities including Roma people, support for and protection of the LGBTI population, women and children, people with disabilities, social rights, rehabilitation and re-integration of victims of torture and violence.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/bosnia_and_herzegovina_2013.pdf

former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

In 2013, EIDHR funding (€0.6 million) was used to support eight projects on greater involvement of minority communities at local level; youth activism to encourage greater acceptance of diversity; improved local lobbying and involvement in public policy making; equal treatment of people with disabilities; inclusion of informal Roma waste collectors in formal waste schemes; strengthening cooperation between civil society organisations and media to pursue human rights and freedom of expression; promotion of democracy; and youth advocates for freedom of expression.

The IPA programme gave €0.3 million of technical assistance funding to projects to improve criminal justice, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia worked with the CoE to ensure law enforcement agencies treat detained and sentenced persons appropriately (project cost: €2.1 million).

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia_2013.pdf

Iceland

Iceland continued to guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms, including socio-economic rights and freedoms, through legal and normative means and implementation. No EU assistance was provided in this area.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/iceland_2013.pdf

Kosovo[20]

During 2013, the EU Office provided financial assistance worth almost € 0.9 million to five projects implemented by civil society organisations in Kosovo under the 2011 EIDHR programme. The issues dealt with by the projects include women's empowerment, LGBTI rights, measures against domestic violence and help for people with disabilities, including assistance for blind people. Under the IPA programme, the EU Office in Kosovo funded a project in 2013 worth € 1 million, which aimed to strengthen the human rights regulatory and institutional framework, and looked at building capacity in the Ombudsperson institution and local civil society.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/kosovo_2013.pdf

Montenegro

There are three ongoing IPA projects on children's rights, gender issues and sustainable solutions for the internally displaced Roma population, worth a total of € 6.2 million over a period of three years. In 2013, the EU provided financial support to seven projects under EIDHR (Country-Based Support Scheme) with a total value of €0.9 million.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/montenegro_2013.pdf

Serbia

In 2013, the EU allocated € 16.5 million under the IPA programme to four projects to support anti-discrimination policies and to improve the situation of vulnerable people, including Roma people, refugees and internally displaced persons. Under the EIDHR budget for 2012, the EU provided financial support to 17 projects in Serbia, implemented by civil society organisations, with a total value of € 1 million. The main focus was on protecting minorities, children's rights, gender equality,

[20] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

LGBTI empowerment, rights for asylum seekers, women's empowerment and rights for people with disabilities. Under the Civil Society Facility programme, the EU provided financial support to some 20 projects, with a total value of €2 million, focusing on public administration reform, cultural diversity and development of civil society organisations at local level.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/serbia_2013.pdf

Turkey

The IPA supported capacity building projects on human rights and fundamental freedoms, the judiciary, gender, security and other aspects related to implementing political criteria. During the reporting period, seven projects were underway, focusing in particular on the impartiality of the judiciary, participatory democracy and police accountability. In 2013 the EIDHR supported 51 ongoing projects to strengthen civil society in its work on human rights, including the protection of human rights defenders; LGBTI rights; women's rights (including women's political participation and preventing violence against women); refugees and asylum seekers; minorities; freedom of religion; and cultural rights.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/turkey_2013.pdf

II EEA/EFTA countries

Norway

As the EU and Norway share similar human rights standards, the EU's human rights strategy is focused primarily on cooperating and maintaining a close dialogue with Norway on human rights matters in international organisations (UN, Council of Europe, OSCE etc.) and in specific countries across the world. In Norway, human rights are included in the EU's public diplomacy and information activities, to stress the EU's leading role worldwide.

Switzerland

As with Norway, the EU's human rights strategy in Switzerland is focused primarily on cooperating and maintaining a close dialogue with Switzerland on human rights matters in international organisations (UN, CoE, OSCE etc.) and in specific countries across the world. One of the three priorities for the Swiss co-chairmanship of the OSCE in 2014 — 'improving people's lives' — looks at the human dimension of OSCE commitments and has a strong focus on human rights.

In Switzerland, human rights are included in the EU's public diplomacy and information activities to stress the EU's leading role worldwide.

In 2012, Switzerland was the subject of a Universal Periodic Review (UPR). As part of this process, 140 recommendations were addressed to Switzerland, of which Switzerland ultimately accepted 99. On 14 March 2013, Switzerland presented to the Human Rights Council its position statement on the outstanding recommendations .

The recommendations which Switzerland refused concerned the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, the enacting of legislation to prohibit organisations which promote or incite racism, the guaranteeing of judicial remedies for violations of social, economic and cultural rights, and the removal of the ban on the construction of minarets. The recommendations accepted by Switzerland broadly focused on the topics of gender equality, police-related abuse, migration (including human trafficking) and asylum, and domestic violence. The coordination between the federal, cantonal and municipal authorities is one of the main challenges for the follow-up to the UPR recommendations, as the competencies to implement changes are distributed across these three levels

III European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), as reviewed in 2011, is the basis on which the EU works with its southern and eastern neighbours to achieve the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration. This goal builds on joint ownership, common interests and fundamental values — democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and social cohesion. Each partner country and the EU agree on an ENP Action Plan, demonstrating their commitment to democracy, human rights, the rule of law, democratic governance, market economy principles and sustainable development. The EU provides support for the achievement of these objectives.

In 2013, a number of neighbourhood partner countries continued to face conflicts, political instability and difficult socio-economic conditions. Nevertheless, bilateral political dialogues continued with most partner countries, including subcommittees on human rights with nine out of the 12 ENP countries. The EU has also continued to live up to its commitment to work with civil society, national parliaments and other key stakeholders, such as social partners and business, to ensure that the reform objectives agreed with partner countries are a true reflection of their societies' concerns and aspirations.

Eastern Partnership

The Eastern Partnership Summit, which took place in Vilnius on 28-29 November 2013, marked an important step in the development of the partnership. The EU, its Member States and partner countries restated their commitment to the principles of international law and to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the market economy, sustainable development and good governance. In 2013, subcommittees on human rights were held with Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. In contrast, the human rights dialogue with Belarus remained frozen.

The establishment of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (CSF), including the establishment of national platforms in partner countries, is a good example of civil society's strengthened role in the ENP. The EU has continued to provide support to civil society through a range of funding instruments.

Armenia

The EU continued to focus its support on Armenia's efforts to deliver on good governance and human rights, in particular by strengthening independence of the judiciary, addressing shortcomings in the electoral process, fostering media freedom, improving detention conditions and fighting against discrimination. The fifth meeting of the EU-Armenia human rights dialogue took place in Yerevan in December 2013.

Presidential elections took place in Armenia on 18 February 2013. The OSCE/ODIHR[21] election observation mission issued its Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions on 19 February 2013. It concluded that the elections were generally well administered and characterised by respect for fundamental freedoms, although the final OSCE/ODIHR report stated that there were serious problems with voting and counting, raising concerns about the integrity of the electoral process. The EU encouraged the Armenian authorities to further address the shortcomings identified by the OSCE/ODIHR concerning both the May 2012 parliamentary elections and the February 2013 presidential elections, in particular the need to ensure a level playing field for all candidates and to avoid the use of administrative resources for electoral purposes. The EU also continued to urge the Armenian authorities to fully investigate the deaths that occurred during the March 2008 clashes following the presidential elections, and the related allegations of ill-treatment in police custody and violations of due process. The EU encouraged the Armenian authorities to improve the situation regarding freedom of expression and the media, more specifically as regards pluralism in the broadcasting sector, and to adequately protect media outlets against abuses in civil defamation cases.

[21] Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

In May, the National Assembly adopted the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women. However, there were protests from certain groups regarding the concept of gender as defined in the law, accompanied by intimidation of women's rights defenders during August and

September. The EU was concerned at the absence of any official condemnation of these acts of intimidation, and the perception of ineffective investigations. The government also turned down a draft law on domestic violence. Instead, it proposed to incorporate suggested actions as a part of amendments to other codes, a step that was criticised by local civil society. An attempt by human rights defenders (with EU advisory support) to prepare a draft anti-discrimination law met with intense opposition from several civil and religious organisations. Restrictions to the right to strike and to join trade-unions were observed.

The EU provided various types of support for justice reforms to promote the development of a more transparent and accessible justice sector. These included the EU Advisory Group, twinning projects, and significant budget support (€29 million). Reforms are necessary in terms of access to justice, including increasing the quality of the judicial process and building the capacity of staff.

Funding through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) continued to contribute to the development of democracy and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It provided assistance on voting rights, children's rights, labour rights, women's rights, ending torture and forced confessions, and other projects. The EU continued to support democratic

elections through a joint project with the OSCE, and — in the run-up to the presidential and municipal elections — provided assistance to training of officials, civil society and journalists, and to improve monitoring and awareness-raising. The EU provided support for strengthening the Office of the Human Rights Defender (HRDO). The EU Advisory Group to the Republic of Armenia continued to provide support for Armenia's reform efforts, especially for human rights and good governance.

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm

Azerbaijan

In 2013, the EU raised human rights issues during various high-level official visits between the EU and Azerbaijan (visit of the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy to Baku; meeting between President Ilham Aliyev and the President of the European Commission in Brussels). These issues were also raised in regular meetings with Azerbaijani officials in Baku and in Brussels (Cooperation Committee in October, Cooperation Council in December). The 2013 Human Rights Dialogue was adjourned to February 2014, at the request of Azerbaijan.

The EU continued to encourage Azerbaijan to abide by its voluntarily agreed commitments in international organisations. This was especially appropriate in view of its non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council and its upcoming chairmanship of the Council of Ministers in the Council of Europe in 2014.

In the run-up to the presidential election, the EU Delegation actively monitored the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country and coordinated joint actions with EU Member State diplomatic missions. In this respect, the EU Delegation and some EU Member State missions monitored campaign rallies in Baku, and regularly attended working sessions of the Central Election Commission. On election day, the EU Delegation deployed two teams of election observers as part of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission.

During the year, the EU also stepped up its regular dialogue with civil society organisations, providing an opportunity for them to share their views in a close and inclusive format. Regular monthly meetings with civil society and opposition groups were held, notably at the EU Delegation premises, and the EU actively supported numerous events that increased the visibility of independent civil society organisations. The Delegation also used its regular media activities and outreach events around Europe Day and the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit to stress the importance of democratic values and human rights for the EU policy agenda with Azerbaijan.

With respect to the implementation of the local Guidelines for Human Rights Defenders in Azerbaijan, the Delegation maintained regular contact with active human rights defenders, although a dedicated meeting in the region could not be organised last year.

During the year, the EU continued to monitor cases relating to property rights, including regular meetings with citizens affected. The EU, and its respective Delegations to Azerbaijan and to the OSCE, issued a total of seven statements addressing the human rights situation in the country and

the conduct of elections. These statements focused on the arrest of the chairperson of the Republican Alternative Movement, Ilgar Mammadov, the amendments criminalising online defamation, the pre-electoral situation and the conduct of elections in the country. The European Parliament passed two resolutions on Azerbaijan in 2013, one raising the case of Ilgar Mammadov (13 June 2013) and a broader resolution on the 2012 ENP Progress Reports (23 October 2013).

In April 2013, Azerbaijan underwent its second Universal Period Review under the United Nations Human Rights Council, where 162 recommendations were formulated, including from EU Member States. As part of the EU Gender Action Plan, the EU Delegation organised a meeting with representatives of prominent women's organisations and discussed challenges in the field of women's rights, including domestic violence and discrimination. The Delegation actively followed up on cases of imprisoned political activists and human rights defenders, and monitored trials jointly with other diplomatic missions. The Delegation also had the opportunity to pay visits to activists in prison and it maintained regular contact with their families and lawyers. During the year, the EU Delegation submitted written requests to the Ombudsperson's Office for information on cases of prisoners who had a political background.

To increase mutual trust and cooperation between the government and civil society organisations, the EU continued to promote the reestablishment of their dialogue. The EU supported an increased role of the Azerbaijan National Platform of the Civil Society Forum under the Eastern Partnership.

The EU Delegation organised a dedicated press conference for the release of the 2012 ENP Progress Report, and discussed the report with civil society representatives.

As a follow-up to the 2012 Heads of Mission visit to Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (NAR), the EU Delegation organised with EU Member States' diplomatic staff a working-level visit to the NAR in February 2013, to meet with local authorities, the Ombudsman, and civil society activists. The EU Head of Delegation — jointly with EU Member State representatives — also visited Ganja, Barda and Goranboy in April 2013. In addition a meeting was held with youth activists and human rights defenders in Ganja.

The EU spent €2 million on human rights and democracy related projects. A call for proposals under EIDHR for €2.2 million was closed in April 2013. Selected projects promote and guarantee access to information, freedom of media and expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of conscience and religion, fight against torture, ill treatment and impunity, access to justice and rule of law, non – discrimination and gender equality ,

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm

Georgia

The EU and Georgia successfully concluded the negotiation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. The Agreement was initialled at the November 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius.

The sixth EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue was held in Brussels in June 2013. The talks focused on the challenges and reform of the justice and law enforcement systems; elections and the electoral framework; freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of association; the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including religious minorities, and anti-discrimination issues. The government drafted and submitted to the Parliament for approval a National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan.

A delegation from the European Parliament visited Georgia for the presidential election in October, and praised the credibility of the electoral process. High Representative Ashton and Commissioner Füle issued a joint statement.

In June, Georgia adopted a new Labour Code in line with ILO conventions No 87 and No 98 on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. This had been a longstanding EU request. Throughout 2013, key steps toward increased judicial independence were taken, such as the adoption of the Law on Common Courts, the adoption of new rules for the selection of members of the High Council of Justice, and the granting of access to courts for journalists. Another important step was the separation of the Prosecutor's office from the Ministry of Justice. High Representative Ashton and Commissioner Füle made a joint statement in relation to the prosecution of 35 central officials of the previous government, demanding strict adherence to principles of fairness and due process, free from political motivation.

The EU supported reforms with strong financial backing — including budget support to grants, and joint actions with international organisations such as the Council of Europe, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF — and these were reinforced with the appointment of Thomas

Hammarberg as EU Special Adviser on Constitutional and Legal Reform and Human Rights in Georgia. In September, he issued his report *'Georgia in Transition'* providing an analysis of the relevant progress and shortcomings as well as formulating advices regarding priority actions.

The EU continued providing support for the Public Defender's Office (PDO) under its 'Comprehensive Institution Building' programme. In 2013, Georgia benefited under the Eastern Partnership integration and cooperation programme's incentive-based approach, and was awarded an additional €27 m.

A call for proposals under EIDHR for €1 million was launched in June 2013. EIDHR funding will contribute to promoting the rights of vulnerable groups including their health, economic, social, cultural, labour rights and rights to equal treatment and their integration into society; combating discrimination on any grounds; fighting against domestic violence; guaranteeing transparency and public participation, free access to public information and to justice; providing support to human rights defenders and civil society organisations' actions aimed at strengthening democratic reform and dialogue

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm

Belarus

In 2013, the situation in Belarus as regards respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles remained of concern. The EU consistently reiterated its commitment to a policy of critical engagement with the Belarusian government.. Human rights violations remained wide-spread. They include limitations on the rights to freedom of expression and opinion, and on peaceful assembly and association; continuing harassment, intimidation and imprisonment of political opponents, human rights defenders, journalists and activists; and allegations of torture and ill treatment while in custody. In 2013, the harassment of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community increased.

On numerous occasions throughout 2013, the EU expressed its grave concern regarding the lack of respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles. The EU Delegation and EU Member States, in their contacts with interlocutors in the Belarusian administration, have continuously stressed the importance of immediately releasing and rehabilitating all political prisoners, and reiterated concerns regarding cases of harassment of human rights defenders, civil society and opposition activists, and further restrictive legislation.

In November, the EU Delegation published the EU's human rights strategy on its website. and stressed its 'particular importance for the overall human rights situation in this country, including the situation of the civil society, democratisation, elections, freedom of the media, freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, as well as the continued existence of the death penalty and political prisoners, and the use of torture.' The protection of LGBT rights, and of freedom of belief and religion, also figure amongst EU priority actions.

A number of political prisoners are still held in Belarusian prisons. Three political prisoners were released from prison in 2013 having served their full terms (Sevyarinets, Dashkevich and Frantskevich) without being rehabilitated.

Some new cases considered by human rights organizations as politically motivated (Lazar, Yaromenak, Pastnau, Parfenkow) were reported in 2013. The EU Delegation and EU Heads of Mission are following the situation closely. On 20 August, the EU Delegation issued a statement concerning the appeal hearing of Andrey Haydukow, a case that might be politically motivated. This statement called on Belarus 'to ensure that trials are just, fair and open, respecting all international standards and obligations'. Dr. Pastnau was released from stationary psychiatric treatment at the end of September 2013. Early December, the catholic priest Uladzislaw Lazar was released on his own recognizance.

The smuggled letter of one political prisoner, Mikalay Awtukhovich, published by an independent Belarusian media, described shocking imprisonment conditions and numerous violations of human rights. On 25 September — the day of his birthday — the EU Heads of Mission sent a letter of support to the prominent political prisoner, Ales Bialiatski. On 13 August, a similar letter was sent to another political prisoner, Mykola Statkevich.

In May and June, the High Representative's spokesperson released statements expressing regret at the issuing of three new death sentences in Belarus. Belarus remains the only country in Europe that still applies capital punishment. Of the four death penalties that were handed down in 2013, two have been upheld by the Supreme Court. For the first time since 2003, a death sentence was annulled by the Supreme Court, and the case was sent back for a new trial. On 25 October, in agreement with the EU Heads of Mission in Minsk, the EU Delegation issued a statement welcoming this decision. However, the death penalty was once again handed down in the retrial.

The spokespersons of High Representative Ashton and Commissioner Füle issued a statement on 14 June in which they expressed support for the adoption by the UN Human Rights Council of a resolution (23/15) on the human rights situation in Belarus. The statement welcomed the extension for another year of Miklos Haraszti's mandate as UN Special Rapporteur on Belarus, and urged the Belarusian authorities to cooperate fully with him. Nonetheless, the Belarusian authorities still do not recognise Haraszti's mandate and have refused to allow him to travel to Belarus.

Several trade union activists, or workers affiliated with independent trade unions, have faced groundless dismissals, particularly in the Mozyr Oil Refinery. A number of trade unions from EU Member States reacted by expressing solidarity, and by demanding the reinstatement of the dismissed workers.

On 29 October, the Council extended the EU's restrictive measures against Belarus for one more year. The annual review of the restrictive measures led to an update of the list of those targeted with a travel ban and asset freeze within the EU. Some 232 people and 25 entities remain subject to EU sanctions, as not all political prisoners have been released, no released prisoner has been rehabilitated, and respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles has not improved.

On 12 September, the European Parliament passed recommendations on the EU's policy towards Belarus. The text of the recommendations indicated that 'the general situation with respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms is deplorable and remained of a great concern'.

EU assistance to Belarus is still limited in scope and focuses on directly and indirectly supporting the needs of the population, and on democratisation. Support to civil society has increased significantly since the start of 2011, with a total of € 19 million for 2011-2013 (of which € 7.9 million in 2013). A call for proposals under EIDHR for €565,000.00 was launched in June 2013. Selected projects are aimed at supporting freedom of thought, conscience and religion in Belarus; improving women's rights and child protection; supporting initiatives of various civic groups; increasing the capacity of civil society organisations and human rights defenders; promoting social inclusion and empowerment of disadvantaged people; and the abolishment of death penalty and the reintegration of former prisoners.

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Republic of Moldova

The EU continued to engage in human rights discussions with the Republic of Moldova in various formats, such as the structured EU- Republic of Moldova human rights dialogue, expert meetings on human rights with the participation of the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, in the framework of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan, and during high-level visits.

The EU's main objectives in 2013 included reform of the judiciary and of prosecution, anti-discrimination, media freedom, and improved human rights in Transnistria.

Ten human rights projects, funded under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument's Civil Society Facility and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), were launched or implemented during the year. They focused on anti-discrimination, the rights of the most vulnerable groups on both banks of the River Nistru, freedom of assembly, the rights of people with disabilities, monitoring reform in the justice sector, youth participation and combating abuse of elderly people.

The EU continued to support the Republic of Moldova's ambitious reforms in the justice and law enforcement systems, through the implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy 2011-2016 and the corresponding Action Plan, and through large-scale budget support and technical assistance operations (€ 70 million). In particular, the EU supported efforts to reform the General Prosecutor's Office, with a view to ensuring its institutional independence, impartiality and professionalism.

The EU welcomed the progress made by the Republic of Moldova towards implementing its anti-discrimination commitments, in particular the creation of the equality body (Anti-Discrimination Council) in the second half of the year, despite several months of delay. To underline the importance of tolerance for the Republic of Moldova's diverse society, Commissioner Füle participated in the 'march for traditional values' organised by the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community on 19 May.

In the Human Rights Dialogue meeting of April 2013, the EU encouraged the Republic of Moldova to step up its efforts to implement its national Action Plan in support of the Roma people. The EU advocated that this should include state funding of 15 Roma community mediators in 2013, in view of the impact this initiative could have, for example, on school attendance among Roma children.

Following concerns in 2012 about the independence of the Audio-visual Coordination Council (ACC), the EU addressed this issue in the agenda for the EU- Republic of Moldova Association Agreement that was presented on the margins of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius.

The EU expressed regret at the lack of accountability for human rights violations that occurred during the April 2009 events, even though it recognised that the Republic of Moldova had taken important steps to prevent torture and ill-treatment in the future (e.g. new Criminal Procedure Code, draft law on the Ombudsman, annulment of the law on chemical castration).

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm

Ukraine

In 2013, the EU and Ukraine continued to work together to enhance the legislative and institutional framework for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which became of particular importance in the light of the deep and lasting political crisis that broke out in November 2013 in Ukraine. Reforms supported by the EU, in the context of preparations for the signature of the Association Agreement and in the framework of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan, had a direct link with some of the key EU priorities in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These included upholding the right to a fair trial, the fight against arbitrary detention and torture, the fight against discrimination, protection of the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, and the establishment of a better framework for the exercise of freedom of peaceful assembly.

The EU continued to discuss human rights in its regular political dialogue with Ukrainian representatives, and maintained close contacts with civil society. Following the meeting of the subcommittee on Justice, Liberty and Security in May, Ukraine submitted its reply to the EU's written list of individual cases of alleged human rights violations.

On 25 February 2013, at the 16th EU-Ukraine Summit in Brussels, both sides confirmed their commitment to create the political conditions for the signature of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in Vilnius. In this regard, Ukraine undertook to address a number of issues outlined by the EU Foreign Affairs Council on 10 December 2012. These included EU concerns on the use of selective justice against opposition leaders and comprehensive reform of the judiciary to prevent any recurrence; a reform of electoral legislation in line with Council of Europe and OSCE/ODIHR recommendations; and progress in the reforms outlined in the proposed EU-Ukraine Association Agenda.

European Parliament President Martin Schulz and Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov established a mission led by Alexander Kwasniewski, former President of Poland, and Pat Cox, former President of the European Parliament. This mission conducted 27 visits to Ukraine to help Ukrainian stakeholders, in particular with regard to the benchmark related to selective justice. Moreover, the EU continued to support the implementation of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR recommendations for the reform of election legislation in Ukraine. As a result, the Parliamentary Election Law was adopted in October 2013. The EU made consistent calls for the continuation of this reform process to address shortcomings in legislation on local and presidential elections.

The reform of the criminal justice system was a particularly important area where the EU and other key international partners were deeply involved. The EU lent its full political support to reform of the justice system, an initiative led by Ukrainian authorities in close cooperation with the Council of Europe. As a result, amendments to Chapter VIII of the Constitution were passed in first reading in September. An ambitious Law on the General Prosecutor's Office was also passed in first reading in October.

Sudden decision of the Ukrainian leadership not to sign the Association Agreement/DCFTA at the Vilnius summit prompted pro-European peaceful demonstrations in Kiev and in other Ukrainian towns. Their violent dispersal on 30 November constituted a breach of Ukraine's international obligations as regards freedom of assembly; other human rights are also concerned. The EU continued to monitor and report on human rights in Ukraine as the demonstrations in Maidan continued. It pursued regular contacts with civil society representatives as the situation worsened on the ground. The paramount importance of the respect for human and civil rights by the opposing sides was stressed during the mediation talks held by high ranking EU representatives with the Ukrainian government and party leaders as well as the civil stakeholders. On this ground, the EU stands for the legal accountability of those who committed acts violating human rights during the mass disturbances in the country.

The EU and Ukraine also worked together to create the conditions that could lead to the establishment of a visa-free travel regime, through the adoption of legislation outlined in the EU-Ukraine Visa Liberalisation Action Plan. In this context, discussions continued on the need to introduce amendments to Ukraine's legislative framework to combat discrimination in a comprehensive manner. The EU made a number of recommendations to the adopted Strategy and the Action Plan on the Rights of the Roma Population.

In the framework of the EU's continued engagement in support of the rights of Crimean Tatars, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy stressed the need for dialogue to address outstanding issues for the integration and restoration of rights of formerly deported peoples. He also reaffirmed the EU's commitment to continue supporting the political and economic development of ethnically diverse Crimea.

A call for proposals under EIDHR for €1 144 100 was launched in April 2013. Selected projects will aimed at fighting against torture and other forms of ill-treatment; promoting freedom of expression, freedom of the media and media pluralism; freedom of peaceful assembly; freedom of association; freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief; guaranteeing the access to justice, including the right to a fair trial and due process, monitoring electoral processes and promoting non-discrimination and equality

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm

The Southern Mediterranean

The situation in the southern Mediterranean continued to evolve during 2013, revealing even greater differences in the trajectories of individual countries in the region. Progress continued to be made in some countries on building and strengthening the institutional basis for deep-rooted democracy and human rights; in others, the process has all but stalled, or even regressed, as a result of political polarisation and conflict. The challenges associated with transition processes concern constitutional

developments, transitional justice, institutional reform, strengthening the role of civil society, and securing respect for human rights, including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, and equal rights for women and men. But they also involve security and stability issues.

The developments in the countries in transition have reinforced the earlier assessment, that these processes require strategic patience and diversified approaches, while upholding the universality of human rights, and democratic values. This was the core message delivered by the HR/VP in her continuous engagement with governments, parliamentarians and civil society activists in the region and in her statements. At the technical level, the EU pursued a comprehensive approach in the continued reform dialogue with partner countries under the Association Agreements, including in the sub-committees on human rights and democracy, and in the process of following up on recommendations made in the annual ENP progress reporting.

The EU has continued to develop a stronger engagement with the League of Arab States (LAS). In 2013, the EU and the LAS commenced implementation of the joint work programme agreed by foreign ministers at their meeting in November 2012. In the area of human rights, women's empowerment and engagement with civil society, a series of activities were implemented by the human rights bodies of the two organisations. These include a study visit by the LAS Secretariat and the Arab Human Rights Committee to the Council of Europe and EU institutions in Brussels, and a series of thematic workshops. In addition, meetings and thematic seminars on women's rights and women's empowerment, organised in cooperation with UN Women, are under preparation. A regional seminar arranged by the EU, LAS and civil society took place in Malta in June 2013. As part of the EU assistance to building democracy, LAS election observers have been trained and participated in election observer missions, including for Jordan's parliamentary elections in January 2013.

The EU has also continued to strengthen its engagement in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The UfM has become the organisational framework for continued sectorial policy dialogues between the EU and countries in the southern neighbourhood at ministerial level. After a pause in such ministerial meetings, a successful re-launch took place in 2013 with the Ministerial

Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, which took place on 11-12 September in Paris. In the conference declaration, ministers reaffirmed their earlier commitments and obligations on women's rights issues, and committed themselves to implement concrete measures to achieve specific objectives. Moreover, ministers agreed on a dedicated follow-up mechanism, which involves regular stocktaking on progress in implementing those measures. The EU organised the second Euromed/UfM Social Dialogue Forum on 13 November 2013 in Barcelona. The forum gives the UfM social partners the opportunity to be consulted on the employment and social situation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Egypt

In 2013, the EU closely monitored the human rights situation in Egypt and engaged with the authorities both before and after the removal of President Morsi in early July. Generally, the human rights environment, in particular regarding freedom of assembly, expression and media, has deteriorated since July. The interim authorities explain this is as a response to the increasing security and terrorist threat.

The removal of Morsi produced mass demonstrations, pro-Morsi sit-ins and violence On 14 July, the High Representative issued a declaration on behalf of the EU, expressing deep concern at the situation and stating that the military must accept and respect the constitutional authority of civilian power as a basic principle of democratic governance. Later that month, the Council adopted conclusions, again expressing concern at the situation and calling for an inclusive process that

would lead to a democratically elected government responding to the legitimate aspirations of all Egyptian people. Following the violent dispersal of the Muslim Brotherhood-led sit-ins, the High Representative convened an extraordinary EU Foreign Affairs Council on 21 August 2013. The Council adopted conclusions that conveyed a firm message to Egypt, condemning all violence — including the disproportionate use of force by security forces and acts of terrorism — and calling for an end to the state of emergency, the release of political prisoners, the restoration of the democratic process and respect for human rights.

During 2013, the High Representative visited Egypt five times, meeting with representatives across the whole political spectrum, and leaders of civil society organisations and activist movements. In all her visits, she reiterated the importance of an inclusive political process for a stable democratic transition along with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights visited Egypt three times in 2013 and held meetings with high-level government officials and civil society organizations to discuss the human rights situation and to raise issues of concern. In the spring of 2013, the EU Special Representative facilitated the deployment of experts to assist the National Council of Women in drafting a law on violence against women. He also engaged the Venice Commission in the drafting of the associations law, following an agreement with the Egyptian authorities. Progress was noted on amending a number of highly controversial provisions of earlier drafts. Nevertheless, on 2 June, the EU expressed fears that the draft law still contained elements that could unnecessarily constrain the work of NGOs in Egypt, and hinder the EU's capacity to support their work.

Following the July 2013 change in government, the EU continued to monitor closely the human rights situation in the country. During her July visit, the High Representative, accompanied by the EU Special Representative, focused on engaging with and providing public support to civil society organisations, and called for inclusiveness and respect for human rights following the change in government. The EU reacted strongly to the adoption in November of the new law on the right of assembly, stating that '*such measures […] violate the rights and aspirations of the Egyptian people and will never deliver real and sustainable security for the Egyptian population'*.

Early in 2012, a case was lodged against 10 NGOs, in which they were accused of operating without a licence and receiving illegal funds from abroad. On 4 June 2013, all 43 foreign and Egyptian defendants were found guilty. Sentences included up to five years imprisonment, fines, permanent closure of activities of the concerned NGOs and seizure of property. This landmark ruling contributed to the uncertainty and risks faced by foreign NGOs working in Egypt, and by local NGOs receiving funds from abroad. The High Representative and Commissioner Füle issued a joint statement expressing concern at the Court ruling in Egypt.

Throughout the year, in numerous meetings and statements, the EU condemned sexual violence against women protesters and urged for swift accountability.

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm

Israel

The EU conducts a regular dialogue with Israel on human rights issues, both within the State of Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territories.

At its core, the EU-Israel partnership seeks to ensure full respect for human rights for all people under Israel's responsibility and for the rights of persons belonging to minorities, to develop democratic values, and to foster a vibrant civil society. Any upgrade in bilateral relations must be based, inter alia, on respect for human rights, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms and international humanitarian law, and — in the context of our common interest in resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict — through achievement of the two-state solution.

The EU and Israel held a meeting of the informal working group on human rights in January 2013. Human rights issues were also raised in regular diplomatic contacts with Israel and through multilateral fora.

The EU raised its concerns on a range of issues, most notably the legal status and economic and social rights of Israeli minority groups, and discrimination against Arab-Israelis, including the Negev Bedouins. As regards the Prawer-Begin Plan on the Negev Bedouins, aiming at settling land claims of the Bedouin and 'regulating' their settlement in the Negev as part of the government's economic development plan for the Negev, the EU stressed in particular the need for proper consultation of the communities concerned, and for an openness to consider alternative plans.

In the subcommittee on social and migration issues, the EU raised concerns about some human rights aspects of Israeli immigration legislation and policies. An additional Criminal Protocol to the Prevention of Infiltration Law widened the definition of crimes that can be punished by detention to include acts that 'disturb public order'. Asylum seekers may legally be imprisoned even in cases where sufficient evidence to indict a suspect is lacking.

The EU experienced fruitful cooperation with Israel as regards the fight against xenophobia, discrimination and anti-Semitism, including through annual joint seminars such as that organised in December 2013. That event included specific sessions on combating hate speech, as well as ensuring access to justice to ensure effective redress against racial discrimination. Israel continued to provide strong guarantees for the rights of women, children and the LGBTI community, and provided useful input to discussions on how to address human rights issues affecting these communities within the EU.

The EU continued to engage with Israel on human rights issues and international humanitarian law in relation to the Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian territories. These include conflict-related violence, military detention of children, administrative detention and Israeli restrictions on Palestinian economic and social rights and freedom of association.

A particular concern of the EU throughout the year was the continued and increased construction of Israeli settlements and demolitions in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, which had a negative impact on respect for human rights. Several statements were issued on this issue and the Council's Conclusions of December 2013 reiterated these concerns. In line with the EU position regarding illegality of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, the European Commission adopted guidelines in June to ensure that Israeli entities and activities based in settlements do not benefit from EU programmes. The EU also condemned violence by Israeli settlers and, in some cases, Israeli security forces against Palestinian civilians. While welcoming the initiation of legal proceedings in some instances, it called on Israel in all cases to bring the perpetrators of these acts to justice.

The Israeli decision to suspend relations with the UN Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was addressed in the above-mentioned meeting of the informal working group, when the EU called on Israel to resume full cooperation. The EU welcomed Israel's decision to participate in its Universal Periodic Review on 29 October and its announcement that it would renew links with the Geneva bodies.

In the period January to October, 30 projects supported by the EIDHR and the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility (CSF) were ongoing, including eight that had begun in this period. These projects contributed to the priorities identified in the Action Plan: respect and promotion of rights of persons belonging to minorities; respect for human rights and international humanitarian law; and the fight against racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. The EU Delegation's annual EIDHR/CSF call for proposals was launched in March 2013 and evaluations were concluded in October. At least eight projects were selected. On the subject of women's rights, three new projects funded by the EU commenced activities; these addressed labour rights for Arab and Ethiopian Israeli women, gender budgeting in local authorities and the gender pay gap. In the latter project, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission is involved.

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm

Palestine[22]

The EU-Palestinian Authority ENP Action Plan, adopted in 2013, envisages a Palestinian state based on the rule of law, full respect for human rights, development of democratic values and the promotion of a vibrant civil society.[23]

The EU's human rights strategy for Palestine is linked to the wider political context: the ongoing Israeli occupation; the continuing internal division between Fatah and Hamas; and the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in August 2013. The EU has underlined its full support for the process and reiterated its vision for a two-state solution resulting in an agreement on all final status issues. However, the EU also continued to monitor and to express its grave concern about disruptive developments on the ground that could undermine these negotiations. This included an increase in violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank in which four Israelis and 27 Palestinians were killed. EU Council Conclusions in December also expressed grave concern at the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. The ongoing internal Palestinian political split between Gaza and the West Bank, and the fact that the EU maintains no contact with the *de facto* authorities of Gaza meant the EU could not effectively raise the significant human rights issues within Gaza. In addition to the suppression of human rights including freedom of expression, and women's and rights of persons belonging to minorities, this included sporadic rocket fire by Gazan militants into Israel, as well as retaliatory airstrikes by Israel.

The EU has advanced the human rights objectives through a significant programme of financial assistance dedicated to the Palestinian Authority, and the deployment of the common security and defence policy mission in support of the Palestinian civil police, the European Union Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS). The rule of law continued to be a focus for EU development assistance to the Palestinian Authority in 2013, while the EUPOL COPPS mission also includes human rights training as part of its wider rule of law activities. Through these, the EU has continued to provide support for the development of an independent, impartial and fully

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22 This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

23 http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_progress_report_palestine_en.pdf.

functioning judiciary and for more accountable Palestinian Authority security services. The EU has also continued to provide support for non-partisan human rights organisations and human rights defenders, notably through ensuring an EU presence in 2013 at selected court hearings, in line with the criteria set out in a locally adopted strategy on human rights defenders.

The fifth EU-Palestine subcommittee on Human Rights, Good Governance and the Rule of Law was held in Ramallah on 26 November 2013. Topics discussed included freedom of assembly and expression; protection of women's and girls' rights; detention conditions in Palestinian jails; allegations and incidents of incitement; international humanitarian law and international human

rights law; and the draft penal code. The Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) participated in the subcommittee on human rights as part of the Palestinian delegation, an example of best practice in the region.

In this context, the EU raised a number of issues. As regards fundamental freedoms, the EU expressed concerns about violations to the freedom of assembly and expression, in particular regarding online and social media.

The EU has commended the *de facto* moratorium on the death penalty in the West Bank and called for a *de jure* moratorium. It has also called for the swift adoption of the draft penal code, which would abolish the death penalty. As reflected in local EU statements issued systematically, the EU condemned the issuing and execution of death sentences in the Gaza Strip.

Concerning protection of women's and girls' rights, there is a worrying increase in the number of honour killings and violence against women in general. The EU expressed concern about the lack of a reference to international standards in the draft law for the protection of families from violence.

As regards detention conditions in Palestinian jails, the EU welcomed the Presidential Decree issued in May 2013 prohibiting torture. Nonetheless, as complaints about allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by Palestinian security forces continue to be registered, the EU stressed that such allegations should be better investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. The EU also commended the improved access to detention centres and prisons provided to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The EU welcomed the announcement of the drafting of a National Action Plan on Human Rights and stressed the importance of a human rights-based approach to be included in the Palestinian National Development Plan.

EU-Palestinian cooperation in multilateral fora (in both Geneva and New York) is positive and constructive.

The EU Representative Office launched a local call for proposal under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the Civil Society Facility targeting especially local civil society organisations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The call focused on the protection of vulnerable groups, freedom of association and expression, citizens' access to information on their rights, good governance and civilian oversight.

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Jordan

Jordan continued to be affected by the Syrian crisis and by the wave of refugees from Syria that exerted pressure on Jordan's education system, healthcare services and informal labour market. In 2013, the EU continued to provide substantial humanitarian and development aid to Jordan, in support of refugees and host communities.

The EU dialogue with Jordan on human rights and democracy takes place on a regular basis. The 8th meeting of the subcommittee on Human Rights, Governance and Democracy was held in Brussels on 9 September 2013. A number of key matters were raised including: reform of the electoral framework; freedom of association and assembly; media freedom; freedom of religion or belief; women's rights; the death penalty; and torture. Concerns persisted over freedom of expression due in particular to implementation in June of the Press and Publications Law

For the parliamentary elections of 23 January 2013, and upon invitation of Jordan's Independent Electoral Commission, the EU deployed an Election Observation Mission (EU EOM), mobilising over 80 observers to assess the whole electoral process. According to the EU EOM final report, the elections were technically well administered and carried out in a predominantly transparent manner. However, the electoral law has a number of shortcomings that undermine the protection of universally accepted principles such as the equality of votes and the universality of suffrage.

The EU dedicated a substantial part (€ 7 million) of its incentive-based allocation (SPRING programme) to the provision of support to the electoral process in Jordan. Three components are currently being implemented: 1) Support to the Independent Electoral Commission in Jordan through UNDP; 2) Enhancing civic awareness, promoting emerging political actors and engaging in the electoral reform; and 3) Enhancing professional and accurate media reporting on the electoral process through UNESCO.

In 2013, the annual programme of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument included a component for civil society and media (€ 10 million) whose main objective is to contribute to the strengthening of democracy in Jordan through increased participation of citizens in political life, and to build the capacity for an independent, quality-based media sector.

The EU Delegation to Jordan launched a local call for proposal under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) targeting especially local civil society organisations and aiming for the prevention of torture and other forms of ill treatment as well as for the advance of rights and living conditions of children.

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Lebanon

In a context characterised by paralysis of Lebanon's national institutions and repercussions of the crisis in neighbouring Syria, the EU continued to engage with Lebanon in the area of human rights. Meetings in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy included the subcommittee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance, and two meetings of the Association Committee. A number of high-level visits took place, during which important human rights issues were raised with Lebanon.

The EU repeatedly urged the timely holding of both presidential and parliamentary elections. In line with the new EU-Lebanon ENP Action Plan, the EU also continued to call for electoral reform, notably a new electoral law that would take into account the recommendations of previous EU election observation missions. The EU continued its twofold approach by: (i) supporting the government in implementing technical reforms; and (ii) encouraging civil society to advocate for a better electoral framework, with the overall EU electoral assistance amounting to € 8 million over the past years.

With regard to the extraordinary number of refugees coming from Syria, the EU continued to commend and encourage Lebanon's open door policy, which Lebanon upheld throughout the year. Lebanon provided protection and assistance to refugees, supported by the EU and assisted on the ground by UN agencies and humanitarian partners. The number of refugees from Syria increased dramatically in 2013, exceeding 910 000 registered refugees, up from 180 000 at the beginning of the year. The EU maintained its role as the largest donor, having mobilised a total of € 232.8 million to help Lebanon mitigate the consequences of the crisis[24].

[24] http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_progress_report_lebanon_en.pdf.

In accordance with the first priority of the new ENP Action Plan, the EU further engaged in the justice sector. It sought to fight impunity (i.e. the exemption from penalty for crimes committed); to enhance efficiency and independence of the justice system; to improve the situation in prisons; to reduce the use of arbitrary detention; to eradicate torture; and to restrict the use of military courts. Concerning the death penalty, 2013 saw the re-launch of the abolitionist movement, supported by the EU, although courts continued to hand down death sentences.

Protection of vulnerable populations and the fight against discrimination, as provided for in the new ENP Action Plan, remained a priority for EU activity throughout 2013. Through financial assistance and political dialogue, the EU continued to support the improvement of living conditions for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Furthermore, the EU continued to advocate for women's rights (e.g. prevention of domestic violence and the right to pass their nationality to children) and improvement in the situation of migrant domestic workers, as raised in key subcommittee meetings.

The EU actively collaborated with civil society and human rights defenders as concerns freedom of expression and followed up with the relevant authorities on reported cases of intimidation. The annual EU-funded Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press, organised since 2006, was given to three journalists in 2013. The EU also engaged thousands of students from universities across Lebanon in debates on human rights and democracy, organising panels with representatives of Lebanese states bodies, civil society organizations, academics and EU Heads of Mission.

The delegation launched a local call for proposal under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) targeting mainly local civil society organisations. The call focused on the protection of vulnerable groups, right to fair trials, improving the environment for rights based organisations, and support to encourage the Lebanese authorities to fully fulfil their commitments in the field of human rights in the context of ENP and the UN instruments.

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Syria

The human rights crisis in Syria further deteriorated in 2013, as the country moved into a situation of protracted conflict. Throughout the year, there were numerous reports in the media and by observers, including from the UN, concerning increasing serious and large-scale violations of human rights. Such violations include arbitrary killings and arrests, torture, abductions and various forms of persecution. The Independent Commission of Inquiry established by a resolution of the UN Human Rights Council in August 2011, in its reports of 5 February, 4 June and 11 September, repeatedly stated that gross violations of human rights in Syria amount to crimes against humanity. Both the number of civilian casualties and the number of arbitrarily detained persons amount to tens of thousands.

The EU has consistently expressed its gravest concerns at the deterioration of the situation in Syria. In its Foreign Affairs Council conclusions in February, May and October 2013, in particular, it highlighted the widespread and systematic violations of human rights, international humanitarian law and fundamental freedoms by the Syrian authorities. Specific reference was made to the increasing attacks on religious and ethnic communities and a call was made for the release of two kidnapped Orthodox Christian bishops. On 27 May, the Foreign Affairs Council specifically condemned the massacres committed by the Syrian armed forces and its militias in Bayda and Banyas that claimed the lives of more than 140 people, including women and children. The High Representative's spokesperson also issued a statement in response to the massacres.

The EU stood united in condemning in the strongest terms the horrific chemical attack perpetrated on 21 August. That attack constituted a blatant violation of international law, which amounts to a crime against humanity and a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The EU reiterated its consistent position that these crimes, and other atrocities and human rights violations and abuses, must be investigated and those responsible must be held accountable. The EU reaffirmed that there should be no impunity for any such violations, including for those committed with either chemical or conventional weapons or other means. It also recalled that the UN Security Council can at any time refer the situation in Syria to the ICC — as requested in Switzerland's letter to the Security Council of 14 January 2013.

On the international stage, during the 22nd, 23rd and 24th sessions of the Human Rights Council, the EU was involved in the adoption of four resolutions on the Syrian human rights situation. It played a particularly active role in the preparation of the March resolution which extended the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry for one more year and called for immediate and unfettered access into Syria for the Commission. The EU's plea to the United Nations Security Council to take a clear stand after the attacks of 21 August was heard on 29 September, with the adoption of the Security Council resolution on Syrian chemical weapons, which should pave the way for their elimination. This legally binding and enforceable resolution, welcomed by the EU, calls for accountability for the use of such weapons and envisages a forceful international reaction in the event of non-compliance. The EU also co-sponsored the resolution on Syria adopted in November at the 3rd committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The resolution contains strong language to further condemn the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Syrian authorities, and the use of chemical weapons, and emphasises international criminal justice.

The EU has also taken a number of measures in response to the regime's repression against the Syrian people and further atrocities perpetrated by all sides of the conflict. The bilateral cooperation with the Syrian authorities, which has been suspended since 2011, continues to be suspended, and an additional sanctions policy targeting the regime was put in place.

The EU remained the first donor towards Syrian refugees and those in need within Syria. The total EU humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance in response to the Syrian crisis, including contributions from the EU budget and from Member States, reached over € 2 billion in 2013. In particular, funding allocated under the EU humanitarian budget and implemented both in Syria and neighbouring countries, included protection support for children and women (gender-based violence) in accordance with international humanitarian law and other applicable international law. The EIDHR funds some civil society organisations working to promote human rights and strengthening of human rights defenders.

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Tunisia

EU objectives for human rights and democracy in the framework of its relations with Tunisia focus on the fight against torture, reform of the justice sector, the guarantee of freedom of expression, women's rights, and abolition of the death penalty. These themes are continuously reiterated in the political dialogue with Tunisia and represent an important part of the agreed Action Plan in 2012.

Following the assassinations of politicians Chokri Belaïd in February and Mohamed Brahmi in July, the High Representative made two statements emphasising the significance of the rule of law. The importance of guaranteeing human rights was for instance underlined during the visits of the President of the European Council in January, and the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy in July, and reiterated during the Association Committee, held in June. In its October conclusions, the EU Foreign Affairs Council also recalled the importance of completing the constitution, and preparing inclusive, credible and transparent elections.

Whenever freedom of expression was curtailed by judgments or repressive activities, the EU has brought these issues to the attention of Tunisian authorities, calling for the revision of laws — inherited from the Ben Ali regime — that can be used to limit freedom of expression. Similarly, the EU attaches great importance to legal provisions consolidating and guaranteeing this freedom. In its regular political dialogue with the Tunisian authorities, the EU has repeatedly reiterated its pleas for the consolidation of freedom of expression. Moreover, the EU sponsored a seminar in Tunisia, which resulted in the adoption of the *Code Déontologique de la Presse Ecrite*. The EU has extensively promoted the dissemination of this code, and also supported the training of journalists. Concerning UNGA's Third Committee activities on human rights, the EU held discussions with Tunisian authorities on its priorities and envisaged activities.

In November, a political agreement was reached on the 'Mobility Partnership', which includes promotion of the rights of refugees. In its contacts at all levels with the Tunisian authorities, the EU has reiterated the importance of establishing a legal framework for asylum seekers, in line with the Geneva Conventions and the African Union charter on refugees.

The European Parliament adopted two resolutions in 2013. The first, in May, focused on the recovery of assets by transition countries of the Arab Spring (including Tunisia). The second, in October, aimed at reinforcing the European Neighbourhood Policy, and specifically — for Tunisia — it highlighted the importance of freedom of expression and non-discrimination, the reinforcement of democracy through independence of the judiciary, media freedom, and adequate preparation for the next general elections.

As regards cooperation, Tunisia benefits from the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

Under the EIDHR, a call for proposals, with a budget of € 1 million, was published during the first half of 2013. The aim of the call was to support the involvement of civil society in the democratic transition and to promote women's rights in marginalised areas. Selected projects focus on domestic electoral observation and training, and awareness activities on elections, political debate and civic education.

Finally, the EU is supporting the Council of Europe's presence and dialogue in Tunisia through the Southern Neighbourhood Programme, which aims at strengthening democratic reforms, with a budget of € 4.8 million for the period 2012-14. The main areas of engagement are: justice, good governance (with a particular focus on corruption and money laundering), protection of human rights, and sharing of democratic values in the region.

The Council Decision 2011/72/CFSP concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities in view of the situation in Tunisia was renewed for a further year in January 2013.

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Algeria

The regular dialogue with the Algerian authorities on human rights continued in 2013, notably in the framework of the EU-Algeria Association Agreement. The EU's main objectives include freedom of expression, freedom of association, women's rights, justice, abolition of the death penalty and an end to enforced disappearance. At the meeting of the subcommittee on political dialogue, security and human rights in May 2013, the EU highlighted its concerns about, inter alia, the 2012 law on associations, gender issues and the implementation of the recommendations of the EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) of May 2012. In addition, high-level meetings in Algiers, such as the visit of the President of the Commission (6-7 July) and of the European Parliament Maghreb Delegation (28-30 October), were occasions to pass on important messages related to human rights and civil society.

On the European and World Day against the death penalty (10 October), the EU, in cooperation with Italy, organised a round-table discussion. A large consensus around the moratorium in place since 1993 confirmed the government's policy.

Regarding the electoral framework, Algerian authorities consider that 17 out of 31 recommendations of the EU EOM could be implemented, with the remainder not being compatible with national legislation or the Constitution. One essential recommendation, namely to make public

the electoral register, has not so far been implemented, and the arrangements and functioning of commissions for the organisation and surveillance of future presidential elections in April 2014 remain unclear.

In November 2013, Algeria was elected a member of the UN Human Rights Council for a three-year period as from January 2014. Regarding follow-up to UN special rapporteur visits, the EU invited Algeria to follow up on the 2011 recommendations of the Special Rapporteur for freedom of opinion and expression (in particular on regulation of the media) and to allow visits of other UN special rapporteurs (e.g. respect of human rights in counterterrorism, torture).

In 2013, EU bilateral assistance under ENPI in the area of human rights and support to civil society amounted to € 1.5 million, implemented through specific projects, including specific regional and thematic programmes such as EIDHR, non-state actors and local authorities and the Civil Society Facility. The EIDHR and non-state actors thematic programmes systematically include gender priorities, and some programmes focus on gender-based violence and women's empowerment.During preparations for a new Single Support Framework (SSF) for the period 2014-17, both sides agreed that reform of the judiciary and strengthening citizen participation will be among the three priorities.

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Morocco

In 2013, EU activities in Morocco in the area of human rights were oriented towards five key themes: impunity; transparency; the right to physical and moral integrity and to respect of dignity; women's rights; and children rights.[25] The EU has enhanced its institutional cooperation while remaining a key partner for civil society, including in the areas where new policies are under development by national authorities: rights of migrants, women rights and justice. On various occasions, the EU urged Morocco to proceed with the implementation of the new 2011 Constitution, which requires the adoption of 19 fundamental laws and other regulations and the strengthening of new entities and institutions. To date, 14 fundamental laws, which need to be adopted in order to implement the new constitution properly, are still unfinished.

The EU has been active in the field of freedom of association and expression, in particular concerning the case of an editor of the online website *Lakome*, who was charged under anti-terrorist law for having posted an article critical of the regime and including a link to a video attributed to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. The actions undertaken included informal high-level exchanges as well as technical meetings with legal experts of Moroccan penal and media law.

Concerning the human rights of migrants, various developments took place in 2013. In March, a task force on sub-Saharan migrants was established by the Rabat missions of the EU, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organisation for Migration. Through political dialogue and cooperation, they worked to better coordinate actions on the spot, with three meetings taking place in 2013. In June, a political declaration on 'Mobility Partnership' was signed emphasising the need to recognise and protect the rights and dignity of illegal migrants. The political declaration also outlines support measures to be provided by the EU and Member States in support of the Moroccan government in implementing its new migration policy. Throughout the year, the EU Head of Delegation held several meetings with civil society, which were followed by media statements insisting on respect for the human rights of migrants in the context of the fight against illegal migration.

[25] http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_progress_report_maroc_fr.pdf.

The EU also encouraged Morocco to ratify as soon as possible the ILO fundamental Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise.

In 2013, the EU continued to support a number of civil society organisations helping vulnerable migrants to gain access to basic social services. Moreover, a € 5 million programme to implement the provisions of the Mobility Partnership was approved. The EU also announced that an additional € 6 million will be set aside from the Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth (SPRING) programme to provide assistance to the Moroccan authorities in their efforts to improve their policies and legal frameworks in the field of asylum and the fight against human trafficking.

In June, the EU Delegation participated in the debriefing by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Trafficking, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo. Institutional cooperation has been initiated in the field of anti-trafficking, mainly through the MIEUX ('Migration EU Expertise') and SPRING programmes. Related initiatives included a November seminar in Rabat on the fight against human trafficking (an exchange on international standards and obligations and national best practices) and in December a series of bilateral meetings with all stakeholders involved in providing support to trafficking victims.

In June, as a follow up to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, the annual EU heads of mission meeting with human rights defenders focused on the subject of torture.

The European Parliament October resolution on ENP calls on Morocco to foster gender equality. An EU programme of € 45 million supports the government plan for the promotion of equality between women and men, with the second disbursement of funds under this programme being made in 2013. Parliament's resolution also notes the work carried out by the Moroccan National Human Rights Council, and calls for its regional offices to be provided with the human and financial resources they need so that the Council can carry out its tasks properly and take on new ones.

In 2013, EU support to the institutional human rights system — comprising the Inter-ministerial Human Rights Delegation (DIDH), the National Human Rights Council (CNDH) and the Ombudsman's office — progressed considerably. Implementation of the bilateral project 'Promote and protect Human Rights in Morocco' (signed end-2012) supported the CNDH restructuring and internal organisation. Under this project, an institutional twinning was also established for the benefit of the DIDH, with activities to be implemented in 2014.

The EU launched a new programme in support of the 'National charter for the reform of the legal system', published in September. A first programme of capacity building for the Moroccan Parliament has been prepared, building on the new prerogatives of this institution, and on the provisions of the 2011 Constitution.

Six new EIDHR projects (in addition to the 15 already ongoing) support civil society in areas such as public freedoms, children's rights and concrete measures to implement the constitutional recognition of the Amazighe language. The Civil Society Facility (€1.3 million), aimed at capacity building for Moroccan civil society organizations, was launched in February 2013. The dialogue with civil society continued to represent a significant share of activities related to new constitutional provisions on human rights and rule of law, and in the process of formulating cooperation programmes, such as support to gender equality or reform of the justice system.

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Western Sahara

Western Sahara is a territory contested by Morocco and the Polisario Front. It is considered a non-self-governing territory by the United Nations. The MINURSO mandate (UN peacekeeping mission) in Western Sahara has been extended until 30 April 2014. In 2013, the EU has repeatedly expressed concern about the long duration of the Western Sahara conflict and the implications for security, respect of human rights and cooperation in the region.

The EU has addressed critical issues in meetings of the joint bodies established under the EU-Morocco Association Agreement. It called on all parties to refrain from violence and to respect human rights: for example, on 16 January 2013, the EU expressed its concern about the situation of the 24 Saharawi activists in prison in Salé, who have been accused in relation to events in Laayoune on 8-9 November 2010. The EU closely followed the trial, which concluded in February 2013 with heavy sentences. The EU has also consistently expressed support for UN Security Council

Resolution 2099 (2013), which stresses 'the importance of improving the human rights situation in Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps' and welcomed the strengthening of the National Council on Human Rights Commissions operating in Dakhla and Laayoune.

At the request of the President of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, the EEAS presented on 12 March 2013 a report on the Gdeim Izik trial. In September 2013, the Parliament adopted the Tannock report on the human rights situation in the Sahel region. This is the first European Parliament report to focus on this, and it was welcomed across the political spectrum for its treatment of this sensitive issue.

The EU has signed a bilateral cooperation assistance programme 'Protecting and promoting human rights in Morocco' (€2.9 million). Over the next three years, this programme will notably strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Council on Human Rights (CNDH) and its regional commissions, and also those operating in Dakhla and Laayoune. The CNDH will be reinforced in terms of professional skills and its capacity to monitor the human rights situation. No other projects are financed in Western Sahara.

Libya

Following the revolution in 2011, the political transition in Libya continued to face significant challenges in 2013. The worsened security situation and political instability had an impact on the human rights situation and numerous human rights violations were reported in 2013. Political assassinations peaked in 2013, notably in the east. Libyan law enforcement officials investigated almost none of these crimes and those responsible were rarely brought to justice.

Following violent incidents in Benghazi in July, which included the assassination of a political activist, the High Representative called on the authorities to ensure that those responsible for violence against the Libyan people are brought to justice to answer for their crimes. Subsequently, on 15 November, the High Representative reacted to the first reports of the Tripoli events, when civilian demonstrators were met by heavy fire from militias and over 40 people were killed. The High Representative deplored the loss of life which occurred during a peaceful demonstration. She underlined the importance for all parties to respect fundamental values such as the freedom of expression and assembly — freedoms that are also at the root of the 17 February Revolution.

On 18 November, the Council adopted conclusions on Libya. The EU urged the Libyan authorities to address reports of human rights violations, including against migrants, and to bring those responsible to justice. While recognising considerable progress on this issue, the EU called on the Libyan government to complete the process of bringing all places of detention under its full control.

Regarding the situation of migrants, and following tragedies in the Mediterranean (e.g. Lampedusa on 3 October), the EU expressed concerns over the loss of lives and reiterated that establishing secure and stable borders is crucial to ensuring well-managed migration flows and to protecting the fundamental rights of migrants. The EU also expressed its commitment to enhancing its cooperation with, and assistance to, the Libyan government, so as to improve Libya's capacity to manage the security of all its borders, to combat human smuggling, trafficking and illicit smuggling of goods and weapons, and to fight against terrorism. The EU also encouraged the Libyan authorities to continue cooperation with the International Criminal Court, following UN Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011) in which the Security Council referred the Libyan situation to the Court.

The European Parliament's Special Rapporteur for Libya visited the country on several occasions during the year. She delivered important messages to the authorities and others involved emphasising the importance of compliance with the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, notably of vulnerable groups, with a special mention to migrants in retention centres.

Following the death of two detainees charged with proselytism in Benghazi in March, the EU Delegation issued a local statement expressing its concern about the continued detention and treatment of persons held on similar charges. The EU Delegation underlined that freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right that needs to be protected everywhere and for everyone.

Throughout 2013, the EU continued implementing a variety of programmes addressing human rights and rule of law. The 'Security and justice support programme' focused on police reform. Its objective is to strengthen the democratisation process of internal security and justice institutions, according to the needs of the people and in line with the principle of the rule of law. With regard to migration, several programmes are currently in place to reinforce the capacities for proper management of mixed migration in Libya. The EU is also implementing programmes for the protection of vulnerable groups against human rights violations, in particular detainees, torture victims and victims of enforced disappearances, people with disabilities and internally displaced people. Other projects addressed the protection and promotion of freedom of information. Finally, programmes dealing with reconciliation processes and democratic transition also contributed to foster human rights in this period.

In November, the European Commission approved an additional € 5 million programme for the protection of vulnerable people in Libya. The first component of the programme will ensure that detainees are afforded better treatment, including respect for their judicial guarantees, in line with internationally recognised standards. The second component will provide support (psychosocial rehabilitation, community mental health services and socioeconomic integration) to vulnerable and at-risk groups, including the economically and socially disadvantaged, internally displaced persons and minorities.

In May, the EU launched a civilian common security and defence policy border management mission to Libya (EUBAM). This aimed to enhance the management capacities of Libyan authorities in the field of migration (security of land, sea and air borders in the short term, and the development of an Integrated Border Management strategy in the medium to long term). Through its activities, EUBAM is contributing to good governance in Libya, so that migrants are treated in full respect of their fundamental rights and in line with international standards.

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IV Russia and Central Asia

Russia

Respect for the commitments that Russia has entered into in the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe remain the reference guiding the European Union's approach to human rights in Russia. A functioning civil society, free and independent media, robust anti-discrimination policies and respect for democratic values and the rule of law are priorities.

Human rights therefore remained an essential element of the political dialogue between the EU and Russia, and were discussed at all levels of the relationship, including at the EU-Russia Summit, which took place in June in Yekaterinburg. Two rounds of regular biannual human rights consultations were organised in May and November 2013, both in Brussels, as Russia did not agree to hold them in the Russian Federation. The EU continued to urge Russia to improve them and to review their modalities. For the first time, a seminar on the universality of human rights, initiated by EUSR Lambrinidis, was organised in the margins of the Human Rights Consultations in May. The EU took the opportunity of the consultations to submit enquiries with respect to specific individual cases. In accordance with the established practice, the EU met with Russian and European civil society organisations prior to each round of consultations, in Brussels, Moscow as well as in Nizhny-Novgorod. The EU continued its support to the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum, and participated to its 4th General Assembly in October in The Hague.

The EUSR for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis conducted his second visit to Russia at the end of October 2013. The main purposes of his visit were to liaise extensively with independent civil society actors and to give a strong and visible sign of EU presence and support, and to engage with Russian human-rights related institutions and mechanisms. He held meetings with a range of civil society organisations, as well as with, among others, the Chair of the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights, the Federal Ombudsman and the President of the Moscow City Court.

In 2013, Russia started to implement its revised legislation on NGOs, the so-called "foreign agents law". From March onwards, hundreds of organisations were checked. Administrative and civil court cases, as well as the issuance of notices of violations and warnings, affected dozens of NGOs. The EU was particularly concerned with those developments and reacted publicly, against the legal proceedings aimed at forcing several non-governmental organisations to register as "foreign agents" and increased pressure against many others. In that context, the EU continued to support financially Russian civil society and the EU-Russia civil society forum, in particular through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (€3 million) and the Non-State Actors and Local Authorities programme (€2 million).

In June, two new pieces of legislation on blasphemy and on 'protecting children from information harmful to their health and development' were adopted at federal level, with a potential to further limit the space for freedom of assembly and expression. The EU publicly stated its disagreement with the legislation, which has contributed to the stigmatisation of LGBTI groups and individuals and to discriminatory practices and discourse against them.

An increase of nationalistic and xenophobic sentiments was observed in Russia, fuelled by populist political discourse. The EU followed the ethnic riots which took place in Moscow on 12-13 October 2013 and closely monitored the developments in that area, including the arrest and detention of several hundred migrants allegedly for violation of immigration laws and the reports about hate crimes affecting them. Claims of exploitation of migrant workers involved in the Sochi Olympics construction remains an area of concern.

The premature closure of the case into the death of Sergey Magnitsky in March, whereas two independent investigations revealed that he was subjected to inhumane conditions, deliberate neglect and torture, was an additional source of concern for the EU as to the state of the due process of law in the Russian Federation. Regrettably, Mr. Magnitsky was posthumously convicted of tax evasion in July 2013 on the basis of unfair procedures and unconvincing evidence. A letter sent in April 2012 by President Van Rompuy to ,his then counterpart President Medvedev expressing the EU's concerns and calling for a credible and thorough conclusion of the case remains unanswered.

The prosecution, including the arrests and trials, of opposition activists such as Alexei Navalny continued over the year 2013. Mr Navalny received in July a 5-year prison term, which was then changed into a suspended sentence, on charges of embezzlement that the EU believed were not proven during his trial. The situation of the defendants in the 'Bolotnaya trials', in particular Mr Kosenko, received attention from the EU, who sent observers to court hearings, and highlighted their difficult pre-trial detention conditions as well as the unbalanced conduct of their trials with the Russian authorities. The EU called for a systemic enhancement of prison conditions in the Russian Federation, highlighted by Ms Tolokonnikova's open letter on her detention conditions, calling on Russia to bring detention facilities and practice in line with its international commitments.

The EU welcomed the pardon of Mr Khodorkovsky and his release from prison. It also welcomed the amnesty law passed on 20 December, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Russian Constitution which allowed for the release of some defendants on trial under the so-called "Bolotnaya case", (most of whom had been in pre-trial detention for more than a year); the release of "Pussy Riot" members; and the closure of the Arctic Sunrise case together with the release of Greenpeace activists. The EU nevertheless stressed that systemic changes should be introduced upstream, calling on Russia to pursue its reforms towards establishing a transparent, independent and reliable judicial system, and to uphold its commitments to human rights, the rule of law and non-discrimination. The North Caucasus remained the major location of human rights abuses in Russia, including allegations of torture and other ill treatment such as enforced disappearances and extra-judicial killings.

The EU and Russia continued to seek common ground on human rights issues of concern in International human rights fora, notably the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council (to which Russia was re-elected). The EU also encouraged Russia to implement all relevant recommendations it received during its participation in the Universal Periodic Review in April 2013.

The work under the EU-Russia Visa Dialogue continued intensively, the exchange of expert missions was completed, and in December 2013 the European Commission published the first progress report on the implementation by Russia of the Common Steps towards visa-free short term travel. In this context, issues such as trafficking in human beings, anti-discrimination policies and respect of human rights related to freedom of movement were discussed.

The European Parliament continued to pay a lot of attention to the human rights situation in Russia. It adopted a resolution on Rule of Law in Russia in June. The High Representative/Vice President clarified regularly the EU's position before the Parliament.

Central Asia (regional)

In 2013 the EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia went into its sixth year. The Strategy is the EU’s main instrument for promoting human rights, democratic reform and the development of civil society in the Central Asian countries. The EU continued its structured human rights dialogues and accompanying civil society seminars with each of the five Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

June saw the launch in Brussels of the first EU-Central Asia High-Level Security Dialogue, which is an integral part of the Strategy.While human rights are not a part of the Dialogue as such, the discussions on counterterrorism, international law and other security issues did include a human rights approach.

The EU Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia deals directly with the promotion and protection of human rights. As part of this initiative the EU conducted a series of seminars and training workshops on topics that are a priority for all Central Asian countries: access to justice, principles of fair trial, independence of the judiciary, the development of the legal profession and training of judges. In April, a high-level regional seminar took place in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek on the right to fair trial. In June, a group of specialists from the Central Asian countries travelled to Germany and France to acquaint themselves with administrative legislation and best practices. In Germany the group visited the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg; in France the group visited the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights and the Ecole Nationale d'Administration, all based in Strasbourg.

When visiting the region, EU Special Representative for Central Asia Patricia Flor included meetings with civil society representatives in her schedule, as did other high-level EEAS officials.

Kazakhstan

Throughout 2013 the EU raised human rights issues consistently and at all levels of its political dialogue with Kazakhstan. During the Human Rights Dialogue, which took place in November in the capital Astana, the EU expressed concern about the freedom of expression, freedom of religion and belief, and freedom of association and assembly. During his visit to Kazakhstan in early June, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso encouraged the Kazakh authorities to promote reform and modernisation, and met with civil society organisations.

The EU closely followed a number of individual cases and encouraged Kazakhstan both formally and informally to fulfil its international obligations. The EU sent observers to several court hearings, including the Supreme Court appeal hearings in the cases against human rights activists Vladimir Kozlov, Vadim Kuramshin and Roza Tuletaeva.

The EU's regular civil society seminar, held in Astana in November, was attended by a broad range of civil society activists and official bodies. This year's topic was 'Enhancing the effectiveness of the Human Rights Dialogue in Kazakhstan at the national and local levels'. The seminar resulted in a series of specific recommendations for the Kazakh Government, the EU, and civil society organisations.

The EU actively promoted human rights through a number of projects funded from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. The projects addressed a range of issues, such as access to public information, the capacity of civil society to advocate human rights, promoting human rights education, implementing Kazakhstan's national human rights action plan, assistance to victims of human trafficking, eliminating violence against children in closed institutions, access to justice for vulnerable groups, and abolishing the death penalty. The annual allocation for Kazakhstan is EUR 600 000.

Kyrgyz Republic

In 2013 the EU continued to promote Kyrgyzstan's democratic transition, inter-ethnic reconciliation, the rule of law and good governance. Human rights remained at the centre of the EU's dialogue and cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, both under the EU Strategy for Central Asia and the bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

The EU called on Kyrgyzstan to step up its efforts to eliminate the torture and ill treatment of detainees, pointing to the recommendations of the UN Committee against Torture issued after Kyrgyzstan had presented its second periodic report in November. The rights of persons belonging to ethnic minorities featured in bilateral discussions at all levels. The EU welcomed the adoption in April of Kyrgyzstan's 'national unity and inter-ethnic relations strategy', and called on the authorities to follow it up with practical measures. The EU continued to raise issues related to the rule of law, the administration of justice and fair trial, and called for proper investigations in the trials related to the events of June 2010. In October the EU Delegation in the capital Bishkek issued a statement on the case of the human rights activist Azimzhan Askarov, who alleges he was tortured while in custody. In it the EU expressed deep regret at the ruling of the Supreme Court not to order an investigation, and called for the case to be re-examined.

The EU has been providing support to Kyrgyzstan's vibrant civil society through a number of thematic programmes, such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, Non-state Actors and Local Authorities in Development scheme, and the Instrument for Stability (IfS). All IfS projects have human rights components. One of these is the Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding project, which is implemented by a consortium of 16 international and local NGOs. The Civil Society Forum, which was held in September with EU funding, focused on methods for upholding the right to fair trial. Human rights projects provided support to minors, women and elderly people in custody and to released prisoners. The National Sustainable Development Strategy 2013-2017 prioritises the rule of law. During President Atambaev's visit to Brussels in September, a framework agreement was signed for a new programme to bolster the rule of law. The agreement aims to strengthen judicial reforms and oversight mechanisms. The programme has a total value of EUR 13.5 million.

Tajikistan

In 2013, the EU priorities for Tajikistan were to promote free and fair elections, defend the freedom of expression and press freedom, promote social equality, reduce the spread of radicalism among young people, protect the rights of labour migrants and facilitate the further development of civil society. All of these issues were addressed during the annual Human Rights Dialogue with Tajikistan, which was held in March in the capital Dushanbe.

The EU closely followed the human rights situation in Tajikistan, especially during the presidential elections, which took place in November. A delegation of European Parliament members took part in a joint election observation mission with the OSCE.

The EU raised its concern about freedom of the press and freedom of association during President Rahmon's visit to Brussels in April. In its political contacts with Tajikistan, the EU repeatedly called on the Tajik authorities to hold free and fair elections, and to do more to guarantee freedom of the press and freedom of expression. Human rights were also discussed at the EU-Tajikistan Cooperation Council in October, and with Tajikistan's foreign minister in the margins of the EU-Central Asia ministerial meeting in November.

Following the presidential elections EU High Representative Catherine Ashton called on the authorities to address the restrictions and irregularities identified by the OSCE, and confirmed the EU's readiness to assist Tajikistan in its efforts to bring the election process into line with OSCE commitments and other international standards.

The EU actively engaged with civil society and organised a number of activities addressing children's rights, the rights of labour migrants, abolition of the death penalty and strengthening civil society. In cooperation with civil society organisations the EU funded a number of projects that aimed to improve the quality and accessibility of social services for illegal labour migrants and victims of human trafficking.

The EU-Tajikistan civil society seminar held in September attracted more than 60 participants. Representatives of local civil society organisations met with representatives of government bodies and international experts to discuss cooperation of national human rights institutions and civil society. The seminar resulted in a series of recommendations for enhancing cooperation between Tajik civil society and the country's ombudsman, which will be discussed further at the next round of the EU-Tajikistan human rights dialogue in 2014.

In response to the events of 2012 in the city of Khorog, the EU adopted a programme to assist in stabilising the situation and help the local population to resume its economic and social activities.

Tajikistan actively participated in the regional seminar on the right to fair trial that took place in April in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and in other regional activities held under the EU Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia.

Turkmenistan

The fifth round of the EU-Turkmenistan human rights dialogue was held in the capital Ashgabad in May 2013. During the meeting, the EU raised concerns about tight restrictions on the freedom of expression, freedom of movement and freedom of association. The EU encouraged the Turkmen authorities to improve training provided to the judiciary and police to ensure that the law is properly applied.

The EU contributed EUR 2.2 million to a programme aimed at strengthening Turkmenistan's capacity to protect human rights. The programme is implemented jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It has resulted in the opening of official human rights resource centres in each of Turkmenistan's five provinces and improved the government's reporting practices and compliance with international human rights standards.

The EU contributed EUR 1.4 million to a legal capacity building project, which was completed in 2013. The project provided Turkmenistan's ministries of justice and foreign affairs, and other ministries and public bodies, with basic training and capacity building in the field of international law and practice. The project included a training resource centre to facilitate further dissemination of expertise in the area of comparative law and international practice.

At the thirteenth joint committee meeting held in December 2013 under the interim trade agreement with Turkmenistan, the EU again raised a number of concerns relating to human rights and the rule of law. Once ratified, the EU-Turkmenistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will strengthen the institutional framework for political dialogue and will broaden its scope.

Uzbekistan

In 2013, the EU pursued its efforts to promote human rights in Uzbekistan through both political dialogue and cooperation. Human rights and the rule of law were raised at the Cooperation Committee meeting in July, during the Human Rights Dialogue in November and in other official contacts at every level. The EU raised concerns about a range of issues, such as the torture and ill treatment of detainees, excessive restrictions on the freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of religion or belief, and the restrictive regulatory framework for independent civil society groups.

Encouraged by the EU, Uzbekistan resumed its cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which put particular emphasis on child labour, and ILO representatives monitored the 2013 cotton harvest. The EU began preparing a large rural development programme aimed at modernising Uzbekistan's agricultural sector, diminishing its reliance on child and forced labour and promoting crop diversification away from the existing cotton monoculture.

The United Nations Human Rights Council examined the situation in Uzbekistan as part of its Universal Periodic Review. This resulted in a number of recommendations, which Uzbekistan included in a human rights action plan in line with the EU's objectives. In November the EU actively participated in consultations with the government and donors working on human rights and the rule of law. During the Human Rights Dialogue, the EU called on Uzbekistan to set up a system

for monitoring conditions in the prison system. It urged the government to make better use of the cooperation instruments already at its disposal for this purpose, to step up the implementation of the EU-funded criminal justice reform programme and to take active part in the regional EU Rule of Law Initiative.

Following the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC) announcement in April that it was discontinuing its programme of visits to detainees, the EU encouraged the Uzbek authorities to review its position and to work with the ICRC towards the resumption of the detainee visits programme.

V Africa

African Union– Joint Africa-EU Strategy

In 2013, democratic governance and human rights remained priorities in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. For the EU, full respect and protection of human rights is an essential precondition for the attainment of inclusive and sustainable development and growth, and as such, it will be a priority theme at the 4th Africa-EU Summit that will take place in Brussels in 2014.

Human rights in Africa can only be guaranteed by strong and accountable democratic institutions. In 2013 the EU continued to support the strengthened mandate of the African Union (AU) in the field of democratic governance, in particular through: the African Governance Architecture and its Platform, established in 2011 and 2012 to coordinate and monitor the implementation of African human rights instruments by all AU member states; the implementation of the provisions contained in the African Human Rights Strategy adopted in 2011; and the ratification and implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance that entered into force in February 2012. The EU also continued to support the independent work of the instruments of the African human rights system, in particular the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and its mechanisms - such as the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders - and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Cooperation with the African Union was further strengthened in 2013 on specific human rights topics, such as children in armed conflict and women, peace and security. A seminar was organised on the latter issue in Addis Ababa in September 2013. A workshop on sexual violence against women was also organised with the AU Commission in October 2013. Electoral observation is another area in which the EU and the AU continued to step up their cooperation in 2013, and the EU provided the AU Commission with EUR 0.4 million to support the organisation and deployment of AU election observation missions.

The EU has continued to apply legal measures in countries where human rights have been grossly violated. Cooperation with Guinea was restored after the legislative elections of September 2013, but four other countries remained under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement: Guinea-Bissau, Fiji, Madagascar and Zimbabwe.

In addition, the EU maintains a regular human rights dialogue with the AU. The most recent dialogue meeting took place in Brussels on 20 November 2013 and was co-chaired by EUSR Lambrinidis. The dialogue addressed issues of common concern for the AU and the EU, including the fight against the death penalty; the rights of migrants; women, peace and security; children in armed conflict; freedom of association and the rights of people with disabilities. Cooperation on these and other issues, such as business and human rights, will figure high on the Africa-EU agenda in 2014, including through increased coordination in international forums such as the Human Rights Council. An EU-AU civil society seminar was also organised as part of the dialogue.

Angola

During 2013, the EU carefully monitored the political and human rights situation in Angola, including respect for freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial, and such issues were addressed during the ongoing political dialogue with the government. The European Union remains attentive to Angola's progress in the context of the forthcoming 2014 United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UNUPR). In the "*Angola-EU Joint Way Forward*" (JWF), signed in 2012, Angola and the EU agreed to reinforce their political dialogue and engage in more active political cooperation. The JWF sets out a permanent and inclusive process of dialogue and cooperation in different areas such as peace and security, good governance and human rights.

In 2013, several peaceful demonstrations, including small-scale protests against the government's policies, were heavily repressed by the authorities. There were problems with regard to the content, interpretation and implementation of laws on freedom of expression and freedom of assembly in Angola. These freedoms have been compromised by threats, intimidation, excessive force, arbitrary arrests and other actions on the part of authorities.

Under the EIDHR, the EU financed an information campaign on human rights in Luanda (EUR 0.29 million), promotion of active citizenship in the Northern Region (EUR 0.86 million), democratisation and media development (EUR 0.3 million), rights to urban land (EUR 0.28 million), as well as specific support to street children (EUR 0.3 million).

Benin

In 2013, the EU focused its actions on prison conditions, the weakness of the judicial system, the systematic use of unlimited preventive detention, and the rights of women and children. Violations of socio-economic rights are a further important challenge.

The EU supported improvements to the legislative process and access to justice by providing EUR 4.5 million under the 10th European Development Fund to support justice sector reform, including reinforcement of the capacities of the judicial chain and modernisation of codes and laws. The government and the constitutional institutions have been regularly involved in dialogue and committed to the Sectorial Policy in 2013. In order to improve prison conditions, the establishment of a prison service emergency plan was supported under the "*Programme d'appui à la réforme de la justice*" (support programme on judicial reform).

Benin is a member of the United Nations Humans Rights Council for 2012-2015 and participated actively in its debates in 2013.

In 2013, the EU also financed initiatives to promote respect for women's rights through projects that raised awareness of women's rights issues, supported the reintegration of victims of gender-based violence, and strengthened NGOs in their efforts to combat discrimination and violence against women. Protection of children's rights, combating child trafficking and social integration of disabled people were supported by six projects under the EDF and the thematic programme '*Non-State Actors and Local Authorities'*.

An EIDHR call for proposals for human rights projects was launched in 2013, with a specific focus on prison conditions and the rights of women and children. Three projects, with a total value of EUR 600 000, were selected. They focus on the reintegration of ex-detainees and on finding alternative options for delinquent juveniles.

Botswana

The main objectives of the EU in Botswana include: (i) abolishing the death penalty; (ii) promoting equal rights for persons belonging to minorities, with a special emphasis on the San people or *Basarwa* hunter-gatherers and the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons; (iii) promoting women's rights; (iv) achieving universal basic education and increasing primary and secondary school attendance rates[26]. As a common thread for attaining these objectives, the EU has been engaged in supporting the development of capacities of relevant local civil society organisations.

The EU Delegation and Member State embassies in Botswana supported the performance of a play and a panel discussion in Gaberone on 10 October, to mark the World and European Day against the Death Penalty.

The issue of rights of persons belonging to minorities in Botswana is currently most clearly illustrated by the plight of the San people or *Basarwa*. The EU Delegation and Member State embassies stepped up their contacts with various interested parties with a view to understanding and assisting this community better.

Concerning universal basic education and the reduction of primary and secondary school dropouts, it is worth recalling that the bulk of the 10th EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Botswana is devoted to the overhauling of the education sector at all levels.

For 2013, a total of EUR 300 000 was allocated to Botswana under the EIDHR. The issues to be addressed by recipient NGOs are general human rights advocacy work, the rights of persons living with disabilities, women's rights, gender-based violence and child protection.

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[26] The bulk of the 10th EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Botswana is devoted to the overhauling of the education sector at all levels.

Botswana was reviewed in the 14th and 23rd sessions of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council in January and June 2013. The EU identified a number of recommendations whereby it would offer technical support on UPR follow-up if the government requested it.

Burkina Faso

EU priorities in the field of human rights in Burkina Faso for 2013 remained unchanged and focused on: a) the institutional framework for the protection of human rights; b) the death penalty; c) torture, detention conditions and the duration of trials; d) the justice system; e) freedom of expression; f) human rights defenders and civil society; g) women's rights; h) child rights.

While the implementation of some human rights is still insufficient, the government appears willing to cooperate in this field and the situation is slowly improving. The main shortcomings relate to governance and democratisation issues, access to justice and gender discrimination, as well as social and economic rights. The EU Delegation had repeatedly conveyed the need for a speedy approval of a law to fight corruption and that law was finally presented to Parliament in late November 2013.

A programme to support national justice policy in Burkina Faso was drawn up in 2013 and will be implemented by the EU in 2014. It should bring improvements on the main challenges facing this sector, through general strengthening of the capacities of the Ministry of Justice and support for the implementation of the national policy on justice. Access to justice remains the most crucial problem at the moment.

Human rights, and in particular women's and child rights, were discussed in the last session of the EU's political dialogue with Burkina Faso. Gender issues have been included in the National Strategy for Development (SCADD), which was supported by the EU. Gender aspects are also included in development cooperation projects financed by the EU.

In the framework of the programming exercise under the 11th European Development Fund, the EU Delegation in Burkina Faso conducted a thorough analysis of the state of human rights in the country.

Burkina Faso featured in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Second Cycle on 22 April 2013. Some improvements were acknowledged and recommendations for further efforts were made, in respect of which Burkina Faso undertook to submit an interim progress report on implementation to the Human Rights Council in 2015. Burkina Faso has adopted an abolitionist stance on the death penalty in many international forums, but did not comply with its commitment to fully abolish the death penalty before the 2013 UPR.

Burundi

The EU objectives related to human rights in Burundi include encouraging the authorities to investigate cases of extrajudicial execution and torture, fighting impunity by reinforcing the rule of law and the justice system, promoting human rights defenders, combating discrimination and ensuring freedom of expression. Human rights issues were discussed with the Burundi authorities during the political dialogue in February 2013. The issue of extrajudicial executions was raised on several occasions with the government and the ruling party.

Under the good governance programme (EUR 28 million), the EU supported the building of local courts, the training of judicial personnel and judges, and the provision of legal aid at communal level. The EU also supported the preparation of the *'Etats Généraux de la Justice*', a national consultation on justice matters which took place in August 2013. The consultation indicated that the justice sector is still politicised and lacks independence.

Minority groups, such as Batwa and albinos, continue to suffer discrimination and violence. The EU is engaged in actions aimed at alleviating discrimination against minority groups with the help of EIDHR funds worth EUR 300 000. The EU provided legal assistance, medical and psycho-social support to children at risk and to minors in prisons. Through a EUR 660 000 project, the EU also provided support to sexual minority associations in the Great Lakes countries, including Burundi. In addition, EUR 270 000 were allocated to reinforce actions on sexual and reproductive health.

2013 saw the adoption of a media law in Burundi which endangered the right of freedom of expression. The EU and the international community expressed regret at the adoption of the law, and the spokespersons of the HR/VP and the Commissioner for Development issued a statement. The EU closely followed the debate on two other important draft laws, concerning public demonstrations and CSOs.

The EU provided funding of over EUR 400 000 for activities with journalists, including support for the production and dissemination of programmes to raise the population's awareness on democracy issues ahead of the political elections in 2015. The EU also continued to support Burundi's civil society through a EUR 5.5 million project financed by the European Development Fund on "Reinforcing Civil Society Organisations".

Cameroon

The EU's engagement on human rights and democratisation in Cameroon has continued, as demonstrated by the high levels of both political dialogue and advocacy, on the one hand, and financial support, on the other.

EU Heads of Missions have made a number of recommendations to make the electoral process more fair, credible and transparent, in particular following the adoption of a consolidated electoral code and the introduction of biometry, and with a view to the legislative and municipal elections on 30 September 2013. The EU provided financial support to various NGOs to foster independent election observation, increase public awareness of the issues at stake and encourage objective coverage of the elections by the media. The fight against corruption, which is linked to democratisation, has been another action area, and the EU has supported the National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC) and NGOs working on the issue.

In addition to their continuous provision of support to the national network for the protection of human rights defenders, EU missions in Cameroon have provided direct support to human rights defenders subject to threats, particularly the lawyers of people being tried for homosexuality (a criminal offence in Cameroon).

The EU continued to raise LGBTI rights in the framework of the political dialogue with the authorities, and the EU Delegation met regularly with LGBTI activists to hear their concerns. In a statement issued on 17 July, the High Representative strongly condemned the assassination of a journalist and LGBTI rights activist, Eric Lembembe, and called on the Cameroonian authorities to launch an investigation to bring those responsible to justice.

The EU remains the main donor in the field of justice and detention. EU support has been key in helping limit the number of people held in pre-trial detention and in helping improve the health care (including HIV prevention), sanitation and legal advice available to inmates. In addition, issues related to the (mal)functioning of the judicial system, in particular in high profile cases, have been raised with increasing prominence in the framework of the political dialogue.

Through a grant to the journalists' NGO JADE (*Journalistes en Afrique pour le développement*), the EU provided support for a series of newspaper articles on prison conditions which are disseminated free of charge by a number of leading private newspapers. This has been contributing to an enhanced awareness of poor prison conditions and of the fact that inmates have rights that are regularly violated.

Issues relating to freedom of the press were raised in the framework of the political dialogue, aimed at encouraging decriminalisation. An EU grant supported a journalists' trade union with its work on preparing proposals for amendments to the law on social communication and for a draft code of conduct against corruption in the media.

In May 2013 Cameroon underwent, for the second time, the Universal Periodic Review, under which it received 171 recommendations, of which it accepted 121. Cameroon rejected 14 recommendations concerning the death penalty, a further 14 on decriminalisation of homosexuality and 9 on press crimes. The outcome of the UPR was discussed during the political dialogue and the EU continued to provide support for actions promoting implementation of the recommendations.

The selection process was completed for the EIDHR call for proposals addressing the issue of human trafficking, which was launched by the Delegation in 2012. One of the objectives of the PASC (*Programme d'Appui à la Société Civile* – support programme for civil society under the 10th EDF) is to support projects aimed at promoting rights of persons belonging to minorities.

Cape Verde

Cape Verde remains a country with a good record on human rights and fundamental freedoms. The main human rights concerns are related to gender-based violence, discrimination against women and juvenile crime.

The EU-Cape Verde Special Partnership includes a pillar related to good governance that focuses on the reinforcement of democracy, the rule of law, participation of civil society in the political life of the country, and strengthening of political dialogue and cooperation, in particular on democracy and human rights. The Special Partnership pays special attention to women's and children's rights, the situation of migrants, combating domestic violence, pushing for reform of the Cape Verdean judiciary system, fighting corruption, reforming public finances and strengthening the capacities of the public administration in terms of provision of statistical data and good governance of natural resources.

In 2013, two new projects were launched with the aim of improving the rights of people with disabilities in Cape Verde. The first has been developed with Handicap International and focuses on protection of the rights of consumers with disabilities (EUR 204 750). The second, *'Cape Verde will see the blind better'* has been developed with the Association of The Visually Impaired of Cape Verde and is aimed at promoting and strengthening the rights of citizens with visual impairment as consumers (EUR 349 977).

During 2013, the country also continued to benefit from an EU-financed PALOP (Portuguese speaking countries) programme providing support for elections, which focused on educating voters on their rights and paid special attention to women.

Central African Republic

In 2013, the EU initiatives regarding the human rights situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) were heavily influenced by the continuously deteriorating security situation and thus concentrated on the fight against the pervasive impunity, on the respect of international humanitarian and human rights law and on the massive displacement of the population. Several channels were used to this end.

Despite the difficult context linked to the deadlock of the political process at the beginning of 2013 and the unlawful change of government at the end of March 2013, two political dialogue meetings were held under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, on 26 June 2013 and 31 July 2013. The first meeting led to the resumption of the political dialogue, which had been suspended since Seleka rebel groups march to Bangui in December 2012. The second was devoted to addressing human rights violations. Given the many crimes and abuses committed before and after the violent seizure of power by Seleka rebel group, it focused on re-establishing a functional criminal justice system (police, prosecution, courts and prisons) and the National Joint Committee of Inquiry, which had been established by the CAR transitional authorities in May 2013. The EU stressed that the primary responsibility for protecting civilian populations lay with the CAR authorities.

Local statements were issued jointly with other international partners represented in the country in the framework of the Follow-up Committee on the Libreville Agreements to express concerns over the worsening political, security, humanitarian and human rights situation. In addition, HR/VP statements and Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council were widely disseminated so as to reiterate the EU's position and condemn the crimes and atrocities committed before and after the violent seizure of power by Seleka rebel groups on 24 March 2013.

A number of informal contacts were established by the Delegation, either bilaterally with the CAR transitional authorities or jointly with other international representatives in the Technical Follow-up Committee on the Libreville Agreements.

Despite the crisis, the EU did not suspend its development cooperation with the CAR. As a result, ongoing activities in the field of human rights continued and a call for proposals was even launched, under the thematic budget lines, to support local initiatives during this critical period. In addition, in August 2013 the European Commission adopted a "*Stabilisation programme in response to the post-coup crisis*" (EUR 10 million) under the Instrument for Stability, which supports inter-faith dialogue and inter-communitarian mediation and reconciliation, the reinstatement of independent media to contribute to the availability of objective and conflict-sensitive information in Bangui and the province, and the deployment of human rights observers in the UN Integrated Office in the CAR (BINUCA).

The EU urged an increased coverage of the CAR crisis by the UN Human Rights Council and supported the establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry provided for in UNSCR 2127(2013).

Chad

In 2013, the EU's main objectives on promotion of human rights in Chad remained reform of the justice system and the security forces, promotion of children and women's rights and promotion of democracy. The EU and its Member States held a political dialogue session with the Chadian authorities in June 2013, at which concerns were raised on several human rights issues, notably: freedom of expression and journalist's arrests, detention conditions and justice reform, the follow-up of the 2008 events, and former Chadian president Hissène Habré's trial. Effective cooperation with and provision of support to the International Criminal Court (ICC) were raised several times with different authorities.

With regard to justice reform, 2013 was the last year of the five-year EDF *Programme to support justice sector reform*, which supported the preparation of a new Penal Code including provisions in line with international conventions ratified by Chad. The draft text includes the abolition of death penalty and is to be discussed in Parliament in 2014. In terms of improvement of detention and prison conditions, the EU supported the training of newly recruited security agents and 5 new detention centres were built in accordance with the international minimum standards. On the World Day against the Death Penalty the EU Delegation met the Chadian Minister of Justice to push for the adoption of the new Penal Code. As regards the reform of the security forces, a Demobilisation and Reintegration project started in March 2013, with a budget of EUR 5 million from the Instrument for Stability.

The EU continued to work closely with human rights organisations, including by supporting the preparation of the alternative report by civil society for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Chad, held in October 2013, and by funding the participation of two human rights defenders in the UPR pre-session held in September 2013 in Geneva. In the course of 2013, the EU earmarked

approximately EUR 2 million for civil society organisations working on human rights projects. Through the EIDHR, the EU supported two new projects on the reinforcement of childcare centres in Chad's capital city, N'Djamena, and on raising awareness of women's rights in Chadian rural areas. Through the EU Instrument for Stability, five new projects were funded to promote mediation processes throughout Chad. Support was provided to human rights defenders and journalists through regular meetings and visits to journalists detained in prison. On 28 August 2013, the European Parliament's Development Committee held a hearing with the Chadian journalist and blogger Makaila.

Support for democracy was also provided through ongoing projects on media capacity-building, civic education and the setting up of registry offices.

Comoros

After the attempt to destabilise the constitutional order in the Union of the Comoros in April 2013, the EU issued a local statement condemning this destabilisation attempt, reiterating its strong attachment to democratic values and the rule of law, and assuring the government of the Union of the Comoros of its full support. With a view to further reinforcing democracy, technical assistance is being provided to develop a support programme for the legislative elections in 2014, to be funded via the EU Instrument for Stability (IfS).

Furthermore, the EU provided equipment for the newly created Human Rights and Anti-Corruption commissions, together with assistance on developing a training programme on the latter issue, to be launched in 2014. In the context of regular political dialogue with the government, the EU expressed concern about the legislation adopted in January 2013 forbidding Muslim religious practices other than those following the traditional Sunni doctrine.

Comoros is scheduled to be subject to a second Universal Periodic Review in January 2014. The national report submitted highlights positive developments based on the 52 recommendations accepted by Comoros during the 2009 UPR.

A local call for proposals was launched to fund good governance and poverty reduction initiatives, and overall funding of EUR 1 million to cover five projects was approved. The civil society network, established in 2011, enables regular dialogue on the priority areas identified in the EU strategy. On this basis, concept notes were developed for future funding under NSA/LA and EIDHR budget lines.

Republic of Congo (Congo Brazzaville)

In 2013, the EU focused much of its work in the Republic of Congo on promoting human rights, in respect of which the situation had not significantly changed since 2012. Some of the main challenges in the country were highlighted in the Universal Periodic Review. Accordingly, the EU priorities were the fight against torture, the improvement of detention conditions, administration of justice and the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, women, disabled people and human rights defenders.

The political dialogue with the Congolese authorities, which had not taken place since early 2011, resumed in December 2013 and included the subject of human rights. In addition to this governmental dialogue, the EU held two meetings with human rights defenders in April and December 2013. The latter took place in the context of a wider communication campaign to promote human rights.

The EU has continued to be informed of cases of ill-treatment and torture in detention centres. In 2013, it financed a large number of activities to improve detention centres in Brazzaville, Dolisie and Pointe-Noire (the three main towns in the country), as well as the cells at the police headquarters in Pointe-Noire. These detention buildings were supplied with medicinal products for treating common illnesses.

At the detention centres in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, the EU also funded the transformation of classrooms into facilities geared to providing training to prisoners with a view to their reintegration in the labour market. Pending the finalisation of this transformation, a number of courses were held in 2013 and equipment was already provided for running classrooms accommodating 70 prisoners (at least 20 % of whom are female). Specific training on gardening, hygiene and sanitation was given to prisoners in Brazzaville over a 5-month period.

In October 2013, the EU began supporting actions to improve the access to health care of detainees at the Pointe Noire detention centre comprising provision of curative consultations and treatment of deadly diseases, promotion of responsible sexual behaviour and of conditions ensuring regular sanitation, and provision of training to help detainees generate their own income.

The judicial system in the Republic of Congo works extremely slowly. Its functioning is hampered by the lack of human and material resources and even more by corruption. In 2013 the EU continued its provision of support to the General Inspectorate of Courts and Judicial Services (IGJSJ) to which it supplied equipment to complete its tasks throughout the country. An expert was made available to support this institution, resulting in the production and validation of a manual of procedures for the IGJSJ. The EU also financed legal assistance to poor, with a view to reducing the length of pre-trial detention and prison overpopulation.

On gender equality, in 2013 the EU supported civil society organisations' actions to promote the rights of girls and women. A one month campaign against sexual violence was carried out in one large town. Loans were granted to 400 women to engage in an economic activity, whilst some 70 homeless girls between 14 and 21 years old received socio-vocational integration support.

The reduction of cases of discrimination against indigenous people depends partly on the adoption of the decrees implementing the 2011 Law promoting and protecting indigenous peoples, but even more on a change of mentality towards them. The EU supported the validation of the national action plan for improving the living conditions of indigenous people for the period 2014-2018 and has also been supporting a network of schools for young indigenous people.

In 2013, Congo voted to join the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. Although people with disabilities are not stigmatised, they face extreme difficulties in their everyday life as they lack family or public support. The occupational integration of young people living with disabilities has been targeted by the EU, which has supported 15 workshops on vocational training and the creation of 24 cooperatives.

A census of Congolese citizens of voting age is under way to give more credibility to the electoral roll. The EU had supported the recent legislative process, through support for the National Commission on Elections and Electoral Affairs Directorate-General, electoral observation/education by NGOs and a survey on the perception of elections by the Congolese people. Local elections which were planned for 2013 were postponed without any specific new date being set. The EU is keeping a close watch on the preparations.

Cote d'Ivoire

The EU's human rights priorities include the right to security, justice and the rule of law; the fight against impunity and reconciliation; the reinforcement of democracy and civil society, the protection of human rights defenders; socio-economic rights including children's, women's and rights of persons belonging to minorities, and the fight against discrimination. In August 2013, the government provisionally released 14 supporters of Laurent Gbagbo who had been held in detention since 2011. The EU reconfirmed its restrictive measures against 15 Ivorians implicated in the Ivorian crisis in March 2013.

Through its permanent political contacts and its official political dialogue, the EU has a channel for dialogue and political exchange with the government on issues relating to human rights. The latest official political dialogue session was held between EU ambassadors and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in June 2013. The EU has also continued its permanent dialogue with political parties from all affiliations and with human rights CSOs.

Côte d'Ivoire is a party to the Rome Statute, having ratified it in February 2013. Cooperation with the ICC was initially good, leading to the transfer of ex-President Laurent Gbagbo to The Hague in December 2011, but has since deteriorated. In December 2013, the ICC publicly requested Côte d'Ivoire to transfer Charles Blé Goudé to The Hague, following the publication of the international arrest warrant against him in September 2013. The Ivorian Government had until January 2014 to respond.

In terms of operational activities, EU budgetary support (EUR 115 million) has provided essential leverage for the opening of three courts in the Western region (Guiglo, Issia and Man) and for the adoption in June 2013 of the policy document on judicial reform and its related action plan. Thirty-six courts of first instance are currently operational in Ivory Coast, dealing with both civil and criminal affairs. The 2013 budgetary support indicators set for the state-building contract on the justice sector (EUR 8 million) were met and new indicators on statistics and impartial justice have been proposed for 2014. The EU Delegation will closely follow progress in setting up "*Cours d'assises*" (court of assizes) trials, which have still not started.

Under the EU justice project (EUR 18 million) both initial and continuing training courses for judges and clerks were fully revised in 2013. More than 100 individuals benefitted from cost-free legal representation and more than 2 600 (40% of whom were women) received legal advice and support across the country from the six legal clinics established jointly through a EU-UN project.

Under the EIDHR, about 50 women victims of sexual violence received legal and medical support. Training on gender issues and governance was organised in Abidjan, providing information to some 30 Ivorian journalists. Several contracts (worth a total of EUR 2 million) focusing on the fight against impunity, land issues and women's rights – including advocacy against female genital mutilation – are being prepared and were signed at the end of 2013.

Through an IfS budget (EUR 2 million), the EU is funding a reconciliation project aimed at building trust and peaceful cooperation between the national police and the local populations, thereby strengthening the legitimate authority of the police force. The project focuses on three communes in Abidjan - Marcory, Treichville and Yopougon - all of which have been facing violent social instability and disrespect for national authorities following the crisis. Similarly, the EU has taken the decision to assist Côte d'Ivoire in its DDR process, and will dedicate EUR 10 million under the IfS and EUR 4 million under the 10th EDF to assist the government with the social reintegration of 7 500 former combatants.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In 2013, the EU continued to promote respect for human rights and the entrenchment of democracy and the rule of law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), through a combination of political dialogue and advocacy, coupled with financial support for a variety of cooperation programmes.

In various formal or informal consultations with the DRC authorities, the EU has underlined the following priorities for the justice and legal system: the establishment of a National Commission on human rights, a thorough reform of the "family code", the transposition into national law of the Rome Statute, the abolition of the death penalty, the establishment of a Constitutional Court and of specialised chambers to judge war crimes and serious violations of human rights, and a new electoral law.

In 2013, the EU made several statements reiterating the importance it attaches to justice and condemning impunity. In March 2013, the HR/VP welcomed the transfer to the International Criminal Court of Bosco Ntaganda, who is accused of perpetrating war crimes and crimes against humanity in eastern Congo. In April 2013, the EU made a local statement expressing concerns over the slowness of the trial against the persons accused of murdering two human rights defenders. In May and November 2013, the EU made local statements regarding human rights violations committed in the Kivus, both by the Congolese armed forces and the M23 movement. This included rapes and other sexual violence against women. The EU also continued to support the reform of the justice system through several programmes, which were co-financed by some EU Member States. Concerning civil and political rights, the EU issued several public statements and made representations to the Congolese authorities regarding the targeting of political opponents and political activists in the country. The EU Delegation in the DRC closely monitored such cases, including attendance of trials and visiting of jailed political opponents in prison.

On 11 and 12 December 2013, the EU and its Member States held a two-day workshop and consultations with 30 human rights defenders representing various Congolese organisations, to examine ways in which the EU could provide better support to the work of human rights defenders. The EU allocated small direct grants to a dozen at-risk human rights defenders in need of urgent support. In addition, the EU is supporting a project led by *Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme* (a human rights association) on strengthening the capacities of human rights defenders in the Kivus.

In July 2013, the EU also approved a EUR 20 million programme to address gender-based violence in several provinces of the DRC. Gender discrimination and gender-based violence in the country are addressed through several programmes in a multi-sector approach (health, justice, police, humanitarian assistance, etc.). In addition, combatting gender-based violence is a part of the mandate of the EUPOL and EUSEC security sector reform missions.

In 2012, the EU lobbied for the adoption by the government of the DRC of the Action Plan to end the recruitment of children by the national armed forces and security forces. In 2013, the EU continued to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, in close cooperation with MONUSCO, UNICEF and other partners. In 2013, the EU supported various projects concerning children's rights, such as War Child UK's project: *"Preventing and responding to girls associated with armed forces and armed groups*", which was aimed at supporting the recovery and sustainable reintegration of street children, and in particular girls, into their families and communities, following their association with armed forces and armed groups. Lastly, the EU's work on implementing an identification system for military and police officers (through the establishment of military identity cards and biometric cards for police officers) helped remove a significant number of children from the Congolese security forces and prevent under-age recruitment.

Djibouti

In February 2013, Djibouti held legislative elections, with the participation of the opposition coalition *Union pour le Salut National* (USN). The EU deployed an Election Expert Mission, whose recommendations were later shared with the government. Following the elections, on 12 March 2013, the HR/VP's spokesperson issued a statement calling for respect of the rule of law and urging all actors to abstain from the use of force.

The post-electoral situation and human rights issues were discussed during the EU-Djibouti Article 8 political dialogue meeting held on 15 June 2013. On 4 July 2013, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Djibouti, expressing strong criticism regarding the lack of respect for democratic principles and human rights. This resolution was rejected by the authorities.

In 2013, the EU continued to work towards improving women's rights and women's general situation in Djibouti. The EU also provided support to civil society and, in the context of the programming of the 11th EDF, held meetings with civil society organisations in September 2013 to discuss their needs.

Equatorial Guinea

Against the background of the continuing violations of all human rights with the exception of freedom of religion by the autocratic government of EG, and the particular concerns of the international community with regard to recent cases of executions, the main EU priorities in Equatorial Guinea include the achievement of an official moratorium on the death penalty, the improvement of conditions on freedom of expression, effective political pluralism, support for civil society and re-engagement with the authorities on political dialogue.

Local and parliamentary elections took place on 26 May 2013. After the new government was formed, a formal EU-Equatorial Guinea political dialogue session was held on 15 October 2013, for the first time since 2009. Human rights and democratisation matters were discussed. The EU and Equatorial Guinea authorities discussed the task of implementing the changes brought about by the new Constitution and the elections and preparations for the UPR on Equatorial Guinea in 2014. EU Member States will be supporting the preparation of the civil society report for the UPR.

Eritrea

The human rights situation in Eritrea remains of grave concern since multiple serious abuses have been taking place. During meetings with the Eritrean Government, including formal Article 8 dialogue sessions, the EU continuously expressed strong concerns about the country's violation of its human rights obligations and urged the authorities to improve the overall situation. Concerns about violations of freedom of expression and freedom of religion*, arbitrary detention and without trial* and the poor implementation of the rule of law, including in relation to property rights, were also raised by the EU. The EU urged the Eritrean authorities to improve their cooperation with the UN human rights system, including with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Eritrea, and to live up to the commitments under the UN Universal Periodic Review.

The EU remains particularly concerned about the fate of detained journalists and prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their political and religious beliefs. While some journalists and media operators were freed in 2013, there were allegations of new arrests and detentions without trial, including after the 21 January 2013 events. The EU repeatedly requested information and access to those in detention. More generally, the EU consistently requested that these prisoners be released immediately and unconditionally. *Among others, the EU called on the Eritrean authorities to release Dawit Isaak, a journalist and Eritrean-European citizen held incommunicado in detention since 2001.* On 18 September 2013, the HR/VP issued a statement on the situation of political prisoners in Eritrea. The EU also continued to express concerns about the reported deaths of some of the political prisoners and the deterioration of the medical condition of others.

In the course 2013, the EU raised concerns with the authorities about the problem of migration and human trafficking in the Horn of Africa. The EU urged Eritrea to implement reforms to address the root causes of migration *, such as indefinite military service,* and to work with international organisations and regional partners. The Lampedusa tragedy in October 2013, in which hundreds of Eritrean refugees died when trying to reach European shores, further highlighted the problem and its regional nature. Also in July 2013, the EUSR for Sudan and South Sudan visited Eritrea and discussed the issue of migration with the authorities.

Ethiopia

The EU sought regular dialogue with the Ethiopian Government to discuss its concerns, notably through the Article 8 political dialogue, including on the reduction of political space and limitations of media freedom, the constraints faced by civil society organisations, religious affairs and the situation in prisons. A delegation of MEPs visited Ethiopia from 15-17 July 2013 and also expressed concern regarding the respect of a number of civil and political rights.

Some encouraging developments can be noted in Ethiopia in 2013, including the adoption of the National Human Rights Action Plan and the constructive engagement in tripartite dialogue with civil society organisations, co-chaired by the EU and the Ministry of Federal Affairs. The agreement by the government to give access to all the country's prisons to the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) is also a welcome development, as prison access has been a problematic issue. Although a visit to the Kaliti prison was denied to MEPs at the last minute in July 2013, Louis Michel MEP visited the prison on the margins of the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly in November 2013. The EU Delegation is engaged in discussions with the authorities regarding the possibility of visiting prisons, in order to assist with improving the living conditions of the detainees. A number of EU Member States also funded projects aimed at improving prison conditions in 2013.

The EU nevertheless remains concerned about some aspects of the approach to human rights, particularly civil and political rights, in Ethiopia. *The 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation remains a cause for concern.* The Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP) was used to justify further arrests and trials of journalists and political opponents in 2013.

The fourth nationwide local elections were held in the country on 14 and 21 April. While the polling days were peaceful, the election did not represent a step forward in Ethiopia's democratisation process. As a consequence, an Election Coordination Group of donor partner countries was established to agree on common messages for political dialogue and to coordinate future election-related and democratisation support activities in Ethiopia. The EU is co-chairing the group with the United States.

As regards EU development assistance, two crucial institutions for human rights in Ethiopia received financial support from the EU and EU Member States in 2013 through the multi-donor Democratic Institutions Programme: the Human Rights Commission and the Ombudsman. Through the EIDHR, the EU has been funding actions by civil society organisations addressing issues such as female genital mutilation, sexual and gender-based violence, discrimination against persons with disabilities and child abuse. Furthermore, the EU-Ethiopia Civil Society Fund, which is regarded as a local fund, has selected Ethiopian NGOs that will work on governance and human rights issues through its 2013 call for proposals.

On the occasion of the World and European Day against the Death Penalty in October, a panel discussion on the death penalty was organised by the EU with the Human Rights Centre at Addis Ababa University and two EU Member States. This well-attended event led to a lively and in-depth debate with government and civil society representatives as well as academics.

Gabon

The main human rights concerns and challenges in Gabon relate to conditions of detention, the issue of "ritual" crimes, women's rights, trafficking in human beings, including children, and the transparency and inclusivity of the electoral process. Problems also exist with regard to delays in the judicial system, the large number of persons held in provisional detention, and discrimination against immigrants and against indigenous communities. The effectiveness of the judicial system is reduced by insufficient financial and human resources (for instance in the area of forensic medicine) and by the effects of corruption.

These issues need to be discussed with the national authorities at political dialogue meetings between the European Union and the Gabonese Republic, on the basis of Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. However, the last political dialogue session took place in October 2012. Efforts have been made to re-launch this political platform, which forms the framework of the EU-Gabon partnership. At local level, the EU Delegation maintained a dialogue with civil society organisations and human rights organisations, and there were also regular meetings with representatives of the relevant official bodies.

Gabon was elected a member of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for the period 2013-2015. The last Universal Periodic Review by the UNHRC took place in 2012. The authorities worked in 2013 on the recommendations covering the key EU concerns listed above, i.e. conditions of detention, children's rights, "ritual" crimes, women's rights, trafficking in human beings, including children, from western Africa, and non-discrimination and freedom of expression.

In addition, the Gabonese Republic has been benefiting from a thematic programme for *non-state actors and local authorities in development* amounting to EUR 2.45 million. Another objective of the action under this programme is to build the capacity and help the structuring of non-state actors and civil society organisations in Gabon. The latest call for proposals, launched in 2013, includes key human rights themes.

Gambia

The EU-Gambia political dialogue under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement took place on 11 July 2013, and human rights issues were raised. The EU priorities remained the death penalty, cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, detention conditions, the rule of law, freedom of speech and the media, support to civil society and human rights defenders, violence against women and LGBTI rights.

The EU continued to address issues of concern in its political dialogue with the authorities through development projects as well as through the support provided to human rights defenders. In 2013, the EU supported civil society with a specific focus on women's rights, through a call for proposals on promoting gender equality, financed under the *Non-State Actors and local authorities in development* thematic programme (EUR 400 000). An additional amount of EUR 415 000 was granted to finance two more proposals submitted through the call for proposals. The EU provided support to human rights defenders during the year through the small grants programme financed by the EIDHR. Through the 10th EDF Governance Programme (EUR 10 million) the EU continued to promote access to justice, especially for the most vulnerable, and legal education, and contributed to the freedom of the press through its media component.

In a local statement issued in May, the EU, UK and US diplomatic missions to the Gambia jointly expressed serious concerns over the arbitrary detention of Imam Baba Leigh, a prominent religious leader and human rights advocate, whose whereabouts had been undisclosed since his arrest in

December 2012. Imam Baba Leigh was subsequently released three days after the press release was issued. The EU Delegation also reinforced its advocacy on human rights and democracy through its public diplomacy outreach on social media platforms and in local papers, as well as through the commemoration of international days, such as the World Day against the Death Penalty, in October 2013, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, in November 2013.

In meetings with cabinet members, the EU Delegation followed up points raised during the political dialogue, including respect of the rule of law (arrests and detentions), freedom of the press and the establishment of a media commission.

Ghana

The EU's key human rights objectives are to promote access to justice, good governance, children's rights and effective implementation of non-discriminatory policies. Key challenges, such as improving harsh detention conditions, ensuring social and economic rights, and the elimination of child trafficking and abuse are included under these chapters.

The December 2012 elections were regarded as having generally been conducted in accordance with the international and regional standards. Following the August 2013 Supreme Court ruling validating the election results, the EU reiterated its support for the improvement of the electoral process, which is one of the key objectives of the EU democracy support action plan. An additional EUR 4.5 million has been allocated to the on-going electoral support programme, providing a total of EUR 11.5 million. The EU is still the main development partner supporting the constitutional review process.

In line with the UN Millennium Development Goals and EU human rights priorities, the EU organised a workshop on 9 May 2013 entitled "*Promoting Gender Equality: EU and Ghana Working Together*". It was organised in collaboration with the Government of Ghana represented by the Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Protection.

On 10 October 2013, the EU and France organised a roundtable discussion in Accra, to commemorate the World Day against the Death Penalty. The roundtable discussions focused on the core issue of the de jure abolition of the death penalty in Ghana. This issue may be included in the referendum on the Constitution.

Under the EIDHR, the EU organised an information seminar on the promotion of child rights as part of the call for proposals. The focus of the call for proposals was to support the implementation of the Children's Act (under Ghanaian law), which seeks to foster parental duty and responsibility towards children, with particular regard to children's rights to education, wellbeing, protection from exploitative labour and protection from torture and degrading treatment. The EU has funded three civil society organisations addressing child labour in fishing communities in the central and northern regions of Ghana.

Guinea

EU's development cooperation with Guinea, partially suspended since the 2008 military coup d'état, resumed following the holding of peaceful and inclusive legislative elections in September 2013. The restrictive measures adopted by the EU in 2009, in particular the individual sanctions (travel ban and assets freeze) against five people presumed to be responsible for the September 2009 massacre, and the arms embargo, have remained in force.

In a very tense political context, in which several demonstrations by opposition parties have ended up with violence, victims and major material destruction, the EU has continued its very active engagement in international mediation to support the electoral process and ensure that the elections are free, transparent, inclusive and peaceful. The HR/VP publicly called on political parties to exercise restraint, avoid violence and to pursue the talks. The EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution calling on Guinea to work towards a compromise providing for inclusive elections, and allowing the EU and the international community to continue to support the electoral process.

The EU provided EUR 6 million to support the organisation of elections, including technical assistance. An EU election observation mission was deployed, with more than 70 observers on the ground.

In addition to the electoral process, EU human rights priorities include justice and security sector reform, the fight against impunity and improving detention conditions.

Following these elections, development cooperation with Guinea has been fully resumed by the EU and the suspended funds totalling EUR 139.9 million are again available. The EU prepared several projects in support to justice and security sector reform, and continued to provide support to the fight by civil society and human rights defenders against impunity and to victims of various instances of political repression. The EU continued to support the transposition into national law of the Rome Statute and international human rights conventions. The EU engaged with the Guinean authorities on cases of human rights violations, involving imprisonment without due diligence and respect of legal procedures. Lastly, a civil society support programme (EUR 6 million) was prepared and two emergency programmes were launched under the Instrument for Stability, with EUR 5 million earmarked to reform the police forces and EUR 10 million to stabilise and prevent further conflict in the forest region, where ethnic tensions led to an outbreak of violence in July 2013.

Guinea-Bissau

The EU priorities before the coup d'état of 12 April 2012 were the respect of democratic principles and the rule of law, torture and detention conditions, the fight against impunity and the protection of the human rights of vulnerable groups. Following the coup and the deterioration of the human rights situation, the EU identified additional priorities: to stop arbitrary killings and arbitrary detentions and to protect human rights defenders.

There were numerous reported cases of human rights violations, including arbitrary killings, detentions and torture, attacks against human rights defenders and restrictions of freedom of expression and of the media. Violence and intimidation by security forces persisted. The government did not take steps to prosecute or punish officials or military personnel who committed abuses. Other human rights abuses were related to the lack of judicial independence and due process, violence against women and trafficking of human beings, including children.

The EU does not have a dialogue with the Guinea-Bissau authorities, because it does not recognise their legitimacy, however it raised human rights issues with ECOWAS (ministerial political dialogue), the UN, the AU and other international partners, calling for stronger pressure on the transitional authorities and on the security forces to respect human rights, fight impunity and create the right conditions for free and credible elections. In addition to numerous local statements (often jointly with other international partners), the HR/VP made a statement on 14 October 2013 condemning human rights abuses and calling for respect of the rule of law and the holding of credible elections as soon as possible.

The application of the appropriate measures under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement (Council Decision 2011/492/UE), was extended again for one year in July 2013, together with the EU restrictive measures against twenty one military officials, which were renewed in May 2013.

During 2013, the EU continued to closely monitor and report on human rights abuses. Five projects were funded through the EIDHR, totalling EUR 1.5 million and aimed at reinforcing human rights observation by civil society and respect of the human rights of women, children and detainees. Through the EIDHR emergency fund, the EU provided EUR 10 000 to secure the urgent evacuation of a human rights defender. The Instrument for Stability was also used to support the strengthening of women's role as actors for peace (EUR 360 000), and to support democracy through funding for the forthcoming elections (EUR 2 million) scheduled for 13 April. An EU Observer Mission has been recommended. The EU Delegation in Guinea-Bissau is still sheltering one victim of violence from last year, owing to fears for his physical integrity and life.

Kenya

While the 2010 Constitution strongly promotes respect for human rights, the implementation of the related provisions is challenging, especially as regards oversight of the police, independence of the judiciary and a free media.

In 2013, EU efforts in Kenya were focused on strengthening the democratic process and following the general elections on 4 March. The EU supported the electoral process by deploying an EU election observation mission during the general elections in March 2013. The EU EOM praised the peaceful and successful conduct of the elections but observed several issues that needed to be addressed in the future.

The political climate was also affected by the fact that both the President and Deputy President were under indictments from the International Criminal Court. The EU made clear its support for the ICC and the importance of Kenya as a State Party to the Rome Statute and of all indictors cooperating with it. The EU also highlighted, in both public and private messages, its support for the rule of law, including the ICC.

The newly elected government has proposed legislation on the media and NGOs that limits some rights, including freedom of speech and freedom of association. The EU has been supporting human rights defenders through the EIDHR. A call for proposals launched by the EU Delegation with a fixed amount of EUR 600,000 will support activists monitoring human rights protection by law enforcement agencies. Meetings are held with human rights defenders on an ongoing basis, and special CSO–EU Heads of Mission meetings are held regularly.

Lesotho

Lesotho has maintained a stable political climate following the formation of a three-party coalition government after the general elections of May 2012. Lesotho's governance and human rights situation is fairly satisfactory. Nevertheless challenges remain including discrimination against women, independence of the judiciary and access to justice for vulnerable groups.

In May 2013,the first EU-Lesotho governance dialogue session was held. Matters discussed included the establishment of the human rights commission, the transposition of international conventions into national law, reporting obligations of the government of Lesotho on the international conventions to which it is a signatory and an enabling legislative framework for civil society.

Through the EIDHR, the European Union supports the advocacy efforts of local NGOs aimed at the establishment of a functional Paris Principles-compliant national human rights commission. The EU also funds a programme that raises awareness on the 2011 Anti-Trafficking Law. In 2013, the European Union renewed its support for the justice sector; this took the form of an improved case management system and the provision of support to the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences.

An EUR 8 million decentralisation programme implemented through a contribution agreement with the UNDP has been progressing smoothly. In October 2013, four grants totalling EUR 3 million were signed with civil society organisations to support capacity-building at local levels with a view to enhancing service delivery. In terms of economic and social rights, support for social protection measures, in particular benefiting vulnerable children, has been provided by the European Union through a EUR 9.8 million project which entered its second phase. The programme, implemented by UNICEF, is geared to building the capacity of the Ministry of Social Development, improving the design of the cash grant programme and working towards an integrated social protection system.

Liberia

Despite remarkable progress since the Civil War, Liberia still faces considerable human rights challenges and abuses. The EU's main priorities for the country are the abolition of the death penalty, awareness and respect of women's rights, awareness and respect of children's rights, and provision of support to civil society for promoting human rights. The specific objectives include promotion of access to health and education for women and children, a substantial reduction of all forms of exploitation with a view to their eradication, a substantial reduction of gender violence and maternal mortality, empowerment of women and stronger civil society action on human rights.

The EU organised public debates on the abolition of the death penalty with the participation of the legislature, the Independent National Human Rights Commission, civil society and the media. Human rights were promoted among young people through musical events.

A new call for proposals was launched on access to justice and gender equality. It complements two ongoing projects (worth EUR 600 000) focusing on national reconciliation and the protection of human rights, financed by the EIDHR. The EU prepared new projects, totalling EUR 860 000, on gender equality and women's rights, including the fight against female genital mutilation,. In addition, two ongoing projects financed by the Instrument for Stability (EUR 670 000) have been supporting youth participation in peace-building. The EU supports civil organisations' work with the most marginalised people, including the disabled, to the tune of EUR 660 000.

In the field of democracy consolidation, the EU has engaged with the national authorities on the constitutional review and preparations for the 2014 Senate elections. Support for the electoral cycle has continued, and a new programme supporting decentralisation and worth EUR 5.5 million has been approved. This remains a challenging area and substantial political will is required to make progress on the related objectives of constitutional reform and decentralisation.

To support good governance, the EU has engaged extensively with the national authorities on the management of the natural resources, in particular in the forestry sector.

Madagascar

Madagascar has been subject to measures under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement since June 2010, following an unconstitutional transfer of power in March 2009. The resumption of cooperation is dependent on the holding of transparent, free and credible elections. The first round of the presidential election was held to the satisfaction of national and international observers on 25 October 2013. A second round, coupled with parliamentary elections, was held on 20 December 2013. The EU is providing political and financial support for the electoral process to end the crisis. An allocation of EUR 17 million was granted specifically to support the electoral process.

The political dialogue between the Malagasy authorities and the EU was resumed in November 2012 but no formal meeting took place during the electoral year 2013. An election observation mission was deployed.

In Madagascar, the EIDHR is focusing on three priorities: promoting respect for human rights in the administration of justice, promoting the rights of the child, and promoting women's rights. Six projects have been selected totalling EUR 1.25 million. They concern provision of support to prison authorities with a view to improving the living conditions of prisoners, the fight against human trafficking in the field of employment, better accessibility to the judiciary system, support to women candidates in the local elections, and the fight against domestic violence. A small allocation from the Country-based Support Scheme (CBSS) budget will be used to fund the publication of leaflets concerning free advice from lawyers for women and minors on the occasion of the international Human Rights Day on 10 December 2013.

Malawi

Engagement on human rights and democratisation in Malawi ranked high amongst the EU's activities in 2013. Political dialogue meetings took place on a quarterly basis.

The EU Delegation has established a working group of human rights defenders, open to Member States and civil society representatives, which meets on a bi-monthly basis. The EU Delegation played an active role in and partially funded the 2013 Human Rights Day organised by the Malawi Human Rights Commission. The 2013 Human Rights Day was devoted to the issue of free and fair 2014 tripartite elections. To assist the country with the preparation of the 2014 elections, the EU provided financial and technical assistance to the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) through the UNDP-managed basket fund and the Democratic Governance Programme, which supports matters including access to quality justice, democratic accountability, human rights observance, civil society empowerment and civic education. In the political dialogue with the authorities, the EU has emphasised the importance of allowing equal state media airtime to political parties in the run-up to the elections, as well as the importance of broader freedom of expression and media freedom.

Children's rights were a prominent issue in public debate this year. Issues relating to violence against children and child marriages were the most discussed topic in the media. The EU will be tackling violence against children through a recently-signed project with Save the Children that will build up child protection systems in two districts of Malawi. The Social Cash Transfer programme, supported by the EU, Germany and Ireland, has child-led households as one of its beneficiaries.

Under the Democratic Governance Programme, the EU also provided human rights training to officers from the police and the prison service.

In terms of support on gender issues, the EU/UNFPA-funded Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programme is in its second implementation year. Some of the main achievements in 2013 were the adoption of a Joint Gender, Youth and Sports Sector Strategy, the establishment of one-stop centres for gender-based violence (GBV) victims in 3 districts of Malawi and the training of prosecution staff and victim support units on gender-sensitive prosecution. The programme also provided direct support to GBV victims through technical and vocational training, as well as the creation of income generating groups for GBV survivors. Two projects selected by the EIDHR will also address gender issues. One will focus on gender-based violence and the other on the inheritance and property rights of women and girls.

Mali

EU priorities include national reconciliation and security, rule of law and democracy, justice reform and access to justice, children, women rights and equality, the fight against corruption, socio-economic rights and basic services. Increased efforts are needed to avoid further violations, ensure security, protection and the rule of law.

The EU Delegation was involved in supporting the re-establishment of constitutional order in Mali throughout 2013 and the EU supported the deployment of human rights monitors for the north. Human rights monitors continued to face challenges of security and capability. Stabilisation efforts have brought good initial results but much more needs to be done to protect human rights throughout the country. Serious allegations of exactions against civilians in the centre and north continue, including detention of children and unlawful killings. Extra-judicial detention has continued, especially at the Security Directorate-General, which refuses access to prisoners.

The presidential and legislative elections have marked the end of the transition period and restored democratically elected government institutions to the country. Three different actions were put in place to support the electoral process: a substantial contribution to the basket fund feeding the multi-donor electoral support programme PAPEM (*Projet d'Appui au Processus Electoral au Mali*); electoral assistance providing technical support to the three electoral institutions in Mali; and EU election observation missions for both the presidential and legislative elections.

One of the objectives of the *state-building contract* (EU budget support for Mali covering 2013 and 2014) financing the Malian Government, is a committed fight against impunity. The EU recognised that national reconciliation must be based on a fair and functional judicial system capable of bringing to justice, without distinction, the perpetrators of the abuses committed.

Human rights observance has been supported through an EIDHR financed project as part of the global EU response to the crisis in Mali. The project aims at training at mobilizing local and sub-regional civil society to document and report human rights violations committed by armed groups and contributing to the consolidation of the rule of law. The action is complementary to the African Union observation mission, funded under the African Peace Facility (APF).

Two programmes have been launched to improve conditions in prisons: one providing legal support to prisoners and training to the penal chain actors, and the other providing support to civil society organisations ensuring the wellbeing of prisoners.

Human rights training was provided to all Malian soldiers who passed through the first EU Training Mission (EUTM) before their deployment. This training will continue to be provided in a renewed mission, as part of wider Security Sector Reform efforts.

Mauritania

Mauritania has made both legal and institutional progress on human rights protection over the last few years. However, serious concerns remain in a number of areas. The EU's objectives in 2013 were to contribute to the efficient promotion and defence of human rights priorities, improve governance and respect of the rule of law through enhanced dialogue and cooperation with the Mauritanian authorities, and help protect local human rights defenders and other relevant actors. EU human rights priorities for Mauritania included the justice system, the fight against slavery, ethnic minority discrimination, gender discrimination, NGO status, the death penalty, the fight against torture and enforced disappearances.

Legislative and municipal elections which were due in 2011 took place in late 2013. The EU deployed an election expert mission to assist with monitoring and analysing the electoral process. Presidential elections are scheduled in 2014.

Two EU official meetings with human rights defenders and one political dialogue session with the government, which included human rights issues, were held in 2013. The EU called for and supported the drafting of a new law to prevent violence against women.

Following its ratification by the European Parliament, the EU-Mauritania Fisheries Agreement, which includes specific human rights clauses, entered into force on 15 November 2013.

The EU supported a range of NGOs working in Mauritania on human rights issues, such as women's rights and slavery, and will continue to do so in 2014. A new project to reinforce the justice system with a specific focus on NGOs was identified in 2013.

Mauritius

The EU actively promoted respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law in 2013 through the annual political dialogue with the Government of Mauritius and meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Speaker of the Parliament, opposition leaders, representatives of the private sector and human rights defenders. The annual meeting with human rights defenders was held on 6 June 2013.

Mauritius's 2nd UPR took place on 23 September 2013. The recommendations included officially abolishing the death penalty, extending a standing invitation to all Special Procedures of the HRC, strengthening cooperation with civil society, addressing gender-based violence, finalising the Children's Bill, and ratifying human rights instruments to accompany the country's own action plan.

In 2013, the EU organised, jointly with NGOs, public events aimed at raising awareness of gender-based violence. Actions to promote women's and children's rights featured prominently in the bilateral development cooperation programmes. The improvement of two health-related MDGs (on maternal health and child mortality) for vulnerable groups are key goals included in the current EUR 86 million budget support programme that is being implemented in Mauritius over the period from 2013 to 2015.

Mozambique

In 2013, the EU worked in particular on the promotion of civil and political rights and credible electoral processes but also prioritised freedom of expression and access to information, the rule of law, and the Paris Principles.

The EU gave great emphasis to electoral processes through a multidimensional strategy combining the provision of support to election management bodies and to civil society with political dialogue with the government and political parties. The EU called for a more open political space for the opposition and for more transparent and credible electoral cycles. A local EU statement was issued, calling for a peaceful electoral process. The EU urged all stakeholders to respect each other and abide by the recently-approved electoral codes of conduct.

The EU organised an election follow-up mission to assess the situation 4 years after the 2009 EU election observation mission. The follow-up mission held meetings with all the stakeholders and triggered additional debate during a seminar, before suggesting a number of recommendations for the upcoming electoral cycle. The EU also organised a diplomatic poll-watching exercise for the local elections on 20 November, and sent a report to the National Elections Commission.

The EU also issued a public statement insisting on the need for all to respect the rule of law and the constitutional system while promoting constructive dialogue, so as to address political divergence and consolidate democracy. In this regard, the need to reinforce the rule of law effectively was raised against the background of the rising number of kidnappings affecting the population.

In terms of civil society support, negotiations were initiated with the National Forum for Community Radios (FORCOM) on a direct award. The grant, which is expected to be signed in January 2014, will cover actions related to the enhancement of political awareness and voters' education through local community radios. The EU also supported a regional project aimed at preventing electoral violence in the Southern African Development Community region. Several activities related to this project took place in 2013 in Mozambique, including a needs assessment and training courses (for trainers) on leadership and conflict management and prevention. Through the EIDHR Country-based Support Scheme, 3 projects started their activities on women's rights and access to information. Technical support was provided to civil society organisations funded under the EIDHR through support measures. In that context, an expert provided support on project management and on improving the monitoring of the human rights situation in Mozambique.

The EU enhanced its contacts with the National Human Rights Commission to evaluate its needs for support and continued to call for high-level support for the approval of the staff organisation chart so that the Commission could become fully operational. The EU called for respect of human rights by the law enforcement bodies and for the adoption of anti-corruption legislation. Mozambique ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture on 5 February 2013. Prison visits by EU Heads of Mission were organised in Nampula, under an EU-funded project, and in Maputo province, where two detention centres (Maputo central prison and the Ndlava detention centre for women) were visited as part of the commemoration of Human Rights Day.

Namibia

Namibia is a stable and secure country with the highest media freedom ratings in Africa. It maintains a generally positive human rights record. The EU's key objectives with regard to human rights and democracy in Namibia are to promote political participation and pluralism, economic, social and cultural rights, women's and children's rights, and the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

In 2013, EUR 600 000 was allocated to Namibia under the EIDHR. This has been funding projects that seek to foster participation, human rights and voter education in Namibia's local communities, and to strengthen the interaction between civil society and regional and local government. The projects also aim to promote a culture of zero tolerance against gender-based violence.

2013 also saw the launch of the Namibia Civil Society Support Programme and the provision of support to the newly-established Civil Society Foundation of Namibia, which will manage EU-funded micro-grants to NGOs. This support is provided for strengthening civil society’s contribution to sustainable development and socio-economic justice.

Some core recommendations of the UPR remained unaddressed, of which some recommendations addressing protection of Children's rights, protection of indigenous people, LGBTI issues and situation in prisons. At the EU-Namibia political dialogue meetings the EU continued to encourage the Namibian authorities to implement these recommendations.

Niger

The EU's human rights objectives in Niger include respect for democratic principles and the rule of law, enhancement of the justice system and protection of women's and children's rights.

As part of its efforts to enhance respect of democratic principles and the rule of law, the EU assisted approximately 160 community-based organisations in the regions of Tahoua, Agadez, Maradi and Zinder. The projects, funded through the Civil Society Support Programme (PASOC II), targeted the promotion of human rights and responsible democratic citizenship.

During the second half of 2013, 10 new grant contracts were signed under the thematic programme "*Non-State Actors and Local Authorities*". Another 6 contracts received funding through the EIDHR. These projects are implemented by civil society organisations or local authorities and are aimed at fostering improvements in governance and, more specifically, in citizens' control of public action, as well as capacity building for civil society actors, prevention and management of conflicts, and promotion of the rights to education and to freedom of expression.

Through its Justice and Rule of Law Support Programme (PAJED II), the EU contributed to an improved functioning of the justice sector. As regards the prison system, in 2013 PAJED II funded the updating of the legal and institutional framework and launched a set of infrastructure projects, educational activities and training programmes to improve living conditions in prisons. Further activities were carried out to facilitate the social reintegration of former prisoners. In the area of legal and judicial support, PAJED II support proivded for the establishment of a National Agency and offices for providing free legal and judicial assistance to the most vulnerable population groups, including women.

With regard to the protection of women and children, the EU support programme on development of the national statistical system for the promotion of good governance and the monitoring of poverty reduction (PASTAGEP), implemented by UNICEF, recorded some significant results. The birth registration rate has increased from 32 per cent in 2006 to 64 per cent today.

In 2013, a local EIDHR call for proposal was launched, with a global budget of 600.000 euros. In line with the Sahel strategy and the Human rights priorities chosen by the EU delegation, the call intends to fund specific actions to improve the penitentiary system and detention conditions, to contribute to the right to education and freedom of expression.

Nigeria

Human rights violations remained of serious concern in Nigeria in 2013. The EU's priorities on human rights include the reform of the justice and security system with a particular focus on combating torture and ill-treatment, extra-judicial killings and impunity, violence against women and children, and the death penalty.

Boko Haram and other terrorist groups stepped up their terror campaign in the north-eastern parts of the country and organised numerous attacks of unprecedented brutality. Through several statements the EU has condemned this violence, demanded an immediate end to all terrorist attacks, expressed its full solidarity with the victims and made clear its strongest support to the Nigerian citizens and authorities in their efforts to bring peace and rule of law to the country. At the same time the EU has called for an immediate end to human rights abuses perpetrated by the security forces and insisted on the investigation of such events on unhindered access to detention places for human rights institutions, and on prosecution and redress.

These issues were addressed with the Nigerian authorities in the human rights dialogue held in March 2013 and at the Senior Officials' Meeting and Ministerial Dialogue, both held in May in Brussels. Regarding discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation no common ground could be

found. Human rights abuses in the framework of the counter-terrorism operations in the North-East were again addressed in the local dialogue on peace and security - held for the first time, also in March - and at the meeting between the EU Political and Security Committee and the Nigerian National Security Advisor in November. A consultation meeting with civil society (and UN agencies) was held ahead of the human rights dialogue and CSOs were consulted both on the agenda and on the main elements to be discussed with the authorities.

The local dialogue on migration and development tackled issues such as trafficking of human beings and human rights protection for migrants. On Human Rights Day, 10 December, the Head of the EU Delegation to Nigeria participated in a public event organised by the National Human Rights Council and gave a speech in front of Nigerian ministers and other dignitaries.

Several statements were issued in the course of 2013: on the bill criminalising same-sex marriage and relationships (June), on the executions resulting from the death penalty (June), on the massacre of schoolchildren by terrorists (July), on the non-compliance with ICC obligations when the ICC-indicted Sudanese President was allowed to enter Nigerian territory to attend an AU-organised conference (July), and on the terrorist attacks against students and children (September). In relation to both the executions and the ICC obligations, informal and formal representations were also made to the appropriate Nigerian authorities.

Nigeria was tabled for the urgency debate in the plenary of the European Parliament in July and an EP resolution was issued on the human rights situation in the country.

In its 2nd Universal Periodic Review, held on 22 October in Geneva, Nigeria accepted 175 out of the 219 recommendations, including those related to torture and extra-judicial killings by members of the security forces. Although Nigeria rejected 10 recommendations - all related to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation - it promised to consider 34 related to a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its complete abolition. The EU will continue its engagement and provision of assistance to Nigeria with a view to contributing to an improvement of the human rights situation in the most critical areas.

The EU continued to support several projects in Nigeria, addressing issues including the fight against death penalty, the prevention of ill-treatment of women, extra-judicial killings and the prevention of torture. The European Development Fund continued to contribute to the ongoing reform of the justice sector in Nigeria, to supporting the 2012–2015 electoral cycle and to promoting women's involvement in peace and security building in Northern Nigeria.

Rwanda

The European Union placed particular emphasis on governance in 2013 by supporting the Joint Governance Assessment (JGA) process; monitoring the elections; coordinating diplomatic poll-watching; deploying an EU election expert mission and supporting the media reform process. In addition, the EU continued its engagement on human rights through a combination of political advocacy, use of the Cotonou Agreement Article 8 meeting and maintenance of its support to NGOs.

The JGA process (co-chaired by the EU Delegation since January 2011), through which the government and development partners regularly assess progress in political and economic governance, received a strong impetus from the EU, which provided support for a revised monitoring framework with robust indicators. The next assessment should take place in 2014, along with a High-Level Forum on Governance.

The electoral code was updated taking into consideration some recommendations made by past EU election observation missions.

The cessation clause came fully into effect on 30 June 2013, effectively ending the refugee status of all persons who had fled Rwanda between 1959 and 1998. In 2011, there were approximately 100 000 Rwandan refugees in 40 asylum countries, 65 500 of whom are living in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region. On the issue of refugees, the EU Delegation organised joint visits to refugee camps and to the formerM23 fighters' camp.

Within the framework of the political dialogue (Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement) and the human rights dialogue the EU has exchanged views with the Rwandan authorities on political, legal and human rights issues. The crisis in Eastern DRC, the justice system, elections and human rights cases have all been discussed.

Through the EIDHR, the EU Delegation has prioritised certain themes in accordance with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), in particular issues such as media strengthening, labour rights, children's rights, reconciliation or support for vulnerable groups, land issues and the fight against corruption. To take one example, the delegation helped fund a study on the working conditions and wages of tea plantation workers, which eventually led to the signing of a collective agreement covering these workers.

The government launched the Economic Development and Poverty Strategy (EDPRS II) 2013-2017 on June 2013, with a focus on accountable governance as a priority area for intervention. The strategy forms the basis for the activities of all donors involved in Rwanda, including the EU, which will fully support the strategy. The EU launched five projects implemented by NGOs and international organisations to promote human rights, strengthen access to justice and monitor the delivery of justice.

Sao Tomé and Príncipe

The main EU priorities include the ratification of core international human rights treaties, support measures for the judicial system, the abolition of ill-treatment by police forces, the encouragement of efforts to fight corruption and raising awareness of the need to combat discrimination.

Although São Tome and Principe has not yet ratified all international conventions (including the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court), human rights are generally well respected. The problems consist mainly of shortcomings in social protection, widespread poverty and weak institutional capacities in the country. At the last political dialogue meeting (9 July 2013), the EU voiced its concern about the postponement to 2014 of local elections scheduled for 2013.

As a result, the action of the EU concentrated on strengthening of development cooperation and collaboration with non-state actors. The country has also been benefiting from a thematic programme for *non-state actors and local authorities in development* amounting to EUR 3.6 million for 2012 and 2013.

Senegal

In 2013, through the political dialogue under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement and the EU cooperation with Senegal, the EU and its Member States focused on priorities such as women's and children's rights, the fight against impunity, and non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Senegal underwent its second Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in October 2013. EU Member States encouraged the Senegalese authorities to take measures to effectively eliminate forced child labour, including forced begging, to pursue the efforts underway to guarantee gender equality, to tackle domestic violence, sexual abuse, rape and forced marriages, to ensure respect of LGBTI rights and to decriminalise homosexuality, which remains punishable by Senegalese law.

In general, while acknowledging the existing legal framework providing guarantees on the protection of children, women and minorities, the EU continued to stress the importance of concrete implementing actions, which often lag behind. The EU and its Member States organised several activities promoting discussion and research and offering a platform for various human rights organisations, civil society and government officials. Round tables were organised on religious extremism, children's rights and LGBTI rights. This allowed the EU to sensitise the Senegalese stakeholders on the EU approach towards these issues and to identify the needs for action.

The EU provided grants under the Instrument for Stability to support the Senegalese authorities with the organisation of the trial of Hissène Habré, accused of crimes against humanity, and to support the normalisation of the situation in the Casamance region.

On Human Rights Day, 10 December, the EU Heads of Mission, together with high school students, visited a children's refuge, where former street children are educated, and, as from the age of 16, trained as professional craftsmen. An EU-financed translation system which enables Senegalese members of parliament – of whom 43% are female – to carry out their work in each of the 6 local languages, was launched in December 2013.

The EU continued its EUR 7.9 million of support under the 10th EDF to the Senegalese justice sector, focusing in particular on improving access to justice and the fight against impunity. The EU capacity-building programme for non-governmental actors under the 10th EDF, amounting to EUR 6.5 million, also continued in 2013; it was directed towards reinforcing political, economic and social governance at the national and local levels and reducing poverty. In 2013, the EU and its Member States financed some 25 complementary programmes, focusing on women in rural areas, gender and education, fighting female genital mutilation, information and awareness raising on children's rights, preventing torture, promoting the rights of disabled people, and other human rights issues.

Seychelles

The EU's policy objectives in 2013 were focused on the electoral reform process (particularly as regards improving freedom of assembly and freedom of the media). The National Human Rights Action Plan, developed in partnership with the Commonwealth and the EU *Governance Capacity Building Programme*, was validated by stakeholders in June 2013 but has not been approved by the government. Small grants totalling EUR 282 000 were provided to both state and non-state actors to address human rights issues in the Seychelles under the EU *Governance Capacity Building Programme*, which ended in October 2013.

Seychelles ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the rights of the child (CRC) concerning the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Seychelles also ratified the UN Convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families in September 2013. Seychelles reported to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in October 2013.

Sierra Leone

Remarkable progress has been achieved since the end of the civil war but considerable human rights challenges and abuses persist. EU human rights objectives include abolition of the death penalty, gender equality, women's empowerment, enforcement of legislation against child labour and exploitation, reduction of poverty, and improved access to justice, health and education. The rights of people affected by large-scale land leasing and extractive industries also needs continued attention. The EU raised international human rights issues with the government in the context of Sierra Leone's membership of the Human Rights Council, and continued to support projects aimed at promoting fundamental rights in Sierra Leone.

Human rights, combined with specific measures to support gender equality and education as an important contribution to poverty reduction, are part of the national agenda for prosperity (2013-2018) launched by the government in July 2013, which the EU is supporting. The EU is also supporting the constitutional review process with a view to aligning the Constitution to the country's international human rights obligations, together with the law on Freedom of Information, adopted in October to guarantee access to information from state bodies.

EU-funded projects focused mainly on the rights of persons with disabilities (capacity-building and mental health), gender (e.g. empowerment and combating gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation) and children's rights (child labour). Support was also given on strengthening access to justice, including training for legal and para-legal practitioners, and on promoting freedom of information and better health services, including the improvement of reproductive and sexual health. The Sierra Leone Human Rights Commission also received support. More specifically, the EU supported the implementation of a project entitled *'A National Conversation on Human Rights, Governance and Democracy'* in Sierra Leone. The aim of the project is to mainstream specific human rights issues in Sierra Leone through the empowerment and strengthening of the country's media and civil society.

The EU issued calls for proposals totalling EUR 5.7 million for human rights projects. The selected projects should contribute to implementing recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, one of the EU's main objectives for its human rights activities in Sierra Leone, whilst helping achieve development goals and build the capacities of local authorities.

Somalia

During 2013, large-scale human rights violations continued in Somalia, including arbitrary killings, persecution, violence and displacement. Many of these violations were related to the ongoing conflict between the coalition of forces supported by the Federal Government of Somalia and Al Shabaab insurgents. Hundreds of thousands remained displaced in Somalia, with around one million Somali refugees in the neighbouring countries. The EU strongly supported the new government's efforts to build human-rights sensitive institutional structures and legislation by promoting the inclusion of human rights as a cross-cutting issue in various guiding strategy documents produced by the new government. Human rights and gender equality cut across the priorities set out in the New Deal Compact, endorsed by the international community at the EU-Somalia Conference in Brussels on 16 September 2013, which aim at rebuilding Somalia's institutions and social fabric until 2016.

In order to improve Somalia's human rights situation, the EU-funded *Rule of Law and Security (ROLS)* programme included support for the drafting of human rights sensitive police and justice strategies. As a key donor of the UNDP ROLS programme (EUR 54 million under the 10th EDF), the EU stressed that the principles of civilian oversight, adequate vetting, human rights sensitive training of new recruits, and addressing impunity, were essential cornerstones in all security sector development. In its discussions with the Somali authorities, the EU continuously raised their need to address the security forces' human rights and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) violations, and to follow a due process in investigations of such cases. The EU also supported programmes that provided protection, legal assistance and psycho-social support to the victims of SGBV. In addition, the EU funded actions that promoted women's political participation, education, access to justice, economic empowerment, food security, entrepreneurship, and access to sexual and reproductive health. Gender equality and women's rights were also frequently raised in discussions with both the authorities and civil society representatives.

Other major concerns for the EU were the state of freedom of expression and the safety of journalists and media workers. The EU reacted promptly to individual human rights cases involving journalists by issuing statements, contacting the legal aid units in detention cases, or calling on the authorities to investigate the circumstances. The EU also linked its human rights priorities to the EIDHR and NSA-LA call for proposals, through which several projects were funded aimed at supporting freedom of expression, including provision of security and safety training to journalists.

The rights of children in armed conflict and prevention of child labour were further key concerns for the EU. Through its child protection programmes, the EU supported the protection and social integration of children affected by armed conflicts, by providing psycho-social support together with education and vocational training opportunities. In addition, the EU-funded project in Somaliland supported the needs of children with disabilities or special needs, by providing them with psycho-social assistance and supporting their education.

An EU-funded programme implemented by East and Horn of Africa human rights defenders was launched in Mogadishu in early 2013, through which support was channelled to human rights defenders, including human rights advocates, threatened journalists and, in some cases, victims of persecution or SGBV. Other major human rights issues that the EU frequently raised with the Somali authorities included arbitrary arrests and denial of fair investigation or trial, the need to put a moratorium on the death penalty, forced labour, and abuse of and discrimination against clan and religious minorities. Through the ROLS programme the EU also supported access to justice for the most vulnerable groups.

In 2013, the EU acted as the Secretariat of the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) and as co-chair of the newly established Gender Working Group, which constitute the key mechanisms enabling donors to monitor the human rights situation in Somalia and to maintain constructive dialogues on human rights and gender with the relevant Somali authorities and civil society. On several occasions, the EU and the working groups issued press releases or sent letters to the relevant authorities in response to cases concerning SGBV, the accountability of the armed forces and freedom of expression. The HRWG also carried out missions in Mogadishu and met the Federal authorities, as well as civil society actors, in October and November.

South Africa

At the Sixth EU-South Africa Summit, which was held in Pretoria in July 2013, both the EU and South African leaders reaffirmed their commitment to continued close and early consultations in the human rights domain in the relevant forums and on a broad range of issues, including discrimination, gender equality, children's rights and private military companies. The Summit welcomed the holding in Pretoria on 27 May 2013 of the first ever EU-South Africa Structured Dialogue Forum on Human Rights, which was co-chaired by the EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis. Though it was formalised only in 2013, the dialogue has been able to build on the regular in-depth consultations held since 2009 and on consultations with civil society organisations engaged in the protection of human rights in Europe and South Africa.

At the first human rights dialogue meeting in May, the EU and South Africa discussed issues of common interest and mutual concern, including cooperation in multilateral forums as well as regional and domestic issues. The focus was on racism in the context of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, LGBTI rights and business and human rights. Several of these topics were identified as topics for further cooperation. Other key topics covered were the ICC, the death penalty and trilateral cooperation. The issue of country-specific resolutions at the UN level was also the subject of a detailed debate. The discussions covered the overall human rights situation in Europe and South Africa, with an emphasis on policing and human rights, violence against women and migration, refugees and asylum, all of which were challenges currently faced by both the EU and South Africa. In addition to co-chairing the human rights dialogue, EUSR Lambrinidis liaised extensively with NGOs and civil society during his visit, and also met relevant ministers and the Chair of the South African Human Rights Commission.

Throughout the year, the EU continued to monitor developments and actively engage South Africa in the field of human rights, with a focus on labour rights, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, immigrants' rights and xenophobia. In this respect it closely followed developments and the debate on the adoption of the Protection of State Information Bill and on the Traditional Authorities Bill in South Africa.

The European Parliament, primarily through its *Delegation for relations with South Africa*, continued to pay particular attention to the work of the Marikana Commission of Inquiry, following the 2012 EP Resolution adopted in the aftermath of the Marikana mine tragedy.

EU development cooperation continued to support human rights, mainly through the preparation of a follow-up support action to the *Access to Justice and Promotion of Constitutional Rights* flagship programme, and through the emphasis laid on socio-economic rights and on civil society in work supported by the EIDHR.

South Sudan

Entering its third year of independence, South Sudan still faces significant challenges in its state and nation-building endeavours. Attempts to promote national reconciliation have been made but have been largely unsuccessful, and were further undermined by the conflict which broke out on December 15th, which led to some ethnically-motivated killings.. The country faces severe challenges in protecting and promoting human rights. There have been a steady number of cases of intimidation, harassment by unidentified elements and arbitrary detention, with the security forces adopting a heavy-handed approach. The National Constitutional Review process has been slow off the mark and freedom of expression and of the press has been restricted on several occasions. In a climate of extreme poverty and underdevelopment, economic and social rights have largely continued to be neglected, particularly as regards the rights to food, health and access to clean and safe water and sanitation, and to education and adequate housing.

The EU maintained regular contact with South Sudanese civil society and organised ad hoc topical roundtable discussions for all interested stakeholders. Support was provided consistently to CSOs' lobbying efforts for a comprehensive Bill of Rights in the National Constitutional Review and added much-needed impetus to the processes.

On two occasions, in May and October 2013, the EU Delegation issued local statements on ending the conflict in Jonglei State. The EU called on all parties to work towards a lasting political solution in Jonglei and called on the government to hold accountable all the individuals who had committed abuses, including members of the security forces, through a transparent judicial process.

In contacts with the authorities, the EU Delegation reiterated the EU's firm opposition to the death penalty under any circumstances, regardless of the crimes committed. Similarly, the EU Delegation, along with interested key stakeholders, made representations to the Speaker of the National Legislative Assembly in November, expressing concern over certain clauses in the NGO Bill, which were deemed too restrictive. In addition, the EU contributed to enhancing prevention, protection and response activities on gender-based violence at grass roots level through community awareness-raising and strengthening of local legal response capacities in seven states.

With key international partners, the EU was engaged in efforts to forge a new partnership with the government through a New Deal Compact, which was based on mutual accountability and underpinned by commitments to more inclusive governance, more efficient and equitable management and distribution of natural resources, and greater transparency. The EU continued to engage in strengthening the capacity of the justice system through the Rule of Law programme. A particular focus was also put on strengthening the institutional and administrative capacity of the staff of the National Legislative Assembly and of Members of Parliament.

In 2013, the EU launched its first call for proposals for both EIDHR and NSA-LA thematic programmes, thus providing an incentive by empowering the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, whilst instilling a more equitable, open and democratic society through supporting the civil society's own initiatives.

Sudan

Serious human rights violations continued in Sudan throughout 2013, perpetrated with impunity by state actors, non-state actors and rebel forces. These included mass displacement of and attacks on civilians in the Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile regions, excessive and lethal force used against those attempting to exercise their right to freedom of expression, torture and ill-treatment by the security forces, restrictions on the media, civil society and religious minorities, as well as widespread violence against women and children. A number of UN peacekeepers were killed.

The EU issued a number of public statements on human rights issues in Sudan during 2013. These addressed, *inter alia*, the closure of civil society organisations, the 10th anniversary of the Darfur conflict, visits by President Bashir to States Parties to the Rome Statute, and the violent crackdown on the September protests. The EU also called for the mainstreaming of human rights in the ongoing constitutional review process and the strengthening of the National Human Rights Commission. Human rights violations were also regularly raised in bilateral contacts with the Sudanese authorities. EU representatives participated in the monitoring of trials against journalists, human rights defenders and female activists in Khartoum, in coordination with EU Member States.

EU relations with Sudan continue to be affected by the outstanding ICC arrest warrant against President Bashir, and by the decision of Sudan not to ratify the revised Cotonou Agreement. Development funding is still provided through re-committed funds and a special allocation based on a 2010 Council Decision to address the needs of the most vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas (a total of EUR 93 million covering projects in the education, health and agriculture sectors in Darfur, East and South Sudan). In addition, human rights-related funding has been

channelled through the EIDHR (EUR 0.8 million in 2013), the *Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development* programme (EUR 2.5 million), the Food Security Thematic Programme (EUR 10 million), the Instrument for Stability and humanitarian assistance. Key areas of project support included promotion of an enabling environment and capacity building for NGOs, civil society and human rights defenders, and promotion of women's and children's rights and of the rights of marginalised groups.

Swaziland

In 2013, the EU used several tools to support and consolidate democracy, and to promote human rights and the rule of law in Swaziland. Under the Article 8 political dialogue, the EU asked the government to respect its commitment to promote democratic principles and legalise political parties. It delivered the same message to the King at the accreditation ceremony for the recently appointed Ambassador.[27]

The EU also used its cooperation programmes to support democracy and human rights in Swaziland. In addition to spending EUR 5.5 million (2007-11) to enable orphan and vulnerable children to attend school, it awarded 3 grants totalling EUR 900 000 under the EIDHR to promote a democratic society, increase women's participation and representation in society, and improve the quality of life of children with disabilities in Swaziland.

[27] In October 2013 the former EU 'regionalised delegation' was upgraded to a fully-fledged EU Delegation, so as to engage more effectively at the political level.

Tanzania

Tanzania has maintained a relatively stable human rights record. Nevertheless, during 2013, tensions between religions and resulting violent incidents increased in Tanzania's traditionally cohesive society. In a local statement the EU condemned all religion-based violence, called on the Tanzanian authorities to protect freedom of religion or belief for everyone, and urged an open interfaith dialogue. The EU and its Member States upgraded the freedom of religion or belief within their prioritised human rights objectives for Tanzania, and the European Parliament also addressed the matter.

Allegations of human rights abuses by state officials and agencies and of police brutality were reported from many parts of the country. Mob and witchcraft-related violence and other forms of extrajudicial killing appear to have claimed the lives of hundreds of Tanzanians in 2013, and in the majority of the cases the perpetrators had not been brought to justice. The EU has continued to call for preservation of the rule of law and its efficient enforcement.

Gender-based violence is widespread. The EU has supported projects combating violence against women and aimed at enhancing women's social and economic rights in the country. Tanzania acknowledges that it faces a challenge on children’s rights, including child labour, which are key priority areas for EU action. While keeping children's rights continuously on the agenda of relevant policy dialogues, the EU has also implemented several projects tackling child labour in Tanzania, cooperating with local and international human rights organisations, local authorities, communities, schools and parents.

The EU issued a local statement in response to the suspension of newspapers, calling for the preservation of freedom of expression and for protection of the right to information. On the occasion of the World Day against the Death Penalty on 10 October, EU Heads of Mission met government, civil society and media representatives and visited the largest prison in the country, to discuss the abolition of the death penalty.

The EU encouraged all parties to the land dispute in the Loliondo area to seek a peaceful solution through a proper consultation process with respect for the rule of law and human rights. The EU called for orderly and equitable treatment for irregular migrants and for the protection of their human and humanitarian rights in all circumstances. At the initiative of the EU, the government invited the International Organisation for Migration to assist with the registration of irregular migrants, with financial support from the EU.

Throughout 2013, the EU and its Member States funded programmes covering a wide spectrum of human rights and rule of law priority areas. These included financial support for civil society organisations providing legal defence and advocacy both on the Tanzanian mainland and in Zanzibar, legal reform support programmes and media capacity development. With regard to vulnerable groups, EU support was directly mainly towards children and women, though also towards pastoralists and indigenous peoples, people living with disabilities, and the LGBTI community. Public awareness-raising was also carried out on several topics, including protection of people living with albinism, responsible policing and social accountability.

Togo

The EU's main country priorities reflected the main human rights challenges and shortcomings, and included: judicial and prison reform aimed at combating impunity and arbitrary detention and improving the treatment of prisoners; the elimination of torture and inhuman treatment; the elimination of electoral violence and promotion of freedom of speech; and the reinforcement of civil society, including protection of human rights defenders and reconciliation.

The EU was heavily involved in the long and difficult mediation process leading to the general elections on 25 July. The results, despite criticism from part of the opposition and some shortcomings, have generally been recognised as a fair reflection of the vote cast. The new government (September 2013) now includes a Minister for Human Rights with official responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (CVJR).

The need to re-launch the judicial and security sector reform in Togo, following the limited results of the first justice modernisation programme, was discussed during the last session of the Togo-EU political dialogue on 26 November 2013. The preparation of a support programme covering this sector under the 11th EDF (2014-2020) was initiated, in parallel with technical support for the preparation of a new justice sector policy.

Togo ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) in July 2010. Through the *Atlas of torture* project, the EU supported the drafting of legislation to establish a National Preventive Mechanism against Torture.

EU projects related to human rights helped finance electoral observation by civil society (EUR 1 million), which entailed observation of the whole electoral process, including the electors' census, in the run-up to the July 2013 general elections. In the justice/prison sector, the "Atlas of the torture" project also enabled the establishment of five legal defence "clubs" in prisons, whilst strengthening of the capacities of human rights organisations. On reconciliation, the European Union continued its financial support, to the tune of EUR 6 million, for activities geared to dissemination and raising awareness of the work accomplished by the CVJR at both the institutional and civil society levels.

Uganda

Freedom of expression and assembly remained causes of concern throughout 2013, with continued constraints placed on demonstrations, including some incidents of violence by security forces, and reported harassment of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and media working in politically sensitive areas. The EU and its Member States continued political dialogue at the highest political level (with the President, ministers, the Parliament and police management representatives) on these issues.

In 2013, the controversial Public Order Management Act was passed by the Ugandan Parliament. The bill underwent considerable improvements in Parliament, but key concerns remain owing to the absence of critical definitions, and the inclusion of some excessively broad definitions. There are concerns about the level of commitment to implement the 2011 UPR recommendations.

On 20 December, the Ugandan Parliament adopted an Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which prohibits all forms of homosexual behaviour – extending to touching another person with homosexual intent – with the penalty of life imprisonment. The Act also imposes criminal liability on persons who allow homosexual acts to take place upon their property, as well as on persons who "promote" homosexuality. The High Representative issued a statement regretting the adoption of the Bill, as it contravened the principle of non-discrimination set out in the ICCPR and the African Charter of Human and People's Rights and called on the Ugandan authorities to maintain a climate of tolerance for all minorities.

There have been a number of well-documented cases of opposition politicians and CSOs being subjected to harassment and arbitrary arrest. In addition, there are reports of media organisations being pressured into refusing to interview opposition politicians. Two media firms were closed down for a number of weeks in circumstances that elicited strong protest from civil society and development partners. The EU maintained a close dialogue with all parties, raising concerns and facilitating the defusing of tensions. Overall, the situation regarding civil and political human rights, land rights, oil governance, accountability, women's and LGBTI rights remains worrying.

The EU supported CSOs working on human rights and governance in 2013 and has planned to continue that support. Throughout 2013, the operating space for CSOs continued to be reduced, particularly for those working in politically sensitive fields and dealing with accountability issues.

The EU Delegation consistently raised the issue of the pending electoral reform bill at all available opportunities. In May 2013, the Delegation launched a local call for proposals on the promotion of human rights in Uganda, with a particular focus on building confidence and enhancing the reliability and transparency of the electoral process.

The EU chairs the local Human Rights Defenders' Group and is an active member of the development partners' working group on democracy and human rights. The second EU human rights defender prize was awarded, in May 2013, to Mr Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala, a programme coordinator and founding member of the Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda).

Zambia

Human rights are an important area in the EU's dialogue with Zambia. Since insufficient capacity is one of the main challenges to Zambia's fulfilment of human rights, poverty reduction is central to this work. The EU human rights objectives include the death penalty, prison conditions, non-discrimination of citizens on the basis of sexual orientation, addressing gender-based violence, and freedom of expression. These priorities have been consistently addressed by EU and EU Member States in the dialogue with government, opposition and civil society representatives.

The EU Delegation visited prisons in Choma, Mumbwa and Lusaka and supported, through the *Access to Justice* programme, an initiative in ten provinces, carrying out police and prison cell inspections. Support was provided to the Child Justice Forum to carry out inspections in prisons. The EU has engaged in a close dialogue with human rights defenders. The EU Delegation held meetings to discuss freedom of association and the NGO act. The EU issued a joint press release on the occasion of the World Day against the Death Penalty.

In 2013, the EU the assistance projects related to human rights included protecting migrant children from trafficking and exploitation, food security and nutrition support, strengthening access to justice, supporting media for advocacy and empowerment, and promoting reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention. The total amount allocated to these projects, which not only covered 2013 but the whole project timeframes, was approximately EUR 10 000 000. In 2013, the EU also continued to support projects aimed at the consolidation of democratic processes and institutions, namely, the *Support to the Electoral Cycle* programme and the *Access to Justice* programme. The EU and EU Member States also supported a number of actors and initiatives promoting human rights, good governance and civil society. Three EIDHR grants were assigned to supporting the rights of vulnerable groups in society.

Zimbabwe

The EU welcomed the generally peaceful manner in which the 2013 Presidential and legislative elections were conducted. However, it also expressed serious concerns over the significant weakness identified in the electoral process and lack of transparency identified by the SADC, AU and domestic observation missions, which called into doubt the credibility of the elections.

2013 saw considerable progress with regard to the EU's restrictive measures against Zimbabwe,. In February, the EU suspended the travel ban on six more members of the Government of Zimbabwe and de-listed 21 persons and one entity. In March, following the holding of a peaceful and credible referendum on the constitution, the EU suspended the majority of the remaining EU restrictive measures (against 81 individuals and 8 entities) and in September, the EU de-listed the Zimbabwe Mining Development Company. These changes and the continuation of the EU Targeted Measures regime reflect the progress that has been made but also the challenges that remain.

The EU has remained firmly at the forefront of the human rights agenda in Zimbabwe, through regular discussion and updates within EU forums and support for regional observation missions from the AU and the SADC. Throughout 2013, the EU Delegation strengthened its engagement and dialogue with the Human Rights Commission. Particular attention was paid to electionpreparedness, human rights defenders and the Commission's mandate to enforce the promotion and protection of human rights. The full EIDHR 2013 allocation of EUR 1.2 million was channelled into activities focusing on election observation, the Human Rights Commission and protection of migrants and IDPs' rights through improving the migration management capacity of local and central government authorities.

VI The Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula

Bahrain

The EU continued to closely monitor developments in Bahrain and where appropriated, via different channels, expressed concern regarding the internal human rights situation. In addition to a series of public statements, the HR/VP had direct contacts with her Bahraini counterparts and political actors. Several EU visits at different levels were made to Bahrain, with the European Parliament visiting in April, HR/VP Catherine Ashton and the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, in June and the Managing Director for the Middle East and Southern Neighbourhood Hugues Mingarelli visiting in March and December.

During his visit in June, the EUSR engaged extensively with ministers, political party leaders, MPs, NGOs and national human rights bodies. They discussed EU support to implement the Universal Periodic Review and Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry recommendations and identified potential follow-up actions. The EUSR also visited Jaw Prison, where he spoke with two prisoners allegedly condemned in the context of their political activities. The EUSR publicly called for the release of political prisoners, in line with the HR/VP's similar call in the margins of the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Ministerial meeting in Manama a few days later.

The EU has called upon all sides to engage constructively in a process of genuine national reconciliation and dialogue, without preconditions and in a peaceful manner. The EU welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the government of Bahrain — including the establishment of the National Consensus Dialogue and implementation of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry report — which yelded some positive results, such as the official launch of the Police Ombudsman for the Ministry of Interior and a Commission of the Rights of Prisoners and Detainees. However, the necessary conditions for real and lasting reconciliation have not yet been achieved. The EU called for renewed measures in 2013 to respond to the remaining challenges in the country and provided concrete support for this process through an expertise-sharing project working with the National Institution for Human Rights, the Police Ombudsman's Office, the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney-General's Office. EU support will continue in 2014 through similar assistance to both chambers of the Parliament and to lawyers. EU Member State diplomats have also attended court hearings involving political and human rights activists.

Iran

After a long period of continued deterioration of the human rights situation in Iran, the election of a new president and a new government in mid-2013 created new hope that improvement was on the way. In September, shortly before the UN General Assembly meeting in New York, a significant number of political prisoners were released, including Nasrin Soutoude, a well-known lawyer and human rights activist and recipient of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2012. Since then, no major releases have taken place.

By December, there had not been any noticeable progress in the human rights situation in Iran, and the international community is still waiting for the new government to implement the human rights commitments made during the election campaign. As in 2012, a major concern was the very high number of executions in Iran. Just over 400 executions had been announced by the end of 2013, which is over 100 executions more than in 2012, when 292 people were executed. The actual number of executions in 2012 and 2013 is feared to be higher, as not all are announced. Most of the executions in 2013 were declared to be for crimes related to drugs. Several targeted minority groups.

The EU reacted with public statements, calling on the government to respect the international legal obligations on human rights that it has signed up to, to adhere to international minimum standards for the use of the death penalty, to halt all pending executions and to establish a moratorium on the death penalty.

In view of the gravity of the human rights situation in Iran, the EU added nine individuals and one organisation to its list of people and organisations responsible for serious human rights violations in Iran. The 87 Iranians currently on this list are subject to asset-freezing and a travel ban to and within the EU, and the listed organisation is subject to asset-freezing. There is also an embargo on equipment for telecommunications monitoring and interception, and on other equipment which might be used for internal repression.

On 19 November, Canada presented a resolution on the human rights situation in Iran in the UN's Third Committee. It was adopted with a vote of 83 for, 36 against and 62 abstentions (in 2012, voting was 88-31-68 in the Third Committee, and 86-32-65 in the General Assembly). The recent resolution is more concise and more focused on the 'call for action' to improve the situation, and it follows up on the commitments made by the new Iranian president. EU Member States co-sponsored the resolution, as in previous years, and their proposals to update and streamline it were taken on board. EU outreach work on the text in national capitals and New York continued to play an important role in explaining the rationale behind, and revisions of, the resolution.

Throughout 2013, the EU continued to engage with Iranian civil society within Iran and in exile, to support the protection and promotion of human rights in Iran.

Iraq

Although democratic institutions are in place, the human rights situation has remained a concern. The continuing terrorist attacks have had a negative impact on human rights, with 2013 seeing a significant upsurge in killings (up to 1 000 per month). On 10 October, the European Parliament issued a resolution condemning acts of terrorism and sectarian violence in Iraq, and calling on the

government and all political leaders to take the necessary measures to provide security and protection for all people in Iraq and, in particular, members of vulnerable minorities. It also called on the government to ensure that security forces comply with the rule of law and international standards.

The framework for cooperation between the EU and Iraq is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, of which respect for democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law are among the essential elements. It provides for formal dialogue on human rights in a dedicated sub-committee, which met for the first time in Baghdad in November.

Regarding Iraq's institutional framework for the protection of human rights, the EU supports the Independent High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) and the Committee for Human Rights in the Council of Representatives through a capacity development programme of € 7.5 million. This project also supports the implementation of Iraq's National Action Plan for Human Rights. The plan has incorporated many of the recommendations that Iraq accepted during the 2010 Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council, about two thirds of which have been fully or partially implemented. Iraq is now preparing for its next UPR appearance in 2014.

The EU provided grants totalling € 6.6 million to Iraqi and international NGOs, to support awareness-raising activities, the protection of human rights defenders, the advancement of rights for vulnerable groups, freedom of expression and the promotion of media independence. It also provided grants totalling of € 3.5 million to Iraqi NGOs for projects to encourage cooperation between civil society and government.

The EU has continued to encourage Iraq to introduce a moratorium on the death penalty, to apply minimum standards for its use and to reduce the number of offences subject to it. The EU made contact with the Iraqi authorities, including through statements by the HR/VP and by the EU Delegation in Baghdad. Regrettably, 2013 saw an increase in the use of the death penalty in Iraq, with at least 177 executions, as compared with 129 in 2012. The Iraqi Kurdistan Region continued to apply an unofficial moratorium on the use of the death penalty. An opinion piece by EU Heads of Mission in Baghdad, calling for an end to executions in Iraq, was published in the *Zaman* newspaper on 22 April.

The EU sought assurances that all reports of attacks on minorities would be investigated and that steps would be taken to enhance the security of minority communities. The EU raised minority issues with the authorities and met regularly with representatives of civil society and minority groups.

The EU encouraged reform of the penal code to remove the notion of 'honour' as a mitigating factor in killings and promoted Iraq's accession to the Optional Protocol *to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*. It also encouraged the Iraqi authorities not to issue homophobic statements and to follow up and investigate attacks on members of the LGBT community.

The EU appealed to the authorities not to operate unofficial or secret detention facilities and to fully investigate all reports of mistreatment in detention, and encouraged Iraqi accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. The EU Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (EUJUST LEX) continued to help improve Iraq's criminal justice system by providing training and mentoring to 1 590 officials in the police, judiciary and prison services. EUJUST LEX's mandate ended on 31 December and the EU initiated a new € 8.5 million programme that will build on the mission's work from 2014.

The EU welcomed the holding of provincial elections and supported the efforts of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to fulfil its responsibilities. An EU Election Expert Mission was deployed for the April municipal elections. The EU Delegation coordinated poll-monitoring activities by diplomatic missions in Baghdad on election day.

Kuwait

The main issues that the EU raised with the Kuwaiti authorities include the situation of the Bidoons (stateless residents), the death penalty, freedom of expression and the situation of foreign labourers and domestic workers.

In April, the HR/VP issued a statement in which she expressed deep regret at the resumption of executions in Kuwait after a six-year interruption and urged Kuwaiti authorities to reinstate a *de facto* moratorium.

The EU supported and was present at the first conference on the Bidoons in Kuwait in April. It also actively encouraged Kuwait to continue to improve the situation of domestic workers. The EU Delegation in Riyadh, which is accredited to Kuwait, continued to engage with the Social Work Society of Kuwait, an NGO that has been instrumental in improving conditions for domestic workers, including through legislative reform. (The Social Work Society of Kuwait received the EU Delegation Chaillot Prize in 2012)

Oman

The EU has been concerned about several court cases raised against people who protested or expressed views on social media, but it has also noted that pardons were granted in most of these cases. Another issue of concern for the EU is discrimination against expatriate workers, in the application of the labour laws and in practice, and their general status and situation. The EU liaised with the Omani authorities on the situation of foreign workers and on human trafficking.

Qatar

The EU and its Member States focused particularly on freedom of expression and the development of independent media; efforts to strengthen civil society via more liberal legislation on freedom of association and civil society initiatives; support for human rights defenders; women's rights; and improving the working and living conditions of migrant workers.

Global attention focused on the conditions of migrant workers in Qatar, following reports of unpaid wages, shortcomings in the areas of health and safety, inadequate housing, and unscrupulous labour agents in the workers' countries of origin.

The EU had meetings with the Qatari authorities on this issue at different levels of government and with the Chairman of Qatar's National Human Rights Committee, offering to share its expertise and provide assistance, especially in the fields of labour law and health and safety.

The European Parliament passed a resolution on the situation of migrant workers in Qatar in November, in which it called for the application of labour standards to all workers, the adoption of legislation for domestic workers, the abolition of the 'sponsorship' system, the establishment of more shelters for migrants and the ratification of relevant international instruments. The EU remains actively involved in this matter.

Saudi Arabia

The EU consistently engaged with the Saudi authorities in an ongoing dialogue on human rights concerns in the Kingdom, while acknowledging and encouraging ongoing reform measures. The areas of concern include the male guardianship system and women's rights; the death penalty; reform of the judiciary; freedom of expression; religious tolerance; and discrimination and foreign labourers' rights.

The EU Delegation in Riyadh, in cooperation with EU Member State embassies, awarded the 2013 Chaillot Prize for the promotion of human rights in the Gulf Cooperation Council region to the King Khalid Foundation, an organisation which had run a powerful public campaign against domestic violence and which had been instrumental in the government's adoption of an important abuse prevention law.

The EU also strengthened contacts with civil society organisations and human rights defenders and raised cases of concern with the relevant authorities. For the first time, the EU Delegation requested and obtained permission for diplomats to attend public trials and, together with EU Member State embassies, continued to encourage Saudi authorities to rapidly adopt a long-awaited and much-needed NGO law.

The EU urged the authorities to commute the death penalty sentence of Ms Rizana Nafeeq, a Sri Lankan citizen who was most probably a minor at the time of the crime. It reacted publicly to her execution in January and issued statements on other executions where it believed UN minimum standards had not been respected.

EU Member States and the EU Delegation in Geneva actively engaged in the UN Universal Periodic Review session on Saudi Arabia.

Two significant human rights-related visits by Members of the European Parliament took place in November, during which Saudi officials and civil society representatives engaged in an open and comprehensive dialogue on the human rights situation.

United Arab Emirates

The EU continued to closely monitor the human rights situation in the United Arab Emirates, noting the positive recent steps taken in the fields of migrant labour rights, women's rights and gender equality, and in the fight against human trafficking.

A milestone was reached in EU-UAE relations when a bilateral technical working group on human rights was established. The group's first meeting took place in Brussels on 14 November, addressing the full range of EU concerns, including the death penalty, migrant labour rights, the rule of law and governance. The EU also continued to encourage the UAE authorities to ensure follow-up to the 2012 UN UPR review.

Yemen

The main Human Rights issues of concern in Yemen included juvenile death penalty and the situation of women with focus on child marriage (Yemen ranks last in the global Gender Gap Index).

The EU has actively addressed the issue of the death penalty, particularly with regard to juveniles, through regular meetings with the Yemeni authorities. The EU has worked with UNICEF and the Ministry of Justice to reinforce institutional capacities towards a child-friendly juvenile justice system and is also in other manners actively engaging with the authorities on the issue.

Joint efforts by the EU and UNICEF have brought individual cases of juveniles convicted to death penalty to the attention of the Yemeni authorities. As a result, in several cases executions were postponed or cancelled.

Through our cooperation programme the development of a formal civil registry in Yemen has also been supported. Facilitating proof of age is an essential element in juvenile justice. A solid civil registry is also essential in many other fields of proper administration and institution building, including elections.

Continuous dialogue with the Yemeni authorities has been pursued on all issues related to Human Rights, in particular women's and children's rights, at different levels, both in-country through the EU Delegation and during official meetings and dialogues including the Joint Cooperation Committee which met in May 2013, after its last meeting in 2010. Regular demarches are made with the Yemeni authorities and parliamentarians on human rights issues. The HR/VP has issued statements on child marriage and execution of juveniles as well as general statements to support the National Dialogue and the reform process.

The EU's support in the area of civil security sector reform bears an essential human rights element pushing for policing methods to follow international agreed practices and rules and be designed to "serve the population".

The National Dialogue, initiated through the GCC transition agreement and largely supported by the international community, addresses issues that are the basis of a new Yemen i.a. a new Constitution and elections. In the EU's support to this process human rights issues are prominently present.

The delegation launched a local call for proposal under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The call focused on strengthening the rule of law in relation to protection of vulnerable groups, and on the promotion of equal citizenship.

VII Asia

Afghanistan

Due to delays in the Afghan political process, hardly any progress was achieved in the negotiations for a Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development, in which human rights provisions are to feature prominently. However, a focus on the necessary improvement and implementation of human rights policy was maintained in the EU's political dialogue with the Afghan authorities. Key areas of concern continue to be women's and children's rights, civil society and human rights advocates, torture and abuse, freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief, the death penalty and access to justice.

The EU continued to support the strengthening of international, regional and national frameworks for the protection and promotion of human rights in Afghanistan. It plays a leading role in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF), *inter alia* working for the implementation of reforms in areas such as governance, the rule of law and human rights, including women's rights. It helped to ensure that the Senior Officials Meeting on 3 July had a strong focus on human rights and gender issues, and emphasised the need to maintain progress in the light of the human rights situation in Afghanistan.

It continued to stress the need for judicial reform to better implement the statutory measures on the rights of women, including the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW), and to improve women's access to justice (one of the TMAF deliverables). It called repeatedly on the government to appoint, in accordance with the constitution, a new Chief Justice and Supreme Court members to replace those whose mandate has expired.

In its dialogue with the Afghan government, the EU emphasised the need to demonstrate political commitment to and support for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and stressed the importance of a constructive approach from the government to enable the AIHRC to retain, or at least regain, its 'A' Status.

A deputy-minister-level National Steering Committee was formed, as was a technical working group (with EU participation), to promote implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security.

The EU issued several public statements in response to major human rights violations, including an expression of deep concern following an UNAMA[28] report on conflict-related detention (20 January). It frequently expressed concern at the high number of civilian casualties of terrorist attacks, armed conflict and the fragile security situation. On 12 June, the High Representative/Vice-President issued a statement deploring the callous targeting of civilians in the attack on the Supreme

Court in Kabul. The EU also issued a press statement underlining its strong position of principle against the death penalty in Afghanistan. Other statements, in particular on women's rights, were issued on the occasion of International Women's Day (8 March), high-level development consultations (23 October) and International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (25 November). On several occasions, the EU emphasised the importance of women's participation in the elections.

The EU continued to support public events that promote human and women's rights. On 6 March, together with France, Norway and Switzerland, it supported the first Women's Film Festival in Afghanistan. On 10 March, it organised a painting exhibition to celebrate International Women's Day. In addition, it continued to chair the EU+ working group on human rights at political counsellor level. In Human Rights Week in December, the EU Special Representative/Head of Delegation gave a closing speech and a press statement was issued.

[28] United Nations Assistance Mission in Afhanistan.

The EU continued to be a key donor in Afghanistan, championing human rights through its various instruments and thematic programmes. In addition to support under the Development Cooperation Instrument (11 ongoing projects under the 'non-state actors and local authorities' and three new projects under the 'social protection of women support' programmes), civil society initiatives and seven projects were implemented through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the Instrument for Stability. This involved support for NGO activities, including human rights and women's rights awareness and advocacy, legal support for human rights defenders and journalists, support for rights of persons belonging to minorities and refugees, counselling and mediation for women and girls affected by family violence, capacity-building and awareness-raising activities for justice personnel and community stakeholders, monitoring women's rights in transition, victims' *shuras*, and enabling CSOs and local communities at provincial level to follow up on the EVAW Law and UNSCR 1325.

EUPOL Afghanistan (the EU police mission) supported the Ministry of Interior in relation to human, women's and children's rights. It conducted a range of training events on violence against women and sexual violence (in collaboration with the International Development Law Organisation) for police and prosecutors, and developed a female police leadership training course. EUPOL is an advisor to the Criminal Law Reform Working Group (CLRWG) currently drafting the Afghan Penal Code. Female policing became a concern, as it emerged that sexual harassment and assault of female police officers was a regular occurrence. With advice from EUPOL and UNAMA, the Ministry of the Interior is drafting a strategy on female policing (to be finalised in 2014) to improve the situation.

The government's progress in the crucial justice sector reform is still slow, but National Policy Priority 5 (Justice for All), under the 'governance cluster', was finally passed in June. This allowed the EU to release € 20 million to the World Bank, and implementation of the Justice Services Delivery Project (JSDP) began in the summer.

ASEAN

Following the adoption by the ASEAN Heads of States and Governments of an ASEAN Human Rights Declaration in 2012, the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), the main ASEAN human rights' body, was stepped up. Based on the Bandar Seri Begawan 2013-2017 Plan of Action to Strengthen the ASEAN-EU Enhanced Partnership, the EU-ASEAN dialogue and cooperation on human rights improved substantially.

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, was invited for official talks with the ASEAN Committee of Permanent Representatives and ASEAN's main human rights body, the Inter-Governmental Human Rights Commission (AICHR), at AICHR's annual meeting in Jakarta in May. During the visit, EUSR Lambrinidis emphasised the importance of working together to strengthen the universal upholding of human rights, and agreed with the members of AICHR on the need to engage more with civil society in the region. An extensive EU-ASEAN Human Rights Work Programme for the coming years is currently being negoyiated under the Regional UE-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI).

Members of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) visited Brussels in February, in order to exchange experiences in promoting and protecting women's and children's rights in Europe and in South East Asia, and to explore cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Bangladesh

The EU continued to work towards the sustainable economic and social development of Bangladesh in line with the Cooperation Agreement, in which respect for human rights and democratic principles feature as an essential element.

In its dialogue with the Bangladeshi authorities, the EU raised issues regarding *inter alia* the death penalty, freedom of expression, the role of independent oversight bodies, communal harmony and the rights of refugees and persons belonging to minorities, the implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, and women's and children's rights. It participated in preparations for the universal periodic review (UPR) for Bangladesh and discussed its human rights priorities with the authorities ahead of the review in Geneva in April. In line with its commitment to sustaining an environment in which human rights defenders can work without harm or hindrance, the EU held several meetings with Bangladeshi human rights defenders and conveyed to the authorities its concern at the detention and prosecution of Mr Adilur Rahman Khan, secretary of a Bangladeshi human rights watchdog organisation.

The political situation in Bangladesh deteriorated in the run-up to the January 2014 general elections, resulting in increased violence on the streets. The EU met key political leaders on several occasions and repeatedly stressed the need for dialogue and the peaceful resolution of political disputes. On the basis of its strong commitment to democracy in Bangladesh, it provided capacity-building support to the Bangladesh Election Commission and declared its willingness to deploy an election observation mission provided political and security conditions are met. An election exploratory mission visited Bangladesh in September and held meetings with the relevant authorities and civil society representatives. The planned Election Observation Mission was cancelled only a few weeks before the election as the main political forces in Bangladesh had been unable to create the necessary conditions for transparent, inclusive and credible elections.

In the aftermath of a tragic fire at a garment factory in Ashulia (November 2012) and the collapse of a garment building in Savar (April 2013), the EU placed particular emphasis on the rights of Bangladeshi workers in the ready-made garment (RMG) industry. It reacted rapidly to help those affected by the incidents, providing medical and non-medical assistance through its Better Work and Standards (BEST) Programme and arranging special training for the victims under its Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform Programme. It also led and facilitated initiatives sustainably to improve labour conditions for Bangladeshi workers. On 8 July in Geneva, the EU, the ILO and the government of Bangladesh signed a Sustainability Compact recording agreement in three broad areas: respect for labour rights (in particular, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining), the structural integrity of buildings and occupational safety and health, and responsible business conduct by all stakeholders in the RMG sector, which was further joined by the US. The EU further followed closely the implementation of the sustainability compact, in coordination with the ILO and the Government of Bangladesh..

A number of new EIDHR projects were launched publicly, supporting human rights defenders and promoting EU policy objectives, such as the fight against torture and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. Advocacy by the EU and its implementing partners led to major policy achievements in the area of democracy and human rights, such as the revision of the Village Court Act aimed at increasing the efficiency of the justice system in rural areas, and the adoption of the 2013 Children Act, which raised the age of majority to 18 years in line with international conventions.

Bhutan

Bhutan successfully conducted its second parliamentary elections in May-July, which led to an uncontested change of government. The EU deployed an expert electoral mission and the HRVP's spokesman issued a statement on 16 July welcoming the people's participation in the democratic process. The electoral mission made recommendations for improving and simplifying the electoral regulatory framework.

The EU continued to raise human rights issues with the new government, focusing in particular on the refugees in Eastern Nepal. Civil and political rights, anti-discrimination and women's rights were also raised, in particular through local dialogue, the 5th EU-Bhutan Biennial Consultation (Brussels, 29 November) and a visit by the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with South Asia (October).

The EU continued to support the democratisation process in Bhutan, mainly by contributing to the annual capital grants system to strengthen fiscal decentralisation to the district and sub-district levels under the € 2.8 million Support to Local Governance Programme which ended in April. Discussions took place with the new government and donors on maintaining, and stepping up, support for the decentralisation process, and on future EU support for civil society. The EU also continued to support a project targeting four selected communities and aimed at leveraging and preserving minority culture and traditions in three districts of Bhutan.

Brunei

Negotiations for an EU-Brunei Partnership and Cooperation Agreement continued during 2013.

On 22 October, Brunei adopted a new Sharia Penal Code, to be applied alongside the existing legal system. It was announced that the new Code would be applied progressively in three phases, with the first phase scheduled for April 2014 and with the final phase entering into force 24 months after publication. The Code includes penalties such as stoning to death for adultery and amputation of hands for stealing. The EU was active in gathering information on how it will be applied, as the guidelines are still under preparation.

EU Member States intend to use the universal periodic review process in the UN Human Rights Council to explore the issue further. Brunei's next UPR is scheduled for May 2014.

Myanmar/Burma

2013 was a landmark year in EU-Myanmar/Burma relations, with the start of a new partnership. In recognition of the significant progress in democratic transition, economic and social reforms and national reconciliation, the EU lifted restrictive measures, with the exception of the arms embargo, in April.

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, visited Myanmar/Burma in May, shortly after the EU sanctions were lifted. The visit aimed to reinforce the positive messages from the lifting of the sanctions, while underscoring continuing EU human rights concerns, including the need urgently to resolve inter-communal violence and discrimination, and exploring ways of addressing these through mutual cooperation. The EUSR also initiated discussions on a potential future EU-Myanmar/Burma human rights dialogue, called for the swift opening of an OHCHR[29] office in Myanmar/Burma, with an appropriate mandate, and offered EU expertise in ratifying key international human rights instruments.

[29] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

On 22 July, the EU adopted a Comprehensive Framework for its policy on and support to Myanmar/Burma, which sets out its goals and priorities until 2015 and defines key areas of involvement, including peace and democracy.

In September, the EU opened a fully-fledged Delegation in Yangon, a sign of the expansion and importance of bilateral relations. President Thein Sein paid a historic visit to the EU in March. A joint statement with President Van Rompuy and President Barroso underscored *inter alia* partnership in the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. In October, the EU institutions welcomed Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who received in person the 1990 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

The launch of the EU-Myanmar Task Force on 13-15 November was the most visible expression of the strong relations developing between the EU and Myanmar/Burma. Co-chaired by HR/VP Ashton, the Task Force included Commission Vice-President Tajani, Commissioners Piebalgs and Ciolos, EUSR Lambrinidis, a European Parliament delegation led by Vice-President Isabelle Durant and representatives of some 100 European businesses. In the framework of the launch, which attracted around 600 participants, a Democratic Civil Society Forum, a Development Forum and a Business Forum also met in Yangon, alongside an inter-parliamentary session, an economic session and a political session in Nay Pyi Taw. The Democratic Civil Society Forum, with the prominent participation of the HR/VP and Aung San Suu Kyi, gathered over 60 participants from the whole spectrum of civil society groups in the country. It gave the EU the opportunity to highlight the importance it places on engaging with civil society and to discuss with a broad spectrum of civil society groups the key challenges facing Myanmar/Burma, including democratic transition, human rights and peace. Civil society representatives were also involved in discussions in the development and business forums and participated actively in the TF's political session. At the close of events, the HR/VP and her Burmese counterpart announced an agreement to establish an EU-Myanmar/Burma human rights dialogue, with a first round to take place in 2014. Another important outcome was the signing of a parliamentary cooperation agreement between the European Parliament and the Parliament of Myanmar/Burma.

The achievement of lasting peace in Myanmar/Burma has been recognised by the EU as a precondition for consolidating democracy, promoting development and protecting human rights. In January, the High Representative expressed deep concern over fighting in Kachin State and urged all sides to end the hostilities. Inter-communal violence erupted again in March, this time spreading to Meiktila (Mandalay region) and with further incidents in Rakhine State. The EU raised its grave concern over the situation and called on the government to conduct independent investigations, and to take a more active role in preventing intercommunal violence and addressing the underlying causes of tension. The EU has expressed special concern about the situation of the Rohingya. Furthermore, the EU strongly encouraged development initiatives and the promotion of religious and ethnic tolerance. On 13 June, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation of Rohingya.

At the United Nations General Assembly's Third Committee, the EU tabled a resolution on the human rights situation in Myanmar/Burma, which was adopted by consensus for the second consecutive time. The government cooperated closely with the EU on the draft resolution. While the resolution welcomes the positive developments and the government's commitment to ongoing democratic transition and reforms, it expresses the international community's concern at recurring human rights violations, in particular in Rakhine and Kachin States and urges constitutional reform to enable credible, inclusive and transparent elections in 2015. This was echoed in statement from the High Representative on 21 November.

At the Human Rights Council's March session, the EU tabled a resolution on Myanmar/Burma to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.

In February, the EU Office, organised a successful seminar on the 'Rule of Law in Myanmar/Burma: Perspectives and Prospects' in cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General of Myanmar/Burma. The government and Aung San Suu Kyi (in her capacity as chair of the parliamentary rule of law committee) asked the EU to provide technical assistance for the reform of the Myanmar/Burma Police Force in the areas of community policing and crowd management, with a particular focus on the respect for human rights and best international practices in policing. In November, the EU launched a project aiming to promote police accountability by engaging civil society and parliament and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people.

The EU Delegation hosted several meetings with a cross-party selection of members of parliament to discuss fundamental freedoms, electoral systems and other ingredients of democracy. The EU has continued to advocate for the immediate release of remaining political prisoners. President Thein Sein's announcement in London in July that all remaining prisoners will be released by the end of the year was followed up with the release of 70 prisoners of conscience in July, 56 in October, 69 more in November and 41 in December. However, a number of individuals whose status is disputed remain in prison.

In 2013, the EU delegation selected projects worth € 2 million with the following priority areas: non-discrimination, participation of CSOs in the democratic reform process and preparing for the 2015 elections. Moreover, targeted support was provided to the Union Election Commission of Myanmar/Burma on electoral assistance and to the eradication of Forced Labour in Myanmar/Burma through ILO.

The EU is the largest grant donor of peace projects and an active member of the Peace Donor Support Group (PDSG) in Yangon. This provides support for the Myanmar/Burma Peace Centre and also for non-state actors in conflict-affected areas, aiming to protect human rights, improve livelihoods and foster reconciliation.

Cambodia

The EU's monitoring of the human rights situation in Cambodia paid particular attention to the follow-up to the July legislative elections. The EU took part in the 'diplomatic watch' on Election Day and issued statements following the elections. The latter were marred by allegations of irregularities and the formation of the National Assembly was boycotted by the opposition. Meetings with local authorities and associations were organised in the aftermath of the elections in an effort to build a dialogue and restore trust between the parties. The EU continued to encourage both parties to establish a productive dialogue and work together in the interests of all Cambodians.

The EU encouraged the Cambodian government to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and to establish a national Human Right's institution according to the Paris Principles. The EU supported the promotion of fundamental freedoms such as the freedom of expression and right of assembly. It paid special attention to freedom of expression in the context of the electoral campaign that was considered to be free. Continuing dialogue with the government focused in particular on equal access to the media for all political parties. A local EU statement was issued in June, underlining the importance of the National Election Committee in implementing the recommendations from the 2008 EU Election Observation Mission, including the need to provide equitable access to the media. Following the election, The HR/VP expressed regret that 'the authorities did not take all necessary actions to address some key shortcomings such as […] ensuring equitable access to the media'. The EU Delegation organised an event for International Human Rights Day on 10 December which focused partly on freedom of expression.

The EU continued to encourage judicial reform, notably access to justice and improving the rule of law. Before the election, it supported the submission to the National Assembly of three bills geared to promoting the independence, impartiality, transparency and efficiency of the Cambodian judiciary system: these relate to the statute of judges and attorneys, the organisation and functioning of courts, and the Supreme Council of magistracy. Following the elections, the government gave a commitment that the bills would be discussed in the first sessions of the newly formed National Assembly.

The EU continued to provide financial support to the international and national components of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia. The HR/VP's spokesperson issued a statement in March on the decision of the Appeal Court to allow the release of Mr Mam Sonando, Head of the Association of Democrats of Cambodia and Director of Beehive Radio. The EU closely monitored the trials of human rights defenders and attended the trial of Ms Yorm Bopha, a land rights activist known for her opposition to development around Boeung Kak Lake in Phnom Penh.

Land rights remained central to the dialogue between the EU and the Royal Government of Cambodia. The government undertook to address land issues through a moratorium on economic land concessions and speeding up the distribution of land titles. The EU repeatedly encouraged the government to take the necessary action to resolve problems linked to land grabbing and economic land concessions, highlighting the needs of an effective dispute settlement mechanism. The EU Delegation intensified its contributions to meetings of the development partners on land issues. It used the opportunities of high-level talks to express concern about the lack of transparency and accountability of the authorities on land issues, which made it difficult to have a clear opinion about the implementation and impact of the new land policy. The EU supported civil society efforts to promote political and financial decentralisation at a sub-national level in order to strengthen good governance locally.

The EU Delegation paid close attention to progress on projects run by its civil society partners — those of associations and NGOs in particular. Meetings and workshops with the main groups were held regularly during the year. A call for proposals led to grants of € 1.9 million being granted to NGOs working in priority areas of human rights. Regular contacts were maintained throughout the year with associations, NGOs, the government and embassies.

On gender equality, the EU worked side by side with Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC), providing training for local authorities, NGOs, civil society and youth groups. It supported the 2009-13 Gender Strategic Plan (*Neary Rattanak III*) and its five key points (economic empowerment, education, health, violence against women, and public decision-making & politics) in its dialogue with local authorities and associations. A strong emphasis was placed on the importance of access to justice for all and diversity, especially in politics. The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment was underlined in an article by the EU Ambassador, which was published on the Delegation's website in March.

China

A Comprehensive Strategic Agenda for cooperation was adopted during the EU-China summit on 21 November, marking the tenth anniversary of the bilateral strategic partnership and aiming to open a new chapter in EU-China relations for the years to come. It recognises the need to deepen bilateral and international exchanges on human rights and to strengthen the human rights dialogue with constructive discussions on jointly agreed key priority areas.

China underwent its second universal periodic review in October, without integrating civil society in the process though, and was re-elected to the Human Rights Council with overwhelming support from the UN membership (176 votes). At the same time, the overall human rights situation remains a cause for concern given the crackdown on human rights defenders and tighter controls over some regions. The impact on the human rights situation following the coming into office of the new leadership in March remains to be seen, however its first year has seen a clear tightening.

On 25 June, the 32nd round of the EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights took place in Guiyang (Guizhou), preceded by a field trip which included a visit to an ethnic model village and short visits to a Christian church and an EU project on environmental justice. In spite of simultaneous interpretation, the dialogue allowed for only two agenda items to be discussed over the eight-hour meeting: 'recent developments in the EU and China' and 'cooperation in international fora'. Discussions concentrated mostly on various aspects of the reform of the Criminal Procedure Law and the rights of persons belonging to minorities, especially Tibetans. Seven government agencies were represented on the Chinese side and press release was issued after the dialogue. On 26 June, in a series of more technical meetings with line ministries, the possibility was raised of developing joint cooperation projects on, *inter alia*, NGO registration and the petition system (ombudsman). No date was found for a second round of the dialogue and neither was it possible to agree on a date or an agenda for the EU-China human rights seminar due to take place in the second half of the year.

In September, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, made a first visit to China, which included five days in Qinghai and the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). The main objectives of the visit included opening a new high-level channel of communication between the EU and China dedicated to in-depth discussions on human rights; raising all key EU human rights concerns with a view to achieving concrete progress; identifying new areas and means of engagement and results-oriented cooperation, including the EU-China human rights dialogue; and engaging with and supporting civil society actors on the ground.

The Chinese side granted unprecedented access both in the Tibetan areas and in Beijing. Apart from numerous meetings with party and government officials, including the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Li Baodong, EUSR Lambrinidis chaired the first EU-China Roundtable on Business and Human Rights, addressed the Central Party School and delivered a lecture at the China University of Politics and Law. In addition to the official program, the EUSR met with a broad cross-section of civil society in Beijing and with farmers, monks and university students in TAR and Qinghai. A press release was issued after the trip, highlighting the EU's human rights concerns and potential areas for future cooperation.

The High Representative issued a statement on 14 December 2012 to express the EU's profound sadness over the increasing number of Tibetans committing self-immolation and concerns over the restrictions on expressions of Tibetan identity. A statement on the death penalty was released on 2 March. On 28 August, a statement expressed concern over the arrest of Dr Xu Zhiyong and the recent detention of several other Chinese civil society activists who had publicly advocated the rule of law, transparency and social justice, and campaigned against corruption. On 20 October, another statement expressed deep concern over the disappearance of Ms Cao Shunli, who had been advocating that the government should include independent civil society organisations in the Chinese delegation and had planned to attend China's UPR Interactive Dialogue in Geneva two days later.

The EU Delegation also launched a call for proposals to contribute to the development and consolidation of good governance in China, particularly in the field of access to social and economic benefits and rights for internal migrant workers and the vulnerable segments of this population.

The EU referred to the human rights situation in China in statements issued during three sessions of the Human Rights Council (in March, June and September), calling repeatedly on China to ensure respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities, in particular with regard to their language, culture and religion; fully respect freedoms of expression, association and assembly; ensure equitable economic and social development; address the underlying causes of ethnic tension, in particular in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibetan inhabited areas; release Liu Xiaobo and other prisoners of conscience, e.g. Xu Zhiyong; adopt a moratorium on the death penalty; and pursue its efforts to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

At the 68th UN General Assembly, the EU encouraged China to further reduce the number of death penalty cases and increase transparency, better protect the human rights of all persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, particularly in the Tibetan-inhabited regions and Xinjiang, and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

In Hong Kong, the EU continued to monitor implementation of the 'one country, two systems' principle and the Basic Law, strongly supporting early and substantive progress towards genuine universal suffrage, consistent with all rights enshrined in the ICCPR, especially the equal right to nominate candidates. Public consultations were launched on 4 December at the Legislative Council, giving five months for the general public to give their views on the method for selecting the Chief Executive in 2017 and forming the Legislative Council in 2016. The EU believes the 'one country, two systems' principle continues to work well, as the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Hong Kong continue to be respected, the rule of law maintained and the market economic system and business environment preserved, though some concerns about gradual erosion of press freedom, independence of the judiciary and LGBTI rights remain. The EU Office organised several events, such as the European Day against the Death Penalty and film screenings against the death penalty and gender violence, held a meeting with human rights defenders and promoted the new EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings at the Asia Justice Conference.

Taiwan

The application of the death penalty in Taiwan remains the most serious area of concern. The EU issued a statement deploring the six executions that took place in Taiwan on 19 April, following a previous round of executions on 21 December 2012, noting a breach of the *de facto* moratorium that had been observed since 2005. In its statement, the EU regretted Taiwan's decision to ignore the recommendation to introduce an immediate moratorium. The EU engaged with local authorities and civil society (e.g. supporting the NGO Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty) to encourage them to work effectively towards the resumption of a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its formal abolition through an organised series of experience-exchange, advocacy and outreach activities.

Taiwan is pursuing its policy of voluntary implementation of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

India

The EU primary focus for India was on the core themes of violence against women, the death penalty and the fight against discrimination in its various forms. The 8th local EU-India Human Rights Dialogue was held in Delhi on 27 November, providing an opportunity to interact with Indian authorities on a number of key issues (human rights defenders, minorities, the death penalty, and women's and children's rights).

On 17 January, in the wake of the 16 December 2012 gang-rape, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on Violence against Women in India. In April, the visiting European Parliament India Delegation interacted in Delhi with experts on women's issues (women in conflicts, women's legal rights. Particular efforts were made to reach out to human rights institutions and individual human rights defenders in several states of the Indian Union and to interact with state authorities, beyond the capital, on recent developments and policies with regard to women's and children's rights (health, education, sexual and reproductive health, trafficking and access to justice). These efforts were backed by projects under the EIDHR.

As regards the death penalty, the EU reacted at the highest level to the recent resumption of executions after a gap of eight years. HR/VP Ashton issued a statement on 22 November 2012 following the execution of Ajmal Kasab and another after that of Afzal Mohammad Guru on 9 February. On 23 May, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on 'The execution of Afzal Guru and its implications'. On 9 October, to mark the World Day against the Death Penalty and as part of its abolition campaign, the EU Delegation organised a debating contest among students at the O.P. Jindal Global University. A three-year project aimed at gathering data on death-row convicts and setting jurisprudence on the death penalty is being implemented under EIDHR. *Equality in aid*, an EU-funded International Dalit Solidarity Network report launched in November, looks into the issue of equality and non-discriminatory practices in the allocation of humanitarian aid. On 10 October, the European Parliament passed a resolution addressing caste-based discrimination in its various forms. The fight against discrimination in all its forms is addressed in a number of projects under the EU's development cooperation programme and thematic instruments such as EIDHR and Non-State Actors, targeting key marginalised and vulnerable groups, including those discriminated against on the basis of caste, disability, gender and ethnicity. Initiatives have ranged from providing legal aid and access to justice to capacity building and empowering target groups.

The EU provided financial assistance for legal, security and other support to two human rights defenders in India. A three-year EIDHR project has addressed police torture of members of minority Muslim communities in Uttar Pradesh in India and another project is aimed at broader police reforms in India and other south-Asian countries.

Indonesia

The fourth session of the EU-Indonesia Human Rights Dialogue in November in Brussels provided an opportunity for exchanges on a wide range of issues such as non-discrimination, justice and the rule of law, freedom of the press and expression, business and human rights and the death penalty. The EU paid close attention to freedom of religion and belief and the protection of persons belonging to minority groups. The EU Delegation in Jakarta held regular meetings with minority groups and human rights organisations working on this issue.

At the invitation of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission for Human Rights, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, visited Indonesia in May and had meetings with the Foreign Minister, the National Human Rights Commission and civil society groups.

The EU prepared a democracy profile and a mapping of democracy support activities in Indonesia, which has been identified as a pilot country under the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Democracy Support in the EU's external relations. Together with the National Human Rights Commission and the Association for the Prevention of Torture, the EU Delegation organised a seminar on the establishment of a National Preventive Mechanism mandated by Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT), which Indonesia has pledged to ratify.

In March, Indonesia carried out its first execution in over four years, executing a Malawian national convicted of drug trafficking. This breach of the *de facto* moratorium was the subject of a statement by the HR/VP on 22 March. In the months that followed, four others (a Pakistani and three Indonesians) were executed and the HR/VP issued a second statement on 24 November calling on Indonesia to return to its previous moratorium policy. The EU Delegation raised the resumption of executions in its contacts with the government throughout 2013. In conjunction with the World Day against the Death Penalty on 10 October, it also launched a social media campaign and participated in an event organised by the Italian embassy.

In July, the Human Rights Committee reviewed Indonesia's report on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and made 26 recommendations including revising the policy of establishing adherence to a particular religion as a mandatory requirement for employment in the public service, and the prosecuting cases involving past human rights' violations and providing adequate redress to victims.

The EIDHR supported eleven projects in 2013, covering a broad spectrum of issues, including elections, freedom of religion, accountability and the protection of vulnerable groups.

Japan

In 2013, the EU and Japan continued their regular and close cooperation on human rights issues, both in Asia and globally. They continued to be committed actors on human rights at the UN, actively participating in the work of the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly

(including on resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar/Burma). The latest round of EU-Japan human rights consultations was held in October (discussions focussed on cooperation at the Human Rights Council and on UNGA 68 Third Committee).

The EU pressed hard for action on the critically important issue of the death penalty in Japan, encouraging the government to put in place a moratorium on executions with a view to abolition (to which the EU remains firmly committed) and calling for an in-depth public debate. The year saw four rounds of executions under Prime Minister Abe's administration, with a total of eight executions. In public statements issued by the HR/VP, the EU condemned in particular the large number of executions and a worrying trend following a period of nearly two years without executions. The EU's concerns in this regard were raised both publicly and in political dialogue including at highest level. Resuming executions in Japan after a lengthy hiatus called for a re-evaluation of the EU's current approach to the local death penalty campaign. A number of recommendations on how to improve the political impact of the EU's activities against the death penalty in Japan were presented by the EU Delegation and have since been implemented.

Republic of Korea

Respect for universal principles of human rights is an essential element of the EU-Korea Framework Agreement agreed along with the free-trade agreement and the declaration of a Strategic Partnership in 2010.

The first EU–Republic of Korea Human Rights Consultations took place on 7 October in Brussels, implementing the sides' commitment to enhance consultations in this key area of common interest. The sides agreed on the importance of the universality of human rights and the need to strengthen the international human rights system. Discussions focused on enhancing cooperation in UN human rights fora (i.e. the General Assembly Third Committee and the Human Rights Council) and touched on third countries with a specific focus on the Asia region. The meeting also served as an information exchange about the sides' human rights policies and instruments, and addressed other human rights issues of mutual interest.

In June 2012, in the framework of implementation of the trade and sustainable development chapter of the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement, the EU side, including social partners and other civil society representatives, discussed with their Korean counterparts the prospects for future ratification by the Republic of Korea of the ILO fundamental Conventions (Nos 29 and 105 on forced labour and Nos 87 and 98 on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining). The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss the situation of trade unions in the Republic of Korea and the EU.

The EU Delegation in Seoul consulted with government departments and a wide range of civil society groups on follow-up measures to recommendations from the second universal periodic review of the Republic of Korea. The consultations examined a number of issues, including the need to transform the 16-year-old moratorium on executions into legal abolition of capital punishment, end the ongoing imprisonment of over 600 conscientious objectors to military service and improve gender equality, and measures to ensure the rights of unmarried mothers and children. In January, together with the German, French, Italian and UK embassies, the EU Delegation organised a seminar for Korean law enforcement officers and lawyers intended to show that the death penalty has not been proven to be an effective deterrent against violent crime. To mark the World Day against the Death Penalty, the Delegation and the British and Italian embassies organised a seminar for Korean civil society organisations to look at other countries' success in persuading the public and politicians to support legal abolition of the death penalty. The Delegation and the Italian embassy also joined senior politicians and civil society activists during the 30 November Cities for Life anti-death-penalty event organised by the Community of Sant Egido.

Close consultation was maintained with representatives of religious groups with regard to court cases in which imprisoned conscientious objectors are insisting that the government follow the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee to provide a civilian alternative to military service.

On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, the EU Delegation participated in a seminar organised by the Ministry of Justice on the issue of media and human rights. Experts from Europe and elsewhere discussed with South Korean counterparts the juxtaposition of ensuring the right to freedom of expression and preventing hate speech, including in online formats.

Human rights education was an important aspect of EU work during the year, with members of the Delegation making frequent presentations on the subject at universities to raise awareness and build support for expanded EU-Korea participation in the area.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

Promoting improvements in the human rights situation in the DPRK remains at the core of EU policy on the country. The EU remained very concerned at continuing reports and testimonies describing systematic, widespread and grave violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It was unequivocal in its condemnation of the situation and expressed its concerns at every opportunity with DPRK representatives.

Due to the EU's active role in the UN (see below), the DPRK has refused since 2003 to conduct the EU-DPRK human rights dialogue that began in 2001. The EU maintains diplomatic contacts with the DPRK authorities and has invited the DPRK to resume the dialogue.

The EU continued to draw the attention of the UN Human Rights Council to the persistent critical situation in the DPRK and co-sponsored a resolution (adopted on 21 March) which condemned the grave, widespread and systematic violations of human rights in the country and established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate these abuses. The EU has consistently and strongly supported the work of the Commission and its methodology.

The EU also supported the adoption of resolutions on human rights in the DPRK in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee (the latest adopted on 19 November) and the UN General Assembly itself (adopted in December) and lobbied strongly to aid the smooth passage of such resolutions.

It also monitored the situation of DPRK refugees abroad, calling when necessary for full respect of all relevant international obligations.

On 14 March, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on nuclear threats and human rights in the DPRK, expressing concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in the country and calling on it to abide by its international human rights obligations.

The EU continued to provide humanitarian assistance to some of the most vulnerable groups in DPRK society, irrespective of political concerns.

Laos

In February, determined to continue to engage in genuine dialogue on human rights, the EU organised the EU-Laos Human Rights dialogue with a comprehensive agenda and special emphasis on individual cases of persons, who according to our information, have suffered severe human rights violations.

Following the unexplained disappearance on 15 December 2012 of a prominent social rights activist, Sombath Somphone, the EU engaged in systematic dialogue with the authorities, at the highest levels, throughout 2013 to express serious concerns about the case and assist them in clarifying the situation. The EU representatives in Vientiane had numerous meetings and consultations with the Lao authorities at the highest levels and, together with members of the European Parliament and international civil society activists, continued to inquire about the case. In February, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the issue expressing its deep concern and calling on the Lao authorities to undertake prompt, transparent and thorough investigations. The continuing absence of credible information on Sombath Somphone's disappearance led to growing indignation in the international media and had an impact on bilateral relations.

The EU conducted a series of discussions with the local authorities, encouraging them to proceed with ICC ratification and early ratification of the Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and to review the declaration on Article 1 of the Convention on Torture.

In May after the approval of a Prime Ministerial Decree on international NGOs, that accentuates the control of international NGOs on staff, budget and activity issues, the EU together with Australia, initiated a process of dialogue with the authorities on the need to open up the rather restrictive environment for civil society organisations in Laos. 'Guidelines on the implementation of the Prime Ministerial Decree on international NGOs' were shared and discussed with other key players in the development field.

When the EU was informed of the expulsion to China of nine young North Korean refugees in June, high-level meetings were held in Vientiane to express the EU's concern at this incident which put the lives of young refugees at risk in their country of origin.

Five human rights projects sought to:

(1) strengthen the role and capacity of the Lao Disabled People's Association in promoting the rights of people with disabilities;

(2) build civil society capacity to promote participation, rights and gender equity for ethnic group adolescents;

(3) build civil society capacity to promote and protect children's rights;

(4) uphold ethnic minorities' rights to food; and

(5) strengthen civil society capacity to participate in government decision-making.

A new call for proposals was launched for activities in the field of human rights.

Malaysia

The EU's main human rights priorities in Malaysia were the abolition of the death penalty and the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The EU continued to support EU citizens on death row. Negotiations for an EU-Malaysia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) slowed down due to the general elections in May, but are expected to resume in early 2014. The draft agreement contains a human rights and fundamental rights at work clause.

Other main issues on the agenda are the situation of illegal migrants, religious freedom (religious tensions have substantially increased during 2013) and freedom of speech.

The EU's Human Rights Working Group met with a number of civil society organisations working on women's rights, the elimination of racial discrimination and freedom of expression.

The EU-Malaysia Human Rights Dialogue has not taken place since 2011.

Malaysia was reviewed under the 2nd cycle of the universal periodic review at the UN Human Rights Council in October. Delegations highlighted positive achievements, such as the progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in advancing the status of women and in the areas of healthcare and education. They raised concerns, however, about the lack of legislation clearly defining and prohibiting torture and the continued mistreatment of persons in custody. The EU Delegation in Kuala Lumpur hosted a meeting with representatives from the Coalition of Malaysian NGOs in the UPR Process (COMANGO), who briefed the EU and Member States ahead of the UPR.

As Malaysia remained a member of the UN Human Rights Council throughout 2013, the EU delivered a number of *demarches* on its priorities and initiatives at its 22nd and 23rd sessions. In March, it delivered a *demarche* on preparations concerning the Commission on the Status of Women (dedicated to gender equality and the advancement of women).

The EU Delegation continued to cooperate with the Malaysian Bar, the National Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the campaign for the abolition of the death penalty in Malaysia, including through a photo exhibition. On 14 November, it co-organised a dialogue at the national parliament on the reintroduction of discretionary sentencing for capital punishment cases. This was attended by members of parliament and all public authorities with competence in this area.

In December, the EU Delegation, SUHAKAM and UNICEF co-organised a Seminar on Migrant Children's Rights in the eastern state of Sabah.

The EIDHR supported six projects relating to the UN Convention on disability, education for stateless children and the rights of indigenous people.

Maldives

The Maldives is one of the pilot countries for EU democracy support. The EU has followed the political crisis in the Maldives particularly closely since the controversial transfer of power in February 2012. HR/VP Ashton issued a number of statements and declarations on behalf of the EU, expressing concern at the transfer of power and the subsequent political crisis. A European Parliament delegation visited the Maldives in July. The EU Heads of Mission also organise regular joint visits in the country.

Despite serious threats, the Elections Commission finally managed to complete the second democratic presidential elections in November. The protracted electoral process was assessed by EU election experts and observed by the EU's 'diplomatic watch, which consisted of the EU Delegation and Member State diplomats based in Colombo and Delhi. Despite evidence of vote buying and other serious distortions, administration of the election was credible and sufficiently transparent, and the results were finally accepted by the main candidates and the people. Several EU statements were issued during the protracted election process (September to November).

In close cooperation with other international players, the EU has also repeatedly called for the rule of law to be respected and for the independent functioning of the executive, the parliament and the judiciary. It is deeply concerned about the state of the judiciary, whose independence is seriously compromised. It has urged the government to address allegations of police brutality but no progress has been made to date; rather, some of the police officers involved were actually promoted. The EU is also particularly concerned by what appear to be politically motivated attacks and threats against opposition MPs.

The EU Delegation and Member State embassies and High Commissions maintained regular contacts with Maldivian civil society, which played an important role in monitoring the presidential elections and was exposed to harassment and threats following its criticism of the judiciary's interference in the elections. The Maldives is benefiting from two projects (election campaign financing; police reform) under the EIDHR envelope.

The EU Heads of Mission expressed concern at the deterioration of women's and children's rights in the context of increasing religious conservatism. In March, the HR/VP's spokesperson issued a statement on a flogging sentence in the case of a 15-year-old girl who had been sexually abused; the sentence was later overturned. Through the UN, the EU is supporting a local conflict mediation project which also includes developing the capacities of women as mediators (23 out of 37 trained mediators are women).

Defenders of political and civil rights are able to operate relatively freely in the Maldives, but those involved in work on religious freedom or the rights of lesbian, gay, transgender and bi-sexual people face having harsh penalties imposed on them by the state and general harassment from conservative social forces. The EU Human Rights Working Group monitors the human rights situation in the Maldives, organises regular briefings and meetings with human rights defenders during visits to the Maldives and coordinates advocacy activities.

On visits to the Maldives, the EU Heads of Mission raised concerns regarding the freedom of religion and belief. The Maldives Constitution requires all citizens to be Muslims and recognises Islam as the state religion. The subject of freedom of religion is politically extremely sensitive and was a key area of controversy in the presidential election campaign.

The EU Heads of Mission regularly expressed strong concern over plans to introduce implementing legislation on the death penalty. The Maldives is a *de facto* abolitionist country (the last execution was carried out in 1953), but a draft law on implementing the death penalty by lethal injection was presented in November 2012. Parliament finally rejected the bill in 2013. The judiciary has continued to issue death sentences for some serious crimes, but to date these have been converted to life sentences.

Mongolia

The EU-Mongolia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed in April contains human rights clauses and provides for reinforced cooperation on human rights.

Mongolia is a pilot country for the implementation of EU democracy support. In 2013, it applied for the new GSP+ scheme, which will provide a useful mechanism to address concerns linked to the legal framework and implementation of the core international human rights conventions and protocols to which it has acceded.

EIDHR-funded civil society projects focus *inter alia* on support and promotion of respect for human rights in Mongolian prisons; protecting the rights of women and victims of human trafficking; strengthening the rights of Mongolia's sexual minorities and their families; and human rights promotion through documentary films among young people.

Civil society is active and involved in shaping policies and there is growing involvement by NGOs in environmental protection.

Nepal

Elections, the rule of law, the prevailing climate of impunity, the need for transitional justice mechanisms based on the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord, and the fight against discrimination remained key issues of EU attention and involvement in Nepal.

The EU deployed an election observation mission for the 19 November elections, monitoring, *inter alia*, election legislation, voter registration and voter education. The election passed off successfully.

In its dialogue with the government, the EU stressed that serious human rights violations cannot be subject to amnesty or forced reconciliation and expressed concern regarding the erosion of national institutions and the weakening of democracy and the rule of law in Nepal. Throughout the year, the EU stressed the need for transitional justice mechanisms in compliance with international standards. It issued several EU statements on these matters.

Caste-based discrimination and gender-based violence and discrimination were addressed through engagement with the government on its commitments at the universal periodic review in 2011 and ongoing support for civil society projects. Support was granted to civil society projects promoting access to resources and opportunities for disabled and other marginalised groups and communities and increasing their participation. The EU addressed the situation of human rights defenders in meetings with activists, bi-annual meetings of the EU Working Group for the protection of Human Rights Defenders chaired by the EU Delegation, and support for civil society projects.

The EU continued to support implementation of the National Action Plan on UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security and violence against women through funding via the Nepal Peace Trust Fund. The Peace Support Working Group, of which the EU is a member, worked on the inclusion of victims of sexual and gender-based violence in the government's definition of conflict-affected persons and in terms of access to relief, rehabilitation and reparation services.

Pakistan

Against a background of continued terrorist attacks across Pakistan, the EU monitored the situation and raised issues as regards the rule of law, impunity and access to justice, notably in the light of the new terrorism-related ordinances promulgated by the government in October, which gave law-enforcement agencies sweeping powers to arrest, search, seize and detain suspects in security-related investigations and authorised civilian armed forces to shoot on sight.

Despite escalating militant attacks and some procedural shortcomings, elections took place with high levels of competition, a marked increase in voter participation and overall acceptance of the outcome. Participation by women and discrimination against the Ahmadi community remained issues of concern for the EU. The EU deployed an election observation mission, which made 50 recommendations for election reform.

The conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council in March strongly condemned all acts of violence against vulnerable religious minorities in Pakistan and the HR/VP and European Parliament both condemned the Peshawar church attack and other violence against religious minorities and called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. The European Parliament also adopted a resolution on caste-based discrimination, an issue that often merges with faith-based discrimination in Pakistan. The EU is engaging with the newly elected government on priority issues including human rights and the protection of minorities.

While Pakistan has acceded to most of the core international human rights instruments, progress is slow on incorporating these into domestic law and implementing measures to achieve their objectives. Over the year, the EU urged Pakistan to improve on this. The European Parliament's Sub-Committee on Human Rights visited Pakistan in August to assess the human rights situation, in particular with regard to the rights of women and children. The delegation met representatives of government, parliament, political parties, UN agencies, the media and civil society. They discussed the merger of the former Ministry of Human Rights with the Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights and the desirability of extending the moratorium on the death penalty. Human rights were a major consideration in the EP review of the GSP+ Delegated Act (including Pakistan) in the autumn.

As part of the fight against terrorism, the new government has been considering changing its policy on the death penalty, a move that was widely discussed in the country's media. Nevertheless, Pakistan has given the EU assurances that it will continue with the moratorium on executions that has been in place for the past five years, although this decision has yet to be formally announced. The issue was raised by the EU, *inter alia* during the visit of the European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights (see above).

Throughout the year, the EU monitored and raised concerns with the authorities about specific cases, including those of Asia Bibi and Rimsha Masih, both Christians accused of blasphemy. In a ceremony on 20 November, Malala Yousafzai, survivor of a Taliban attack, was awarded the European Parliament's 2013 Sakharov Prize in acknowledgement of her brave stand for the right of all children to be granted an education. In April, the EU Delegation organised an event for human rights defenders to exchange views on the human rights situation and how the EU could better support their efforts.

Through its development portfolio, the EU continued its cooperation with law-enforcement agencies, building their capacity through training, including on the effective protection of human rights. A new financing decision was adopted to support the rule of law and community policing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The EU continued a project on improving parliamentary performance (support for the National Assembly and the Senate) and consolidating democracy in Pakistan through support for credible, inclusive and transparent elections involving national and international civil society organisations and networks. This complemented the EU election observation mission. The 'Support to democratic institutions and promotion of human rights' programme was launched with a view to strengthening provincial assemblies and work with government and independent national human rights institutions. The EU Delegation oversaw implementation of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights Country-based Support Scheme, which included several child protection projects and an event for the International Day of Rural Women.

Philippines

The human rights situation in the Philippines did not change significantly in comparison with 2012. Despite the administration's pledges to protect human rights, the culture of impunity still lingers and grave cases of human rights abuse remain unresolved. The EU continued to engage with various state and non-state actors, including civil society organisations, on the human rights situation in the country. In June, the 8th EU-Philippine Senior Officials Meeting in Brussels took stock of a number of human rights issues, such as the fight against human trafficking, the rights of migrant workers, the Ampatuan massacre and the witness protection program.

The EU continued to support human rights defenders and criminal justice reform and organised the second dialogue with the Philippine Commission on Human Rights, including its regional offices, and several high-profile meetings with human rights defenders. Backing up the government's efforts to fight impunity, the EU's 'Justice for All' programme, launched in July, promotes equal access to justice and human rights for poor and disadvantaged persons. The EU monitored several cases of human rights violations (arbitrary detentions), including those of Temogen Tulawie and Zara Alavarez. The assassination of a radio journalist, Joas Dignos, in November highlighted again the importance of working on the protection of the media and the freedom of speech. Since 1992, there have been 72 journalists assassinated.

Through its participation in the International Monitoring Team in Mindanao, the EU continued to monitor violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in the region, paying particular attention to the protection of the rights of children affected by the conflict.

The Philippines signed and ratified a number of international human-rights-related instruments, including the Progressive Anti-Enforced Disappearance Act, the Domestic Workers Act and the Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act. These signatures and ratifications are fundamental for the Philippines, one of the countries with more enforced disappearances reported to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

Nine EIDHR projects are ongoing, with a total budget of € 3 million, focusing on the protection of children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, the protection of human rights victims and defenders, and the fight against impunity.

Singapore

Negotiations for an EU-Singapore Partnership and Cooperation Agreement were formally concluded. The Agreement, initialled in Singapore on 14 October, contains a human rights and fundamental rights at work clause.

The EU Delegation hosted an informal dialogue on human rights with local NGOs and a separate specific session on changes to the death penalty arrangements with contributions by local criminal defence lawyers. Following changes to the criminal legislation introduced in late 2012, the mandatory death penalty is no longer applicable to low-level drug couriers who cooperate with police and in homicide cases where there was no intention to kill. In 2013, for the first time, the sentences of several former death-row inmates were commuted to life imprisonment.

Human rights issues and the death penalty were addressed at a meeting between Foreign Minister Shanmugam and the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee on 9 September. On 18 July, Singapore ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

An issue of major concern is the increasing restrictions to the use of the internet and the related problems with freedom of speech regarding for instance the cases of Mr. Nizam Ismail, Mr. Chew and the new Regulation establishing conditions for online publications with more than 50,000 visitors.

On 8 December, the EU Delegation was associated with the 'We Can!' Arts Festival organised by local non-government organisations in support of the global 'We can end all violence against women' campaign. The festival was the culmination of a year-long effort and featured film screenings, theatre performances and testimonies from social workers, activists and victims of violence.

On 10 December, the EU Delegation organised a Human Rights Day seminar on 'Contemporary Perspectives on Economic and Social Rights' at which academics, officials, diplomats, the regional UN representative and numerous civil society participants engaged in a free-ranging discussion on labour rights, health, ageing, disability and the partnership between the state and civil society.

Sri Lanka

The 1995 Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development provides the basis for the EU's cooperation with Sri Lanka. A Joint Commission meeting finally took place in December for the first time since 2008 and a range of cooperation issues, including human rights, were discussed. Despite the end of the war in 2009, the government's main focus remains state security, often at the expense of civil liberties. Areas of particular concern are continued impunity for human rights abuses, the security of human rights defenders and journalists, freedom of expression and assembly, the right to peaceful demonstrations, freedom of religion, land rights and, more generally, issues relating to the rule of law (including the independence of the judiciary) and continued militarisation in the North.

The EU issued several statements, on *inter alia* the impeachment of the Chief Justice (January), the right to peaceful protest and freedom of religion (August), the International Day of the Disappeared (also August) and the International Day of Human Rights (December).

The EU Human Rights Working Group continued to engage with human rights defenders and civil society, including through an annual meeting and regular thematic briefings, observation of trials and protection of human rights defenders and journalists. Special attention was paid to consultations on gender and women's rights, the rule of law and the judiciary. Several meetings were organised with local organisations involved in domestic monitoring of the provincial council elections in September. The EU also continued to raise the death penalty issue with the authorities. A European Parliament delegation visited Sri Lanka in July.

At the United Nations Human Rights Council in March, EU Member States co-sponsored (with the USA) a resolution urging the government to make further progress on reconciliation and to conduct investigations into alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and Non-State Actors (NSA) budget line continued to finance projects in Sri Lanka. The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) country programme focused on rehabilitation and livelihood programmes for the most vulnerable groups, including women and children, in conflict-affected areas in the north and east.

Thailand

Negotiations on the EU-Thailand Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which features a human rights and fundamental rights at work clause, were concluded with the initialling of the text on 7 November.

On 30-31 January, the EU hosted a public forum on 'Reconciliation and Freedom of Expression in Thailand' which brought together Thai and European experts on freedom of expression, government representatives, the National Human Rights Commission, civil society, academics and the general public. The two-day event generated fruitful discussions on freedom of expression in Thailand, including the problems that stem from enforcement of the *Lèse-Majesté* Law and the Computer Crimes Act.

In consultation with Member State embassies, the EU Delegation closely followed legal cases against human rights defenders (HRDs) and observed the trials of prominent cases, mostly regarding violation of the *Lèse-Majesté* Law. A small EIDHR grant was provided to support the legal fees of one Thai HRD. In addition, the EU organised detention visits to HRDs who have been imprisoned for *lèse-majesté*. On 24 January, the EU Delegation held consultations with representatives of community-based HRDs working in the areas of environment, land rights and the rights of indigenous people.

The EU financed a public forum on 'Human Rights Defenders Protection, New Media and Online Security' aimed at informing community-based human rights defenders about legal frameworks and international mechanisms to protect them. The EU Delegation joined representatives of the Thai government, the National Human Rights Commission and civil society organisations to present the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders and the EU's financial instruments to support their work.

The EU Delegation continued its partnership with civil society in advocating for the abolition of the death penalty in Thailand, focusing on awareness-raising campaigns to support the government's goal — as set out in its National Human Rights Action Plan — to end capital punishment. The EU provided financial support to the Union for Civil Liberty in establishing the first local-language website to provide comprehensive information on the death penalty. The website serves as a tool to complement the government's nationwide public consultations, planned for 2014.

On 10-11 October, in cooperation with the Office of the Attorney-General, the EU Delegation jointly organised a Thailand-EU Experts' Roundtable on Trafficking in Human Beings. Eleven government agencies and EU institutions, including EUPOL and EUROJUST, engaged in two-day discussions, which also highlighted the areas for future EU-Thailand cooperation.

The EU has been closely following, since early December, the situation of Human Rights during the demonstrations and protests that are taking place in the country, mainly in Bangkok.

Timor Leste

The EU fully supports Timor-Leste in its remarkable drive towards the establishment of a stable democracy. In February in Dili, the EU and the government held their first political dialogue under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. The agenda included human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance, and regional integration and foreign affairs. The dialogues attracted broad media attention and resulted in joint commitments to follow-up a number of specific issues.

The 'Learning from our past, preventing conflict in our future' project enhanced understanding of the findings and recommendations of the two truth commissions and strengthened victims' ability to work together, notably in voicing their interests in debates in parliament. The Implementing Partner pushed, albeit unsuccessfully, for parliament to resume debate on two draft laws.

The 'Democracy and Development in Action, through Media and Empowerment' project aims to strengthen the democratisation process in Timor-Leste and further stabilise the country by building NSA capacities and improving channels of communication between citizens and decision-makers.

The 'Strengthening institutional capacity of the National Parliament in Timor-Leste', '*Programa de Apoio à Governação Democrática em Timor-Leste — Programa de Justiça*' and '*Apoio à Governação Democrática em Timor-Leste — Componente de apoio à Comunicação Social*' projects aim to strengthen the democratic foundations of oversight/accountability and transparency through institutional and capacity development in parliament, the judiciary and the media, *inter alia* by combining forces and specifically addressing the shortage of skilled human resources, which is a source of fragility in the country, and through dissemination of better information about legislation, the judiciary and security sector activities.

In total, around € 10.8 million has been set aside for these projects, which are to be implemented from 2011 to early 2015.

Vietnam

Respect and promotion for democratic principles and human and fundamental rights at work constitute an essential element of the EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed in June 2012. In the framework of the advance implementation of the Agreement, the EU and Vietnam held the third round of their enhanced human rights dialogue in September. Human rights were mainstreamed throughout the year during high-level bilateral visits. In particular, human rights issues were raised at the highest level when Presidents van Rompuy and Barroso received the General-Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam in January. In a statement, the HRVP's spokesperson welcomed Vietnam's signing of the UN Convention Against Torture on 7 November as a positive reaction to a long-standing EU request.

Through the human rights dialogue, public statements and discreet diplomacy, the EU urged the government to remove restrictions on freedom of expression and the media. In public messages, it repeatedly expressed its concerns about the arrest and sentencing of a number of activists, bloggers and students, mostly on the basis of the penal code's national security provisions, and reiterated its calls for release of all imprisoned peaceful advocates of human rights in the country (in this context the EU's list of Persons of Concern was regularly updated and shared with the authorities). On 18 April, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on Vietnam, in particular freedom of expression. Its ASEAN Delegation visited Vietnam in late October, raising human rights issues, in particular freedom of expression and capital punishment, as part of a broad agenda.

The EU also raised the issue of capital punishment with the authorities and reacted to the resumption of executions in August with a public message of concern issued on the website of the EU Delegation in Hanoi. It also monitored developments on the freedom of religion or belief, which remains a concern although gradual improvement was noted on the registration of churches. EU representatives visited one person of concern in prison, attended the trials of two human rights defenders and visited a re-education centre. They also interacted with local human rights activists and civil society representatives to share views on human rights developments.

The EU continued to support the modernisation of the judicial system, *inter alia* as regards access to justice, with a contribution of € 8 million to the Justice Partnership Programme, a joint donor initiative involving the EU, Denmark and Sweden. The project supports key institutions such as the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuracy and the Bar Association, and includes training for judges, lawyers and other law professionals.

The EIDHR supported seven projects covering a broad range of issues, including empowering people with HIV and populations at higher risk of HIV infection, fighting violence against women, human trafficking and non-discrimination, the rights of persons with disabilities, children's rights, support for civil society organisation networks, the rights of persons belonging to ethnic minorities and workers' rights and labour relations. In the framework of the Strategic Dialogue Facility, the EU also supported activities in the areas of anti-corruption, rights of persons belonging to ethnic minority, freedom of religion or belief, governance and migration.

Vietnam was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2014-16 term and has been preparing for its second universal periodic review in January 2014.

VIII Oceania

Australia

Australia remains a strong promoter of human rights at home and internationally, where it is a reliable partner for the EU in pushing forward the multilateral human rights agenda.

However, the question of how to deal with asylum seekers, in particular those arriving by boat, remains a major and sensitive issue domestically. In November, the UNHCR found that asylum seekers who had been transferred from Australia to processing centres at Nauru and Manus Island in Papua New Guinea were living in arbitrary detention, in conditions that did not meet international standards.

Exchanges with the EU on the regional processing arrangements for asylum seekers in Australia took place in the annual Senior Officials' Dialogue on Migration in Brussels on 9 December.

A comprehensive bilateral framework agreement, currently being negotiated, will provide opportunities to further enhance dialogue and cooperation on human rights issues with Australia.

Fiji

The EU Council decided in September to extend the measures imposed on Fiji under Article 96 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement by 18 months, for breaching core parts of that Agreement relating to democratic values, human rights and the rule of law. The extension decision also required the EU to improve political dialogue with Fiji, working together towards lifting the Article 96 measures.

Fiji promulgated a new constitution on 6 September 2013, with an extensive Bill of Rights that included many socio-economic rights, but also allowed limitations on rights to be adopted by a simple majority vote in Parliament. Total and immutable immunity was granted to anyone involved in the coup-installed government.

Fiji's Prime Minister reiterated his commitment to holding democratic elections by September 2014. In July, the EU, New Zealand and the Commonwealth Secretariat prepared an elections gap assessment report that forms the basis for further donor assistance to the electoral process. In the autumn, the EU deployed experts to provide legal and administrative assistance to the Fiji Electoral Office. More capacity building is planned for 2014, in the lead-up to the elections. The EU also continued to support civil society organisations and human rights defenders through grants awarded under the EIDHR. The country-based support scheme focused on democratisation and women's rights.

The EU issued two local statements in March, one regretting the police's last-minute cancellation of the Women's Day march and the other reacting to the release of a video which contained graphic evidence of the torture of two men suspected of being escaped prisoners. The latter called for Fiji's early signature of the UN Convention against Torture.

The EU urged Fiji to re-engage with the ILO in organising the Direct Contacts mission, which did not go ahead in 2012 due to a disagreement on the terms of reference.

These and other relevant human rights issues were raised with the Fiji government in the high-level enhanced political dialogue meeting that took place in October.

Small Pacific Island States – Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu.

The EU continued to promote human rights and gender equality through *ad hoc* political and policy dialogue with countries in the Pacific region, where it does not have a Delegation. It also works with regional organisations, civil society and other donors in the region to encourage respect for and the protection of human rights.

The rates of gender-based violence and discrimination against women in the Pacific region are among the highest in the world, although these vary between countries. Through dialogue and development assistance, the EU supports the region in its effort to accelerate sustainable progress on this issue, to empower women economically, to increase female participation in decision-making institutions, and to take into account the gender dimension in policy-making. Gender issues are addressed as a cross-cutting issue in many projects and programmes. For example, improving access to sustainable energy and clean water in these countries will have a favourable impact on women.

The EU allocated € 1 million to the Pacific Islands Forum to support Pacific island countries in their ratification and implementation of the Rome Statute and international human rights treaties. The project also contributes to efforts to increase gender equality and to decrease levels of gender-based violence. Niue was the third country to engage in national consultations with the Forum Secretariat in 2013, similar consultations with Vanuatu and Palau already having been completed. Human rights issues of importance to Niue include children's rights, women's rights and employment.

The enjoyment of human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people is still a matter of concern in the whole Pacific region. In all countries except Micronesia, homosexual acts between men are illegal. Same-sex relationships are not recognised and there are no anti-discrimination legal frameworks relating to sexual orientation.

The EU partnered with UN ESCAP, ILO and UNDP to fund the three-year Pacific climate change migration project, which aims to improve the capacity of Pacific island states to address the human rights and migration-related impact of climate change in the region.

New Zealand

Currently, the EU and New Zealand collaborate under the 2007 Joint Declaration on Relations and Cooperation, an overarching political framework which governs and directs their joint activities, including in the field of human rights. A bilateral Partnership Agreement on Relations and Cooperation, currently under negotiation, will provide opportunities to further enhance dialogue and step up cooperation on human rights issues.

As the EU and New Zealand share similar human rights standards, the EU focuses primarily on further improving cooperation. It holds regular human rights consultations with New Zealand in international fora, including at the UN in New York and Geneva, and in specific countries in the Asia-Pacific region and across the world.

In 2014, New Zealand will undergo its second Universal Periodic Review (UPR) before the UN Human Rights Council. Ahead of this, the EU has carried out extensive exchanges with the New Zealand Human Rights Commission on the current state of human rights in the country.

Papua New Guinea

Combating gender-based violence is one of the EU's top priorities in Papua New Guinea. The EU has urged the authorities to combat abuse and take action on education, awareness-raising, and legislative and policy initiatives.

In 2013, the EU contributed to combating violence against women in Papua New Guinea in various ways. Under the EIDHR, the EU and *Médecins Sans Frontières* co-sponsored a conference in Port Moresby on family and sexual violence in Papua New Guinea on 21 and 22 November. The conference supported the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive response to family and sexual violence, in particular the adoption of an Action Plan for 10 selected provinces. In October,

ECHO agreed to provide € 1.5 million for 2014-15 to support the victims of gender-based-violence in Papua New Guinea. The EU is supporting the Office of the Speaker of Parliament in its Open Parliament initiative, aiming to promote adherence to democratic principles by making parliament open to all citizens.

Women's rights and women's empowerment were addressed as a priority in implementing the EU's cooperation programmes. In particular, the second phase of the EU's rural economic development programme supported women's empowerment in remote rural areas.

The parliament's amendments to the Criminal Code in May raised concerns, reintroducing the death penalty for a wide category of crimes, such as aggravated rape, sorcery-related killings, robbery with violence and the use of weapons. Parliament also approved several methods of capital punishment, including hanging, lethal injection, firing squad and electrocution. This constituted a serious set-back, considering that the country had observed a moratorium on executions since 1954. The HR/VP issued a statement on 3 June in which she called on the authorities to maintain the 1954 moratorium. The EU, together with the United Kingdom and France, issued an opinion piece on the World Day against the Death Penalty on 10 October, again urging the government to reconsider its position.

The amendments did include some positive developments, such as the repeal of the 1971 Sorcery Act (which could previously be used as a defence for murder) and the adoption of the Family Protection Act in October 2013 (making domestic violence a criminal offence). A national policy on women and gender equality was adopted, covering the period from 2010 to 2015. Other positive developments included the presentation of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women's report on Papua New Guinea, and the launch in June 2013 of a national policy on gender equality in the public sector.

Discussions began with the authorities on organising the first formal political dialogue under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, but a date still needs to be agreed.

Samoa

In general, human rights in Samoa are protected by law, but the law is not always enforced. Gender-based violence and discrimination against women remain major concerns. Through dialogue with the government and various financial instruments, the EU promotes human rights, gender equality and greater participation by women in decision-making. It provides support through the regional EIDHR project assisting Pacific countries to raise awareness of linkages between human rights and development; increase capacity to integrate human rights into government policies and development plans; and ratify and implement UN human rights treaties and the Rome Statute.

Samoa benefits from the EIDHR programme on Media for Democracy and Human Rights. In 2013, the EU provided € 192 000 from the Civil Society Support Programme to improve mental health, address the stigmatisation of mental illness, and provide sports training for children with intellectual disabilities. The EU also provides funding to civil society from its regional programme in order to strengthen civil society's voice and monitoring role.

Solomon Islands

The EU continued to actively promote human rights and gender equality in the Solomon Islands through dialogue and financial support. In meetings with government representatives, it raised the issue of ratifying UN human rights conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Promoting gender equality and combating violence against women remain key priorities on which the EU works closely with the government, civil society and other donors.

The Solomon Islands benefited from the EU's regional programme of assistance to Pacific countries on human rights and development. This focused on the integration of human rights into government policies and the ratification of UN human rights treaties and the Rome Statute. The programme financed a country focal support officer for gender equality and human rights activities, and regional training for lawyers, MPs, civil society and judicial officials. The government submitted its first report (since ratification in 2002) on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Solomon Islands is a pilot country for implementing the EU's agenda for action on democracy support. In light of the parliamentary elections in 2014, the EU continued to focus its support on improving the transparency and integrity of the electoral process, encouraging women's political participation and representation, and strengthening the capacity of non-state actors and citizens to defend their rights and play an active role in the political debate.

Vanuatu

The main human rights violations in the country are related to domestic violence against women and children. The third political dialogue with Vanuatu was expected to take place in Port Vila in the second half of 2013 but the Ni-Vanuatu authorities decided to postpone.

The Good Governance and Development Contract (GGDC) between the EU and the government of Vanuatu (which is the core of the 2013 annual action programme) puts a strong emphasis on the need to demonstrate, through appropriate indicators, progress in the area of human rights (notably on gender-related issues), in order to be eligible for the incentive tranches of the allocation. In particular, the GGDC aims to strengthen the implementation of policy promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, through enhancing government transparency and accountability on gender issues. Accordingly, human rights in general, and women's rights and participation in particular, will be regularly monitored in the GGDC's risk assessment framework. National reporting on gender in the annual development report will also be improved, including through the disaggregation of statistics by gender.

The EU raises human rights issues in its regular contacts with the Vanuatu government, and addresses human rights priorities through targeted development assistance, focusing on developing ethics and citizenship, and fighting against gender-based violence.

IX The Americas

Canada

In 2013, the EU and Canada continued their close cooperation and consultation in UN human rights forums such as the UN Human Rights Council and the UNGA Third Committee. Canada co-sponsored EU resolutions on Myanmar/Burma, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), freedom of religion or belief and children's rights. EU Member States co-sponsored the Canadian-led initiative on Iran. Canada and the EU supported a cross-regional initiative on Child, Early and Forced Marriage.

Canada underwent a Universal Periodic Review, accepting 122 recommendations either in full, in part or in principle, and rejecting recommendations *inter alia* on becoming a party to certain human rights instruments, on the rights of indigenous peoples and on Canadians sentenced to death abroad.

The EU and Canada held informal human rights discussions and liaised on a regular basis in Geneva, New York and Brussels.

USA

The EU and the USA continued close and regular cooperation and exchanges on human rights-related issues throughout 2013. At UN level, they worked together within the Human Rights Council and in the UNGA Third Committee in support of country resolutions on Myanmar/Burma, DPRK, Iran and Syria, and in the Human Rights Council on Sri Lanka. The USA also supported EU initiatives on freedom of religion or belief and children's rights in both forums. EU Member States lent support to a Human Rights Council resolution on the role of freedom of expression and opinion in women's empowerment as well as an UNGA Third Committee initiative on periodic democratic elections.

The EU and the USA held human rights consultations in August. Issues covered included third-country situations and thematic issues such as pressure on civil society, freedom of religion and belief, LGBTI rights, and business and human rights. The EU also raised the death penalty, domestic detention conditions, and human rights aspects of the fight against terrorism, including Guantánamo and indefinite detention. Bilateral consultations were complemented by *ad hoc* exchanges involving the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, and EU and US officials on specific issues, such as the shrinking space for civil society. Human rights-related issues were raised in regular meetings on justice and home affairs, in particular regarding the fight against terrorism and the activities of intelligence services. An *ad hoc* EU-US working group was established to look at the impact of US intelligence services' activities on EU citizens' personal data protection rights. Human rights issues were also raised as part of EU-US dialogue and cooperation on consular matters. These discussions led to joint approaches to relevant authorities, for example on prison conditions and on the protection of children.

The death penalty in the US remained a matter of concern for the EU despite the fact that some progress have been made. The HR/VP issued a statement congratulating the State of Maryland on its decision to abolish the death penalty. Maryland is the sixth state in as many years to do so. However, 32 states still provide for capital punishment in their legislation, as do the US federal government and the military. 61 people were sentenced to death and 35 were executed. In accordance with EU guidelines, the EU issued a statement and approached the relevant authorities, pleading for clemency in two cases concerning inmates with a mental illness. EU export restrictions on short and intermediate acting barbiturate anaesthetic agents and voluntary restrictions applied by European companies in connection with the use of other anaesthetic drugs for executions contributed to shortages in the availability of drugs for lethal injections. Such shortages led authorities in certain states to stay executions or to turn to other drugs or drug combinations. Through the EIDHR, the EU supported advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty in the USA with around € 1.5 million in funding.

The EU expressed its concerns on the extent and length of solitary confinement in the US penitentiary system during bilateral consultations on human rights and through approaches to federal and state authorities.

Guantánamo, indefinite detention and the use of drones for the targeted killing of terrorism suspects were also the subjects of parliamentary questions and hearings in the European Parliament, including a joint hearing of the Sub-Committees on Defence and Human Rights on 25 April.

The Council Presidency and the Commission submitted their report on the findings of the *ad hoc* EU-US working group on data protection on 27 November. The main findings and recommendations relate to the differences of treatment between US and non-US data subjects, in particular the fact that most of the protections in the US legal system do not apply to the latter. The activities of the US National Security Agency and their possible impact on the rights of EU citizens were also the subject of a European Parliament inquiry, during which several public hearings were held. The inquiry's report will be issued in early 2014. This matter was also the subject of several European parliamentary questions. Electronic communications and data processing are of increasing importance for the transatlantic economic exchange as well as cooperation in the field of national security. Restoring confidence in EU-US data flows seems all the more important. In pursuit of this goal, the EU and the US have recently commenced bilateral talks with the aim of improving EU-US instruments of data exchange.

The EU and the US strengthened transatlantic human rights through working together on specific issues, such as women's economic and political empowerment (for example, the Equal Futures Partnership) and rights for people with disabilities, and by joining forces in events to mark Human Rights Day.

X. Latin America

Argentina

Argentina has ratified most of the UN and regional human rights instruments as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. However, a number of challenges remain, particularly with regard to prison conditions, domestic violence against women and the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

In September 2013 Argentina, as a member of the LGBTI core group together with the EU, was one of the signatories to the UN Ministerial Declaration on ending Violence and Discrimination against Individuals Based on Their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. As an elected member of the UN Human Rights Council, in 2013 it sponsored some of the increasing number of cross-regional initiatives, including those on enforced or involuntary disappearances and business and human rights.

Human rights issues feature prominently in the EU-Argentina bilateral agenda with a specific EU-Argentina Joint Declaration on Human Rights (2008).

In EU-Argentina cooperation on human rights, social justice, rights of persons belonging to minorities and the human rights of indigenous peoples were key issues and core areas of intervention under the EIDHR[30] and non-state actors thematic lines. The EU worked with the Argentine Secretariat for Human Rights, supporting the work of eight human rights observatories. It also strengthened the role of civil society organisations in promoting human rights, human rights defenders, justice and the fight against impunity, and financed some of their initiatives, selected through open calls for proposals.

Bolivia

Cooperation between Bolivia and the EU on human rights focuses on strengthening the rule of law and improving access to justice; better protecting and enforcing the rights of indigenous peoples; and eliminating violence against women and children.

[30] The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

Bolivia is one of the seven pilot countries chosen for the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Democracy Support in the EU's external relations. EIDHR funding was used to pay a consultancy firm to map the donor community's activities in support of democracy and the country's needs as perceived by key actors. A joint working group on democracy and human rights was set up in the framework of the 2012 high-level dialogue. The group held its first meeting in 2013.

In 2013, the EU programme under the Instrument for Stability (€4 million) provided support for the consultation process with indigenous peoples; conflict management and prevention; and strengthening of the judicial system's independence. Justice was chosen as one of the three sectors for intervention under the next bilateral cooperation programming exercise (2014–20). The EU has adopted a local strategy for implementing EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and an advisory group has been set up. It works with the UN to help the Bolivian authorities and civil society implement the legal framework on violence against women.

Brazil

During 2013, EU human rights policy in Brazil remained focused on protecting vulnerable groups, such as children, women, indigenous peoples, human rights defenders and the LGBTI community, in particular by combating homophobic violence. This is done through political dialogue and working with contacts with counterparts in the ministries and the Secretariat for Human Rights (in the Office of the Presidency), as well as through various EU-financed cooperation projects.

The EU Delegation held discussions with the authorities throughout the year, both individually and jointly with EU Member States. Topics discussed ranged from the Commission on the Status of Women, EU priorities for the 23rd regular session of the Human Rights Council (on Belarus) and draft resolutions on Syria, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar/Burma and Iran for the UN General Assembly Third Committee.

Brazil hosted two major international events, the Third Global Conference on Child Labour (Brasilia, 8-10 October) and the World Forum on Human Rights (Brasilia, 10 December). Both were followed by the EU and Member states.

The year was marked by the large-scale protests that shook the country in June and by debate about forced evictions and labour conditions linked to the major construction activities in preparation for the World Cup and the Olympics. There were also frequent protests against reported attempts to alter the constitutional guarantees of the rights of indigenous peoples over their ancestral lands.

The EU continued to actively support the rights of indigenous people in Brazil through the EIDHR and other instruments..Contacts with the federal authorities responsible for matters related to indigenous peoples have intensified, including those with FUNAI, the national agency for indigenous peoples. The EU Delegation and EU Member States in Brasilia also maintain regular contact with the Human Rights Secretariat and those involved in the Human Rights Defenders Programme. During the year, the EU also engaged with Brazil on several occasions in multilateral forums – for example, on LGBTI events organised around Human Rights Day in New York and in the UN Human Rights Council.

More than 15 projects are ongoing under the Country-Based Support Scheme/EIDHR, covering a range of issues including violence against women, the protection of children's rights, the protection of prisoners' rights, legal aid and sexual exploitation during international events, such as the forthcoming World Cup and Olympic Games. In order to address the poor conditions and lack of legal protection in the penetentiary system, two projects on promoting human rights for prison inmates in Brazil (expanding and consolidating the Association for the Protection and Assistance of Convicts system which has been producing results thus far in its pilot projects) attracted a lot of attention during 2013, receiving the World Bank's Experiences from the Field award in May.

The EU Sector Dialogues Facility Fund financed a human rights defenders seminar in September in Ceara State. Member State embassies took part in this event, which included a visit to local human rights defenders.

Chile

Dialogue and close cooperation with Chile on human rights issues continued in 2013. The EU focused on gender equality, the rights of indigenous peoples, LGBTI rights, actions to remember the 1973–90 military dictatorship and cross-cutting issues such as strengthening the role of civil society, and improving cooperation, in international forums. The 40th anniversary of the 1973 coup d'état gave rise to debates on the need for compensating victims and education and awareness. Matters such as the pending implementation of the indigenous peoples' consultation process as stipulated in ILO Convention 169, recourse to the anti-terrorist law in Mapuche social protest cases and continued prejudice and violence towards the LGBTI community, were reviewed through UN special procedures, including a visit from Ben Emmerson, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism. They were also reviewed by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Through thematic line cooperation, the EU provided € 1.2 million to support more than twenty projects in these areas. It has continued to support civil society's involvement in fostering and monitoring Chile's progress and international commitments in these areas. In the run-up to the country's Second Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the EU and Chile held their fourth local human rights dialogue in November 2013. Discussion topics included women's rights and gender equality, LGBTI rights, migrants' rights, the rights of indigenous peoples and cooperation in multilateral forums.

Colombia

The Colombian authorities are doing a lot to improve the human rights situation in the country. This is a major challenge given the complexity of the causes that led to violence and human rights violations. Momentous verdicts were reached in a number of cases of serious human rights violations, but many crimes still remain unpunished, such as threats against human rights defenders, sexual violence against women and assassinations of land restitution leaders. Through its cooperation mechanisms and political dialogue, the EU has continued to actively support the government's efforts to tackle violence and threats against human rights defenders, women, children, indigenous people and Afro-descendants.

In April 2013, the United Nations' Human Rights Council carried out its Second Universal Periodic Review of Colombia. Colombia accepted 126 recommendations (120 of which it considered 'already implemented' or 'in the process of implementation'), rejected 26 and left 8 pending.

In 2013 the European Community Humanitarian Office continued to provide emergency assistance and protection to the conflict-affected populations of Colombia. Particular attention was paid to the most vulnerable groups in rural areas: internally displaced persons, refugees in neighbouring countries, households headed by women, children, the elderly, indigenous people and Afro-Colombian populations.

In line with the EU Human Rights Strategy for Colombia, a call for proposals was launched (total funding: € 1.6 million). It focused on two aspects: strengthening guarantees and scenarios for the political participation at local level of ethnic, rural and other populations at risk; and the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security. Five new projects were selected for funding. Human rights defenders, in particular trade unionists and land restitution claimers, were given support through projects providing protection and psychosocial support.

Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a democracy with a long-standing record of compliance with its international human rights obligations. The main human rights challenges relate to public security, drug-related crimes and corruption. In 2013, the EU focused mainly on these issues (including impunity, safety and security) and on discrimination against minorities and women's rights. Progress was monitored through frequent contacts with the Costa Rican authorities and dialogues with civil society. Discussions with the authorities on multilateral human rights issues were carried out in cooperation with EU Member States.

The Member States are currently ratifying the EU-Central America Association Agreement concluded in 2013. Once in force, it will provide the context for further engagement with Central American countries on human rights issues, in particular through political dialogue.

EU cooperation activities in 2013 — both bilateral cooperation and actions financed under the EIDHR — had the same thematic focus. The bilateral Emprende project, to which the EU contributed €4 million, helps women in rural and marginal urban areas to be more economically independent. Four actions under the EIDHR (total EU contribution €343 000), focus on domestic violence, the social exclusion of young people, public security and civil society capacity-building. Budget support is also being provided to help Costa Rica deal with security issues. An example is the Prosec project in support of national public security policy. The EU's contribution to this project is €13 million.

Ecuador

The human rights situation in Ecuador deteriorated, with the criminalisation of social protest, especially in relation to extractive industry projects, and an increasingly tight regulatory framework. Against this backdrop, the EU Delegation and other EU embassies in Ecuador focused on cases of human rights defenders and on how Ecuador follows up on the UPR recommendations in its relations with the authorities.

A lot of attention was also given to human rights issues during the inaugural meeting of the EU-Ecuador bilateral consultations mechanism on 21 June 2013, in particular freedom of expression and human rights issues Ecuador needs to tackle in order to fulfil its obligations under the Inter-American Human Rights System.

The prison system remains one of the critical sectors, with humiliating conditions for detainees and some cases of torture being reported. It is still difficult for organisations that could provide assistance to get access to prisoners.

A call for proposals under the EIDHR, which was to be launched at the end of 2013, had to be postponed to 2014.

El Salvador

In 2013 the EU focused on promoting LGBTI rights as a follow-up to El Salvador's joining the LGBTI informal core group at the United Nations General Assembly. Several discussions on El Salvador's signing the International Criminal Court Statute were held with the authorities at different levels.

Through the EU-funded project 'Strengthening of citizen participation and electoral institutionalism in El Salvador', the Supreme Electoral Tribunal finished identifying voting centres to implement residential voting countrywide. This was one of the most important recommendations made by the 2009 Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) and the 2012 Election Expert Mission.

Through the Country-Based Support Scheme, the EIDHR contributed a total of € 1 million to four projects focusing on strengthening democracy, good governance, accountability, transparency, citizen engagement and gender equality.

Through the Peace-building Partnership, the EU Delegation obtained € 1.8 million to finance organisations working on crime prevention and gender issues in prison and providing support for victims of gang violence. Under the component of the Instrument for Stability devoted to improving the capacity of non-state actors, an additional allocation of € 750 000 was approved for rehabilitation and reinsertion actions to help women in prisons.

Guatemala

On 18 April, the spokesman for the HR/VP issued a statement welcoming the Guatemala's progress in prosecuting important violations of human rights committed during the civil war' as a measure to foster reconciliation. However, there were concerns about the delays to the judicial proceedings against those accused of human rights violations during the civil war and the EU will continue to monitor progress in this area. Throughout 2013, the EU continued to provide financial and political support to the UN-backed International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). Following the extension of CICIG's mandate until September 2015, it approved a further financial contribution for 2014 to 2015.

The EU Delegation has followed up on several high profile cases of attacks on human rights defenders through regular dialogue with defenders, CSOs and state authorities, as well as by participating in public activities in which the important role of human rights defenders in the country has been highlighted. Support for protection measures was provided through the emergency fund for human rights defenders. The EU's annual meeting of human rights defenders took place on 10 December, with discussions on access to justice, union and labour rights and protecting economic, social, cultural and environmental rights.

The EU established a regular dialogue with all major trade union confederations and with the government authorities in charge of labour issues and of investigating crimes against trade unionists. It also fully supported the ILO's endeavours in helping the country improve its core labour standards. Effective implementation of the core ILO labour rights conventions is an important benchmark for the EU-Central America Association Agreement.

Promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples is part of all EU actions in Guatemala. The G-13 Working Group on Indigenous Peoples' Rights was set up as a forum to establish a joint and strategic dialogue on the issue between the main donors present in the country. Monthly meetings were held with indigenous social movements and state authorities. The EU also met with the Inter-American Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples' rights and the UN Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples' rights.

There were 665 violent deaths of women in the first ten months of 2013, an increase from 573 in the same period in 2012. The EU has expressed its concern about the high incidence of violence against women and stressed the necessity to prevent and punish those responsible. It helped civil society organisations launch the *Ya es Hora* campaign, and a special newsletter was published to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Honduras

Widespread human rights violations in Honduras continued during 2013, particularly violations of the rights of vulnerable groups such as human rights defenders, women, the LGTBI community and journalists. Frequent reports of attacks on and harassment of indigenous groups advocating the protection of environmental rights have been provided by national and international human rights NGOs. Generally speaking, the very high homicide and crime rates, combined with widespread impunity, adversely affect protection of the rights of all citizens.

The human rights situation in the country is a major concern for the EU and a priority for its political dialogue with national authorities. It remains a key player and donor in the security, justice and human rights sector. It holds regular meetings with human rights defenders and maintains an ongoing dialogue with civil society organisations. Many meetings and visits to the premises of human rights organisations were organised in 2013, including a follow-up session to evaluate the implementation of the EU's local strategy for the protection of human rights defenders. The Heads of Mission visited Bajo Aguán in April to monitor the human rights situation in the region and meet the local peasant and farmers' organisations.

The EU continues to work towards reducing impunity levels, improving investigation capacities, building capacity, strengthening institutions and improving service delivery. In 2013, the EU helped the Ministry for Justice and Human Rights implement the country's first National Human Rights Policy and Action Plan through the Programme for the Support of Human Rights in Honduras. Under the programme, it has contributed to the inclusion of human rights indicators throughout the operational planning of the different national institutions and supported the integration of a human rights approach at municipal level.

It is also helping to improve the situation of those living in detention centres. During 2013, an EU-funded project with the civil society organisation DOKITA supported the Women's National Penitentiary for Social Adaptation and contributed to the rehabilitation of detainees through vocational training and better living conditions. Within the framework of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the EU is also helping to strengthen the National Prevention Mechanism, responsible for monitoring the conditions of those in detention centres.

Between 2007 and 2013, the EU granted civil society organisations approximately €4 million of funding through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, €0.6 million of which was earmarked for 2013.

Mexico

Mexico is a strategic partner which has similar views and aims to those of the EU. In 2013, EU continued to help Mexico implement major reforms, focusing on the fight against impunity (reform of the criminal justice system), gender-based violence and the situation of human rights defenders, journalists and vulnerable groups (indigenous peoples, migrants).

Human rights issues were raised at the meeting of the Joint Committee in June. They also occupied a prominent place in parliamentary exchanges, notably during the visit of EP President Schulz to Mexico in February, during which he met civil society organisations. The two meetings of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee held in Mexico (May) and Strasbourg (November) included sessions with human rights defenders and members of civil society.

As a result of the civil society seminar that preceded the 2012 human rights dialogue, the EU considerably strengthened its engagement with NGOs in May 2013 by setting up a civil society working group in which the EU Delegation and the main human rights NGOs meet regularly. Two meetings to exchange information, views and recommendations on human rights priorities, and on the EU's dialogue and cooperation with Mexico, took place in 2013.

Under the local guidelines on human rights defenders, the EU Delegation and Member States' missions continued their regular work with activists. Field visits were made to the states of Coahuila, Chihuahua and Oaxaca, during which the EU representatives met Members of the local civil society and discussed individual human rights cases with senior local officials. Meetings were held with senior officials in the federal authorities, such as the Vice-Minister responsible for Human Rights, the Head of the Unit for the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists and the President of the National Human Rights Commission.

The EU continued to closely monitor developments in the case of Jyri Jaakkola, a Finnish citizen who was killed in 2010 while helping human rights defenders in Oaxaca. It was announced that the prosecution of one of his presumed murderers would start in early 2014.

From the multilateral point of view, the EU and Mexico continued their constructive engagement through consultations in New York, Geneva and Mexico City. The EU also supported Mexico's candidacy for the Human Rights Council 2014-2017.

The EU's cooperation revolved around these political priorities under the bilateral Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) allocation, the EIDHR and the non-state actors instrument. The DCI-financed 'Social Cohesion Laboratory II', signed in November with an overall EU contribution of € 11 million, includes a substantial human rights/access to justice component focusing on gender-related violence, the legitimate use of force, protecting human rights defenders, journalists and the rights of indigenous peoples, and support for criminal justice reform.

The EIDHR is contributing a total of € 1 million to NGO projects. A major goal is to strengthen the work of human rights defenders through protection, documentation and advocacy if they are attacked or threatened. A local call for proposals was launched under the NSA instrument in August, with a view to supporting NGOs working on the implementation of criminal justice reform, crime prevention, public safety and law enforcement. A project agreement was signed with the Ombudsman of Mexico City under the thematic line on migration and asylum, to protect the human rights of migrants by strengthening cooperation between civil society organisations and the public authorities of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

Nicaragua

In 2013, a number of developments related to human rights and democracy in Nicaragua were closely monitored by the EU with a view to include them in the future political dialogue between the EU and Nicaragua. A few main issues can be highlighted: controversial reform of the Constitution and Law 779, "Integral Law against Violence towards Woman"; police handling of protests; and the revocation of the mandates of two parliamentarians.

The reform of Law 779 included the procedural figure of mediation between couples for less serious crimes, when the woman had filed an abuse complaint. A positive issue of the reform was the promotion of the "Observatory Against Violence Towards Women" that has already completed the first phase of it creation. In 2013, non official figures reported 72 women murdered in Nicaragua due to gender based violence, less than previous year.

The EU provides support for human rights and democracy in Nicaragua through the bilateral cooperation portfolio (€214 million between 2007 and 2013), mainly focused on economic and social rights, and through thematic lines and instruments which are the basis for working with civil society. In 2013, it also helped further the cause of human rights and democracy by providing

support for civil society projects on relevant issues. Grants worth €6 million were awarded in support of actions on governance, job creation and entrepreneurship for women and young people in the country's rural areas. Other civil society projects funded through the EIDHR continued to be implemented during the year, focusing on widening democratic participation and promoting the human rights of the most vulnerable groups (children in conflict with the law, women, Afro-indigenous communities and the LGBTI community).

Panama

Panama is a middle-income country and one of the most stable and prosperous economies in Latin America. Its human rights record is considered to be relatively good in the context of the region. The main civil and political rights are guaranteed in the constitution and are in general respected.

In 2013, key objectives for the EU were consolidating democracy, ensuring respect for human rights and maintaining social cohesion. It focused on discrimination against minorities (indigenous people), the right to life (impunity, safety and security), detention conditions, civil society and international human rights mechanisms. In addition, the EU paid attention to matters related to impunity and disproportionate use of force by police. It monitored the situation with regard to these matters through regular contacts with the Panamanian authorities and dialogue with civil society organisations.

The EU-Central America Association Agreement, concluded in 2013, was under ratification by EU Member States at the end of the year. Once in force, it will provide the context for further engagement with Central American countries on human rights issues, in particular through political dialogue.

The key objectives were achieved in 2013 through bilateral and regional cooperation projects, and through thematic cooperation including actions financed under the EIDHR. The EU has contributed € 10 million to the Cohesal programme. It aims to reduce social and regional disparities in the context of institutional modernisation and social cohesion policies. Under the Secopa programme, the EU contributes € 28 million to provide strategic support to Panama to improve co-existence and citizens' security. The project for promoting democratic principles, which receives € 100 000 in EIDHR funding, supports the Foundation for the Development of Civic Freedom, the aim of which is to defend and promote democratic freedoms.

Paraguay

The EU's human rights priorities in Paraguay are to improve the justice and penitentiary system; to institutionalise human rights; to ensure better protection of the rights of children, women, the LGBTI community and indigenous peoples; and to ensure that environmental rights are respected.

An EU Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) was sent to Paraguay to observe the general elections of April 2013. The mission, led by MEP Renate Weber, concluded that the elections were well managed and a reliable measure of the will of the people.

Its final report included a list of recommendations which was well received by the government.

In 2013 the EU implemented three projects in Paraguay through the EIDHR for a total amount of € 625 000. The projects aim to strengthen the rights of people with disabilities, the right to food in rural areas and the rights of older people. The EU also launched a new EIDHR call for proposals with a budget of € 750 000, with the aims of strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and the rule of law, and supporting capacities for political dialogue and consensus-building.

Peru

Dialogue with the Peruvian authorities and civil society continued in 2013. The human rights priorities for the EU are indigenous peoples' rights; the prevention of social conflicts; follow-up on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and the rights of vulnerable populations, especially women and the LGTBI community.

Vice-President Ashton's visit in January 2013 served to highlight the EU's interest in supporting Peruvian social policy, including through Europan*,* the bilateral cooperation programme aimed at tackling poverty and malnutrition.

The EU Delegation closely followed developments in the country through frequent contacts with the Vice-Minister for Human Rights, representatives of Peru's Ombudsman, local NGOs, third countries' embassies and through field visits to various regions of Peru.

Discussions with the authorities took place on matters such as the death penalty and coordinating positions at multilateral level. From early 2013, the EU decided to pay particular attention to social conflicts relating to extractive industries, which have become a major subject of national NGOs' reports on human rights violations. Reports on attacks on human rights defenders (mostly defending environmental rights) are closely monitored and emergency support measures have been implemented. With regard to indigenous peoples, the EU has been closely monitoring implementation of the law on prior consultation of indigenous peoples.

In 2013, the EU contributed a total of € 4.5 million to eight projects under the EIDHR. The human rights issues covered include access to justice, preventing torture and conflicts, discrimination, the rights of indigenous peoples, governance and access to justice and establishment of historical memory of the violent internal conflict in Peru in the 80s and 90s. At the end of the year, three more projects were awaiting approval under a local call for proposals for human rights projects (for a total of almost € 700 000) focusing on gender, discrimination and the rights of the LGBTI community.

Uruguay

EU action in Uruguay focused on justice, the rule of law and the link between human rights and public security, which is a major concern for Uruguayan citizens. The EU continued to support the reform of the penal justice and penitentiary systems, the improvement of prison conditions and the reintegration of prisoners. Other areas of concern it closely monitors and provides support for through the EIDHR include domestic violence and the trafficking of women and children. In 2013, it allocated € 300 000 from the EIDHR's country allocation to promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the family, educational and neighbourhood environments.

In October, Uruguay presented its fifth report to the UN Human Rights Committee, highlighting work done in the areas of gender equality, migrant and foreign workers, domestic violence, racism and other forms of discrimination and reducing over-crowding in prisons. It also prepared for its second UPR appearance at the Human Rights Council, scheduled for January 2014.

Venezuela

The very high homicide and crime rates, combined with widespread impunity, adversely affect protection of the rights of all citizens.

The EU does not have a structured political dialogue with the Venezuelan Government. Discussions on human rights therefore took place in an *ad hoc* manner during meetings between the EU Delegation or Member State embassies and the Venezuelan authorities

Venezuela's denunciation of the American Convention on Human Rights, of which it formally notified the Organization of American States in September 2012, took effect on 10 September 2013. The European Union recognises the important developments that have taken place in the region in terms of human rights and believes that the Inter-American System of Human Rights has played a significant role in those developments.

In a statement following the April 14 presidential elections in Venezuela, Vice-President Ashton expressed concern at the increasing polarisation of Venezuelan society. She called upon all parties to engage in peaceful dialogue and work together to promote good governance and transparency.

In 2013, the implementation of nine projects funded through the EIDHR was completed. A new local call for proposals was launched in June under the EIDHR. The general objective is to strengthen democracy by empowering citizens and legislators and strengthening respect for the human rights of vulnerable groups, with a special emphasis on the prison population and refugees, and on guaranteeing due process. The EU Delegation organised the annual meeting with human rights defenders in June 2013,

XI The Caribbean

Antigua and Barbuda

In 2013, Antigua and Barbuda continued to face serious human rights challenges, ranging from failure by law enforcement bodies to comply with international human rights standards, the death penalty, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender-based violence.

No death sentences had been carried out since 1991, which amounted to a *de facto* moratorium. However, there were public calls to resume executions, and the EU Delegation engaged with the authorities to discuss this issue.

In 2013, Antigua and Barbuda received EUR 3.4 million in funding from the 10th European Development Fund. In line with the key human rights principles of transparency and universality of services, this assistance focused on public finance management, support to the government and support to civil society. The EU also provided EUR 380 000 to the Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Center for a project to empower women through entrepreneurship and inclusive vocational training.

Bahamas

In 2013, the EU's human rights priorities for the Bahamas were abolition of the death penalty, improving conditions of detention, defending women's rights and ending discrimination against illegal immigrants. The Bahamian authorities still consider the death penalty as an effective deterrent to crime, and one person remain on death row. The Current legislation leads to a *de facto* moratorium on the death penalty, as the right to appeal to UK based Privy Council prevents implementation of death sentences. The second Universal Periodic Review of the Bahamas in January 2013 by the UN Human Rights Council acknowledged achievements in a number of areas, including measures to curb human trafficking, promote women's rights and provide human rights education. The UN's main recommendations related to national human rights institutions, the death penalty, police misconduct, and discrimination based on sexual orientation

During 2013, the Bahamas was heavily criticised for its treatment of Haitian immigrants and Cuban detainees. Also, the Bahamas has not ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The EU raised both issues with the government.

Barbados

In Barbados, concerns remained over the death penalty, mandatory death sentences for murder and treason, corporal punishment, impunity for the use of excessive force by police, conditions of detention and the criminal penalties for consensual sexual acts between adults of the same sex. The EU continued its dialogue with the authorities on the death penalty and the government's earlier commitment to remove the mandatory death sentence for murder from the statute books. The UN Human Rights Council conducted its Universal Public Review for Barbados in 2013,

Gender-based domestic violence was the EU's utmost priority for Barbados in 2013, and cooperation continued to implement the EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them. Following the European Council's selection of Barbados, in 2008, as a pilot country on children's rights, the EU and Barbados also continued to work together on a pilot programme on violence against children.

In 2013, the EU continued to work with the authorities to curb domestic violence. For this purpose, the EU Delegation led an informal working party made up of development partners, civil society, and government bodies, including the police.

In common with many other countries in the region, Barbados still retains legislation that undermines people's rights based on their sexual orientation. Under the Sexual Offences Act, certain consensual sexual acts between adults of the same sex are punishable by life imprisonment. The EU, in close cooperation with the British High Commission, engaged with local media to counter prejudice on the basis of sexual orientation.

Together with the Regional Security System, the EU Delegation offered a training programme for the security forces that included human rights principles and supported a national action plan for human resources that promoted social inclusion and access to quality education for all.

In 2013, the EU Delegation spent EUR 100 000 in support of numerous non-governmental organisations that promoted human rights.

Belize

The EU's human rights priorities for Belize were the use of excessive force by security forces, lengthy pre-trial detention, domestic violence, discrimination against women, child abuse, human trafficking and discrimination based on sexual orientation. Although Belize retains the death penalty for murder and military offences, it is considered to be a *de facto* abolitionist state.

The UN Human Rights Council conducted its second Universal Periodic Review for Belize in October 2013.

The EU continued to promote human rights in Belize through meetings and discussions with interest groups and the government. In addition, the EU Delegation helped to raise awareness of offender rehabilitation by sponsoring the screening of a documentary about an EU-funded programme in Jamaica that used music to rehabilitate prison inmates. The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) allocated EUR 100 000 to UNICEF for child protection.

Cuba

There is no legal framework for relations between the EU and Cuba, but political dialogue and cooperation were re-launched in 2008. The EU aimed to promote civil, political, social, economic, cultural and other human rights in Cuba.

In 2013, the EU encouraged Cuba to increase the freedom of movement and ratify international human rights covenants. Improvement on these two fronts was seen as likely to broaden the freedom of expression and the freedoms of association and assembly, and to give civil society and human rights defenders more margin for manoeuvre.

The year was marked by the new migration law that entered into force in January and significantly eased travel and migration restrictions for Cuban citizens. In 2013, the EU advocated a broad interpretation of the law and closely monitored its implementation. The law enabled representatives from the Ladies in White movement to travel to Brussels in April to receive the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, which the European Parliament had awarded to them in 2005. Similarly, Guillermo Fariñas, who was awarded the Sakharov Prize in 2010, was able to attend a ceremony held in his honour at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Freedom of travel resulted in more contacts between representatives of Cuban civil society and EU officials in Brussels. The EU Delegation in the capital Havana established a human rights focal point and engaged with a diverse range of Cubans in a human rights working group. However the meetings between the EU with te opposition continutes to be prohibited, The EU engaged with authorities and independent lawyers on a reform of the criminal code. Also, the EU expressed concern about the concept of ‘social dangerousness’ in Cuba’s penal code.

In its dialogues with the Cuban authorities, the EU also encouraged Cuba to ratify the UN conventions on human rights, and to extend invitations to UN special rapporteurs on various human rights issues. On a positive note, the moratorium on the death penalty remained in place, and no new death sentences were pronounced.

In May, the UN Human Rights Council conducted the second round of its Universal Periodic Review and gave Cuba 292 recommendations. The Cuban government fully accepted 230 of these, took note of another 42 and rejected 20. The EU facilitated coordination between EU Member States' missions before and after the review with a view to urging the Cuban government jointly to follow up on the review.

The EU continued to fund cooperation projects in Cuba to strengthen the rights of women, adolescents and people with disabilities. The EU also set aside EUR 300 000 for Cuba under the 2013 allocation of the EIDHR and engaged in preparatory work with the authorities and civil society on its allocation.

Dominica

Despite the general improvement in the country's human and social development, Dominica continued to face persistent economic and social challenges in 2013, such as high levels of youth unemployment, high emigration and rising crime rates. The indigenous Kalinago people are especially vulnerable.

The main human rights concerns for Dominica related to the death penalty, corporal punishment, conditions of detention and the criminal penalties for consensual sexual acts between adults of the same sex. Domestic violence and sexual abuse continued to undermine core development and protection rights of the population and exacerbated the inter-generational cycle of violence that affected the whole of society.

The EU continued to be the largest international donor to Dominica, helping it to enhance social and economic rights. The General Budget Support Programme of the 10th European Development Fund aimed at supporting Dominica's poverty reduction strategy and provided complementary support to the government and civil society organisations.

Dominican Republic

In a formal sense, most human rights were respected in the Dominican Republic. All relevant conventions had been ratified, except those on migrant workers and their families and on the prevention of statelessness. However, in practice, there were problems concerning gender, extra-judicial killings, migration, race and nationality, rights of people with disabilities and human trafficking.

With the ratification of the new Constitution in 2010 and the naming of an Ombudsman in May 2013, progress in the realm of human rights is deepening, which the success of the protection of freedom of expression and the high levels of civil society participation allude to.

In 2013, the EU and the government of the Dominican Republic continued their regular political dialogue. At the most recent meeting, the EU gave special attention to human trafficking, as the Dominican Republic is a priority country for EU cooperation in this field. The EU continued to engage with many major human rights organisations and supported key organisations that promote human rights.

In September, the constitutional court handed down a controversial ruling that could deprive thousands of Dominicans of foreign descent (mainly Haitian) of their citizenship and effectively render them stateless. The EU monitored the situation carefully and kept in close contact with both the Dominican government and human rights organisations.

The EU continued to support public administration reform, bilateral relations with Haiti and work in the areas of governance and human rights. Through the Instrument for Stability, the EU contributed EUR 5.5 million to the management of Haitian migration, which resulted in the first survey of immigrant workers. In 2013, the EIDHR contributed EUR 346 480 to projects in areas such as the rights of persons with disabilities, women's right to representation, women's sexual and reproductive health; and migrant and nationality rights.

Grenada

Over the preceding five years, Grenada was hit hard by a combination of natural disasters and the global economic recession. This exacerbated vulnerability and poverty in the country. Grenada continued to face human rights challenges such as the death penalty, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, sexual abuse, and domestic violence. In 2013, the EU prioritised gender-based domestic violence in its political dialogue with the government and in its contacts with key stakeholders, such as the University of Huddersfield and the NGO Grenada Community Development Agency.

In 2013, Grenada ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The EU provided Grenada with budget support to enhance social inclusion, social rights and education outcomes. The country adopted a new poverty reduction programme that singled out health and education as focal points for government expenditure.

Guyana

In 2013, Guyana was still a fragile, democracy with a multi-ethnic, multi-religious population. It achieved a certain degree of progress in building a governance infrastructure and bolstering several sectors of the economy. The EU identified domestic violence (including sexual violence), child abuse and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation as the main human rights issues to be addressed. Trafficking of persons and prostitution of women and girls in remote mining areas were particularly prominent in 2013.

The EU continued to support civil society organisations through the programme 'Non-state actors and local authorities' and the EIDHR. It spent about EUR 1.14 million on the fight against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, the fight against gender-based violence and violence against children, and provided support to Amerindian communities.

Although the country observed a *de facto* moratorium on the death penalty, capital punishment was still enshrined in the constitution. In October, the EU Delegation urged Guyana to abolish the death penalty.

Haiti

In December 2013, the EU launched a political dialogue with Haiti. A first working session was scheduled to take place in early 2014, at which human rights issues would be on the agenda.

The EU's main objectives in its political dialogue with Haiti were human rights and democracy, and more particularly the rights of women and children, civil society organisations and human rights defenders, and the rule of law. The EU put particular emphasis on gender-based violence, children living in conditions of domestic slavery, the judiciary system and conditions of detention.

In 2013, EU financial support mainly focused on children's rights. The European Commission and the Member States funded seminars and numerous projects in support of civil society and public administration. The EU also provided about EUR 5 million in funding to projects aimed at

protecting the rights of women and children. In May, a presidential decree established a government human rights commission. This has responsibility for supervising Haiti's ratification of new international human rights agreements, compliance with existing agreements and implementing the 112 recommendations the government accepted in 2012 under the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council.

The EU was to contribute EUR 5 million to a programme led by the United Nations Development Programme supporting the electoral process. This programme aimed to enhance the capacities of the provisional electoral authority, which should lead to the establishment of a fully-fledged permanent electoral council.

Jamaica

The EU´s human rights priorities for Jamaica were abolition of the death penalty, alleged misconduct by the security forces, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, conditions of detention, and women's and children's rights. Jamaica retains the death penalty for murder, although it has observed a *de facto* moratorium on its application since 1988. Nevertheless, a total of 213 people died at the hands of police from January to October alone. Jamaican non-governmental organisations had pressed the government for years to repeal the law against sodomy and to pass legislation to end discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The conditions of children in detention continued to be a cause for concern. Jamaica has still not ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In 2013, the EU continued to promote human rights through a number of activities, focusing on discrimination and children in detention. The EU Delegation organised a number of public screenings of a locally produced documentary showing how inmates at the Tower Street correctional facility participated in a project — funded under the EIDHR — that relies on music to rehabilitate them. The EU Delegation also supported a public forum on the progress being made on recommendations issued under the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Human rights issues were regularly raised in contacts with the government at various levels.

In June, four EIDHR projects were signed to promote rehabilitation of detainees, legal aid to victims of abuse by the state, human rights training and publicity, and children´s and women's rights. Their total value was EUR 523 000. Earlier in the year EUR 200 000 was allocated to a joint project with UNICEF to rehabilitate children in detention and give them counselling.

St. Kitts and Nevis

Overcrowding and inhumane conditions of detention continued to be major issues, exacerbated by judicial delays and lack of reform. The EU is supporting an alternative sentencing strategy to promote alternatives to incarceration, and cooperates with the authorities on penal reform.

Over the preceding decade, close to EUR 70 million had been allocated to support Saint Kitts and Nevis in protecting the economic and social rights of its population by promoting social inclusion, quality education, and transparency in the management of land and public finances.

The EU focused its support under the 10th European Development Fund on the government's chosen priority of internal safety and security. This helped both the government and civil society to reduce the country's endemic violence in small but noticeable steps.

St. Lucia

The EU identified domestic violence as the main human rights priority for Saint Lucia. In 2013, it supported the EU-St. Lucia non-state actors panel in promoting human rights and encouraging victims to report abuses. Saint Lucia retained the death penalty, although it observed a *de facto* moratorium on its application.

The EU promoted economic and social rights in Saint Lucia mainly by funding the health and agriculture sectors. To tackle governance issues in national security, the EU acted mainly through regional programmes such as the Regional Security System, the CARICOM[31] Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, and the Seaport Cooperation Programme.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

In 2013, the EU prioritised domestic violence as the key human rights issue for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The law does not treat domestic violence as a criminal offence, but prosecutors can bring charges for assault, battery and similar offences, and the government operates a shelter to protect survivors. Sadly, police were often reluctant to investigate, with the result that many perpetrators enjoyed impunity.

EU development support mainly focused on agriculture and on improving access to healthcare for all members of society. The EU cooperated with an active panel of non-state actors. This panel provided gender-sensitive support to local civil society organisations that promoted the right to participate in public life.

[31] Caribbean Community and Common Market

Suriname

In 2013, the main human rights challenges in Suriname were conditions of detention, domestic violence, and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Trafficking of women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation became a particularly prominent issue. Although Suriname observes a *de facto* moratorium on the death penalty, capital punishment is still on the statute book.

During the second round of the political dialogue held in April in the capital Paramaribo, the EU raised its concern on the impact of the amendment to the amnesty law, and appealed to the Surinamese authorities to abolish the death penalty. For the first time, the EU granted Suriname an allocation under the country-based support schemes of the EIDHR, and a call for proposals was to be launched in 2014. Moreover, a consultation session was held with civil society organisations for the new 2014-20 programing cycle.

Trinidad and Tobago

In 2013, the EU had the following human rights priorities for Trinidad and Tobago: maintaining the existing moratorium on the death penalty while working towards its abolition; promoting women's and children's rights; tackling discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; prisoners´ rights; and strengthening the capacity of investigative bodies.

The EU and Trinidad and Tobago continued their regular political dialogue, in which they addressed issues such as discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, prison conditions and the functioning of investigative bodies such as the Children's Authority. The EU raised public awareness of the need to abolish the death penalty, which has helped to maintain the existing moratorium on executions. Less progress was made concerning children´s and women's rights, mainly owing to the absence of a country-based support scheme.

The EU Delegation provided funding under the 10th European Development Fund for conferences, workshops and training to promote human rights awareness.