

JANUARY 1 - JUNE 30, 2022

Assessment of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

In March 2022, Plateforme des Droits de l'Homme published the position paper For a French presidency of the European Union promoting and defending human rights ! setting out, around 3 axes and 20 demands, the recommendations of civil society organizations for the protection of human rights to the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EUPF).

The purpose of this document, six months after the start of the EUPF, is to take stock of the actions according to our recommendations.



IOI Plateforme
IOI Droits de l'Homme

Introduction

For the first time in 13 years, France has ensured the EUFP. From 1 January to 30 June 2022, the orientations given by this presidency have weighed on the European legislative agenda. During his inaugural speech [1], Emmanuel Macron stated the three axes given to this presidency : "a sovereign Europe", "a new European growth model" and "a Europe on a human scale".

These three priorities are related to an action plan published on January 1, 2022 [2]. This program proposed, among other things, major advances concerning border protection and the development of a European defense policy, a growth policy that reconciles economic development and climate transition, support for digital innovation, a social policy in favor of qualified and better-paid jobs, as well as a section on the defense of the rule of law and European values.

This program was positioned in a European moment [3], facing health and climate crises, the digital revolution, migration issues and the affirmation of powers. But on February 24, 2022, the war in Ukraine broke out on the European continent. This major event disrupted the European agenda and led to changes in European policy priorities, particularly in terms of energy independence and European defense policy. More than ever, France has reinforced its will to reinforce European sovereignty.

However, beyond a "powerful" and "sovereign" [4] Europe as announced by Emmanuel Macron during the inaugural speech of the EUFP, civil society organizations expected the EUFP, during these six months, to design a more human Europe of the future, protector of civic space and human rights, promoting ecological initiatives and working for more equality. In addition, they wanted the European Union (EU) to undertake a strong and ambitious action to support and promote the work of civil society organizations, and particularly by recognizing their expertise and added value in responding to the major crises of our time. As France enters its final days as Council President, has it met these expectations?

Assessment of the EUFR in response to the recommendations concerning EU support for French NGOs engaged in the defense and protection of human rights:

1 - COHERENCY BETWEEN THE EU'S INTERNAL AND FOREIGN POLICIES

The Russian military assault against Ukraine reinforced the coherency between the EU's internal and external human rights policies. Condemning Russia's actions, the European Council expressed its solidarity with Ukraine, pledging to provide necessary humanitarian help [5]. In this context, it is also worth highlighting the sanctions taken by the EU against Russia but also against Belarus.

The war in Ukraine has also had an impact on the EU's relations with China, continuing existing tensions concerning China's human rights policy. Indeed, if trade between the EU and China has never been as intense as in 2021, the EU has made the necessary commitments to condemn and punish the actions of the Chinese government, particularly with regard to forced labor.

On March 22, sanctions were imposed on four Chinese leaders for their involvement in the repression of the Uyghur people. These convictions for serious human rights abuses are in addition to the EU directive on the duty of vigilance of companies concerning human rights and environment in global value chains, and therefore in relations with China. Despite this, we must admit that the Chinese and Europeans remain in a "situation of extreme interdependence" [6]

2 - ESTABLISH HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT STUDIES OF EU-FUNDED PROJECTS AND CREATE A SPECIFIC MECHANISM FOR MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS PERPETRATED BY EU-TRAINED SECURITY FORCES

The Strategic Compass [7], a new plan to reinforce the EU's defense and security policy by 2030, was adopted on Thursday, March 24, 2022 by the European Council. This long-awaited first European defense white paper marks a turning point in EU policy, towards a common defense strategy. This action plan follows an evaluation of the current threats and challenges facing the EU. Its publication has been accelerated in view of the rise of powers and the return of war in Europe.

In the context of such a strengthening of its defense policy, it is essential that the EU sets up a monitoring of its actions. There is indeed a lack of transparency in the monitoring of human rights violations committed by EU-trained security forces, like the abuses committed between 2012 and 2017 in Mali by soldiers of the Malian army trained by the European Union Training Mission (EUTM), as reported by the International Commission of Inquiry for Mali [8]. The strategic plan does not include a specific component dedicated to the prevention and punishment of human rights violations by European forces. We reiterate our recommendation on this point.

3 - ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS IN EU FOREIGN POLICY

The EU has been able to reinforce its action to promote economic, social and cultural rights in its foreign policy. The Sixth EU-African Union Summit [9], held on 17 and 18 February 2022, was an opportunity to renew the partnership between these two Unions, while affirming the EU's willingness to act over the long term. The issues of health (access to vaccines and work on Africa's sovereignty in terms of health), education and the economy were also discussed.

The Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific was also an opportunity, on February 22, to recognize the importance of economic, social and cultural rights in the EU's foreign policy. Discussions focused in particular on the climate emergency, from a common perspective of mitigating its consequences on the most vulnerable countries, while allowing their development. In view of the humanitarian stakes, we believe it is essential to continue to place this issue in the center of the EU's priorities. The Forum also highlighted the importance of cooperation between the two regions in terms of education; cooperation reinforced by university exchange programs, such as the Erasmus+ program with specific support for students with disabilities [10].

This cooperation appears, in fact, as a major issue for innovation and research in the Indo-Pacific region (connecting innovators and developing capacities to cooperate internationally on global issues).

Finally, the Covid-19 crisis has shown the need for stronger cooperation in health, both on a cross-border and transnational scale. The launch of the "European Hospital" [11] label project is to be welcomed, which should make it possible to reinforce networks and joint actions in the field of health, provided that it is set up and continued in the long term.

4 - ESTABLISHING A CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EU FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AGENCY AND THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The United Nations and the EU have common objectives, particularly in terms of protecting fundamental rights. We reiterate the interest of an increased collaboration to be put in place between these EU and UN bodies in charge of the respect of human rights.

5 - CONSOLIDATE FUNDING FOR PROJECTS RUN BY HUMAN RIGHTS NGOS AND SIMPLIFY THE MECHANISMS FOR OBTAINING ASSISTANCE TO GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE ACTIVITIES ON THE GROUND

For a long time, the EU has been a major contributor to the work of NGOs promoting and protecting human rights. Its support for humanitarian aid during the COVID-19 pandemic was decisive. During the EUFP, actions were taken in this sense. The first humanitarian forum was held from 21 to 23 March 2022 in Brussels [12]. The European Humanitarian Response Capability was created to ensure the efficient delivery of humanitarian aid in the event of a sudden-onset natural disaster. Participants also worked on finding new donors. New partnerships could be created based on the "Grand Bargain" [13] model, an agreement between the largest donors and the humanitarian UN agencies which aims to maximize the efficiency of humanitarian sector funding. This "Grand Bargain" has the particularity of establishing a dialogue of equals between applicants and donors and the respect of a list of commitments, in order to reach financial compromises.

In addition, the EU has committed to increase funding for projects related to the climate and environmental crisis, with the objective of better integration of climate risks into humanitarian projects.

This commitment was immediately followed by the adoption by the 27 Member States, on 21 March 2022, of the Humanitarian Aid Donors' Declaration on Climate and Environment.

Furthermore, the Humanitarian Forum attracted increased attention from member states, with 15 foreign ministers in attendance. While such engagement is easily attributable to the context of the war in Ukraine, it is nonetheless an important step in consolidating the EU's role as a driver of humanitarian action.

However, the French presidency of the EU has not succeeded in simplifying the mechanisms for obtaining funding for human rights NGOs, which have even become more difficult with the new procedures in place.

6 - ENABLE PROJECT FUNDING AT THE MICRO AND MESO LEVEL WITH LIGHT PROJECT MONITORING ADAPTED TO STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED NGOS

The European Humanitarian Forum in Brussels in March 2022 reaffirmed the EU's commitment to strengthen the implementation of international humanitarian law. We welcome the expansion of exemptions for humanitarian actions under the mechanisms for sanctioning human rights violations in member states.

However, we would like to see a dialogue between the EU and civil society organizations, including human rights organizations, to reinforce these exemptions and reduce the administrative burden.

The implementation of stricter monitoring of international humanitarian law, mentioned during the humanitarian forum, has led to a tightening of the requirements for European funding, including for human rights NGOs. These new requirements, which take the form of laws and regulations applicable to all projects carried out, such as the filtering and screening of funds in the context of the fight against terrorism or the increasing complexity of audits and procedures for obtaining funding, mainly impact small and medium-sized NGOs that do not have the human resources necessary to respond to this increased complexity.

These measures currently only apply to humanitarian NGOs. Although the question of their application to human rights NGOs was not discussed during the various events organized by the EUFP, it is highly likely that they will be extended to the human rights sector in the future.

We reiterate the need for the EU to take more into consideration the added value of the action of French civil society, and therefore to adapt the requirements for funding to the structural constraints of humanitarian and human rights NGOs.

This reflection was initiated during the EUFP through the European Parliament's resolution of March 8, 2022 [14], which presents a strategy for strengthening the civic space. The European Parliament reminds Member States that they have a "positive obligation to ensure an enabling environment for CSOs"[15]. It is now up to the next EU Presidency to implement this action plan.

7 - IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EU BODIES WORKING ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE WORLD AND CIVIL SOCIETY MOBILIZED ON THESE ISSUES AND PROMOTING PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION BY EUROPEAN NGOS OF THE EU ACTION PLAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY 2020-2024

During the French presidency, the conference on the future of Europe concluded its one year long work, which allowed European citizens and representatives of civil society to formulate [16] propositions and measures to be taken by the EU around major themes such as, among others, law, democracy, the rule of law and migration, in order to ensure a better future for Europe. The final report [17] was published on May 9, 2022, on Europe Day. This event, because of its considerable dimension, is a good example of communication between the EU institutions and civil society.

However, the follow-up and implementation of these propositions by the targeted bodies, namely the Council of the EU, the European Parliament and the EU Commission, remains a great challenge.

With regard to support for the implementation by European NGOs of the EU Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, actions in this area should be intensified as the Plan will come to an end in two years.

8 - EFFECTIVELY GUARANTEE PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN OFFICIAL EUFP EVENTS AND THEIR PREPARATORY MEETINGS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

Human rights organizations have been invited to participate effectively in various official EUFP events, such as the first European Humanitarian Forum. The war in Ukraine, and consequently, the humanitarian emergency that ensued, are particularly revealing of the need to involve human rights organizations more. For this reason, we reiterate the need to systematically allow human rights NGOs to participate in the official events of this subject, and to involve them upstream in the organization of the latter.

[1] Speech by President Emmanuel Macron to the European Parliament, 19 January 2022, available on <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/french-president-emmanuel-macron-s-speech-at-the-european-parliament-strasbourg-19-january-2022/>

[2] The program of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, available on <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/programme/programme-of-the-presidency/>

[3] *ibid.*

[4] *ibid.*

[5] European Council conclusions on Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military assault against Ukraine : <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/25/european-council-conclusions-on-the-russian-military-aggression-against-ukraine-24-march-2022/>

[6] EU-China summit: war in Ukraine interferes in relations with Beijing, *Toute l'Europe*, available on <https://www.touteleurope.eu/l-ue-dans-le-monde/sommet-ue-chine-la-guerre-en-ukraine-s-imisce-dans-les-relations-avec-pekin/>

[7] Strategic compass for security and defense, available on https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf

[8] June 19, 2020 report, available on <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/024/69/PDF/N2102469.pdf?OpenElement>

[9] European Union-African Union Summit, February 17-18, 2022, available on <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/press/press-releases/2022/02/18/sixth-european-union-african-union-summit-a-joint-vision-for-2030/>

[10] Improving accessibility and access to rights: implementing the Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030, 9 March 2022, <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/improving-accessibility-and-access-to-rights-implementing-the-strategy-for-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2021-2030/>

[11] Resilience of health systems - launch of work on the "European Hospital" label project", 18 January 2022, <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/resilience-of-health-systems-beginning-work-on-the-european-hospital-label-project/>

[12] European Humanitarian Forum: Commission and French Presidency of the Council of the European Union affirm EU aid policy ambitions, 23 March 2022, <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/press-release-european-humanitarian-forum-the-commission-and-the-french-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-european-union-affirm-the-ambitions-of-eu-aid-policy/>

[13] What is the Grand Bargain, IASC website, available on <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/about-the-grand-bargain>

[14] European resolution of 8 March 2022 , available on https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-03-08_EN.html

[15] *ibid.*

[16] Conference on the future of Europe concludes its work, 9 May 2022, available on <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/press-release-the-conference-on-the-future-of-europe-concludes-its-work/>

[17] Conference on the future of Europe, Report on the final results, <https://futureeu.europa.eu/pages/reporting?format=html&locale=en>

Assessment of the EUFP in response to the recommendations on the EU's commitment to the protection of human rights :

1 - ADOPTING A CONCERTED AND EFFECTIVE EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR SANCTIONING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AT THE EU'S BORDERS AND MANAGING THE HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES THEY ENTAIL

The French presidency, whose agenda was considerably affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, had to deal with the humanitarian consequences caused by the conflict. Since February 2022, the EU has adopted six sets of economic, trade and diplomatic sanctions not only against Russia, but also against individuals. Belarus is also subject to the sanctions, as a promoter of this invasion undermining the territorial integrity of Ukraine and fundamental rights [18].

To deal with these humanitarian consequences, in addition to the series of sanctions, the EU has also adopted an action plan [19] that defines the objectives and measures to be taken in order to face this humanitarian crisis and prevent the risks of violations of fundamental rights of people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

In addition, the EU's indirect sanctions against China regarding the situation of the Uighurs are also part of a strategy adopted by the Union to fight against human rights violations at its borders. This is the resolution of the European Parliament adopted on June 9, 2022, which is a continuation of another resolution dated December 17, 2020 concerning forced labor and the situation of Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The resolution seeks to create a new trade instrument "to prohibit the import and export of products manufactured or transported by the use of forced labor" [20]

2 - ENSURE RESPECT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL EU HUMAN RIGHTS GUIDELINES

In a context of weakening human rights, particularly in regard to the current crises, it is necessary to ensure that all EU human rights guidelines are respected and applied. In the continuity of the efforts already put in place, in particular through sanction measures against States that do not respect human rights, we reiterate the need to ensure their respect.

3 - SUPPORTING ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND THE PROTECTION OF CIVIC SPACE IN STATES WHERE THIS IS A PARTICULAR CONCERN, INCLUDING THROUGH THE SYSTEMATIC SENDING OF OBSERVERS DURING ELECTION PERIODS

The defense of the rule of law and democracy had been announced as one of the pillars of this French Presidency [21]. We therefore welcome the efforts made to reinforce existing tools, such as the regulation on conditionality related to the rule of law [22]. We are also pleased to note the importance given to civil society and the resulting ideas for a strategy to protect civil society organizations [23]. In addition, it is worth mentioning the establishment of an election observation mission in Lebanon [24], at the invitation of its Ministry of Interior and Municipalities. The sending of observers during election periods must, in this way, continue and be reinforced, and this in all the States where this problem remains particularly worrying.

4 - ADOPT AN AMBITIOUS EUROPEAN DIRECTIVE ON CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY, INCLUDING OBLIGATIONS TO ENSURE THAT THEIR BUSINESSES DO NOT VIOLATE CIVIL LIBERTIES (SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT, INTERNET BLACKOUTS), THE ENVIRONMENT (DEFORESTATION) AND MORE BROADLY HUMAN RIGHTS

In the context of the recognition of the harmful effects of the activity of large companies undermining human rights and the environment, the proposition for a directive on the duty of care of companies was adopted on 23 February 2022 by the European Commission [25]. This draft directive, long awaited on the European continent, concerns the operations of companies, their subsidiaries and their value chain, and places them on the same playing field with fair rules. The directive focuses on the responsibility of companies and their directors for human and environmental rights violations and, in addition to control mechanisms, it provides mechanisms to prevent such violations. Despite several questions that arise [26], the adoption of the draft directive on the duty of care is a major step forward in favor of the above-mentioned rights, while the transposition and application of the directive is the challenge of the next decade [27].

5 - IMPLEMENT THE LGBTQIA+ EQUALITY STRATEGY RELEASED IN NOVEMBER 2020

On November 12, 2020, the EU presented a five-year strategy for LGBTQI+ equality in the EU. It plans to tackle inequalities affecting LGBTQI+ people [28], through legal measures such as including hate speech and hate crimes based on sexual orientation in the EU's list of criminal offences [29]. During the EUFP, round tables were held on this subject during the conference "Hate, discrimination and gender violence: justice in the face of contemporary forms of intolerance" [30] which took place on 27 January 2022. The question of the role of the Internet in the dissemination of hate speech and discrimination was also addressed. Following this preparatory work, we reiterate our recommendation that concrete actions should be taken on the legislative level, such as the inclusion of hate speech in section 83.

6 - MAKE THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY A PRIORITY FOR THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE ON THE GROUND

On February 18, 2022, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on the Iranian authorities to put in place a moratorium on the application of the death penalty. Together with Raphaël Chenuil-Hazan, Executive Director of Ensemble contre la peine de mort, we welcome this "strong signal [sent] to the international scene" [31].

We hope, in this way, that this resolution marks the need to make the abolition of the death penalty a priority for the European service in its external action on the ground.

7 - ENSURE COORDINATED CONSULAR SUPPORT AMONG EU MEMBERS FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENS FACING THE DEATH PENALTY AROUND THE WORLD, WHEREVER AND WHENEVER THEY ARE

In its resolution on the death penalty in Iran, adopted in February 2022, the European Parliament emphasizes the protection of European nationals detained in specific circumstances, calling on EU member states to take "diplomatic initiatives to monitor unfair trials and visit prisons where human rights defenders and other prisoners of conscience are being held, including European nationals in Iran, in accordance with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders" and calling for "all charges against all arbitrarily detained EU nationals to be promptly dropped" [32]. However, we reiterate the recommendation to continue efforts to ensure coordinated consular support among EU members for European citizens facing the death penalty worldwide in all places and circumstances.

8 - REPATRIATION OF EUROPEAN NATIONALS (MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN), PRISONERS AND/OR DETAINEES IN CAMPS IN SYRIA DUE TO AFFILIATION WITH ISLAMIST TERRORISM

The living conditions of European nationals, prisoners and/or detainees in the camps in Syria, are contrary to human rights. That is why we reiterate our demand for a common policy, at the EU level, of repatriation of European nationals (men, women, children), prisoners and/or detainees in camps in Syria due to their affiliation to Islamist terrorism.

9 - DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM AND THE PROTECTION OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS IN THE RECASTING OF THE COMMON ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY

During the French presidency, the issue of unaccompanied minors was raised several times, both in the general context of improving certain measures [33], and in a more specific context, namely the war in Ukraine. During the meetings, particular attention was paid to the consolidation of databases to facilitate the protection of the rights of refugees, especially the superior interests of unaccompanied minor children fleeing war [34]. In coordination with the French Presidency, an action plan has been drafted with a view to reinforce

coordination between Member States in the area of reception of persons in exile [35]. According to this plan [36], the support and reception of unaccompanied minors is one of the objectives set by the EU. In order to achieve this goal, the new anti-trafficking plan to protect people fleeing the war in Ukraine [37], developed by the Commission, contains recommendations for measures to be taken by Member States, EU institutions or agencies in close cooperation with civil society organizations to ensure that the interests of unaccompanied minors are respected.

10 - CARRYING OUT A POLICY TO FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING BY INVOLVING AND SUPPORTING SPECIALIZED ASSOCIATIONS AND IMPROVING PROTECTION MECHANISMS FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

As trafficking in human beings is a complex phenomenon that requires coordinated actions between different institutions, the role of civil society organizations is important and is provided in the EU legislative framework [38]. Facing the Russian assault against Ukraine, under the leadership of the EU anti-trafficking coordinator, a joint anti-trafficking plan to combat the risks of human trafficking and support potential victims among those fleeing the war in Ukraine [39] has been drafted. The plan provides the involvement and active participation of civil society

organizations in the fight against human trafficking. The active participation of the EU Civil Society Platform against trafficking human beings in the meetings of national reporters that take place in the framework of each EU Council Presidency is a good example of the plan's application [40].

In terms of support, despite the calls for propositions launched by the Commission for projects on trafficking human beings with a budget of several million euros [41], the question of funding for specialized associations remains to be intensified.

11 - INITIATE WORK AT A COMMUNITY LEVEL TO CREATE A MECHANISM FOR COOPERATION ON THE RESTITUTION OF ILL-GOTTEN GAINS AN EUROPEAN LEVEL

On January 31, 2022, a conference for strengthening European cooperation against trafficking in cultural Goods took place. However, the EUFP has not initiated any specific work on the issue of restitution of ill-gotten gains. We reiterate the need to set up a community cooperation mechanism on the restitution of ill-gotten gains, similar to the French law of August 4, 2021 [42], which set up a mechanism for the restitution of sums to aggrieved populations in the form of projects related to human rights (not taken into account in official development assistance).

12 - REMOVE ALL OBSTACLES TO EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 VACCINES

During the EUFP, several meetings were devoted to the lessons learned from the health crisis and to international solidarity, particularly regarding the equitable distribution of COVID 19 vaccines. The EU affirms that "intellectual property must never be an obstacle to the equitable distribution of pandemic products" [43], and announces that it is intensifying its actions, whether with the COVAX mechanism or on a bilateral basis [44], as evidenced by a particular focus on African countries. It is clear that the EU's contribution to the donation of vaccines for low- and middle-income countries is quite significant [45], yet inequality persists in this area [46].

[18] Update on EU sanctions against Russia, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/sanctions-against-russia-explained/>

[19] The 10-Point Plan For stronger European coordination on welcoming people fleeing the war from Ukraine https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/10-point-plan-stronger-european-coordination-welcoming-people-fleeing-war-ukraine_en

[20] European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2022 on a new trade instrument to ban forced labour products, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0245_EN.html

[21] EU: the priorities of the French presidency exposed to the European Parliament, Vie Publique, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/en-bref/283368-ue-les-priorites-francaises-exposees-au-parlement-europeen>

[22] Regulation aimed at protecting the budget of the European Union in case of violation of the principles of the rule of law in a Member State.

[23] Report on the shrinking space for civil society in Europe, European Parliament resolution of 8 March 2022
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-03-08_EN.html

[24] Lebanon: European Union deploys election observation mission, European External Action, available on
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/lebanon-european-union-deploys-election-observation-mission_en

[25] European Directive on the due diligence of Companies : <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022PC0071>

[26] PDH Webinar "European Union and Human Rights", May 9, 2022
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krgO9PwiXlg>

[27] The EU LAT Network Webinar "Europe-Latin America and Caribbean Relations", April 28, 2022
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOkM2vu5b1w>

[28] Acronym used in the strategy issued by the EU

[29] List of Eurocrimes provided for in Article 83 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

[30] Conference "Hate, discrimination, gender violence", <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/events/conference-hate-discrimination-and-gender-violence-justice-in-the-face-of-contemporary-forms-of-intolerance/>

[31] Iran: European Parliament adopts important resolution on death penalty, Ensemble contre la peine de mort, 21 February 2022, available on
<https://www.ecpm.org/iran-parlement-europeen-adopte-resolution-sur-la-peine-de-mort/>

[32] Article 8 of the European Parliament Resolution of 17 February 2022 on the death penalty in Iran
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0050_EN.html

[33] European symposium on assessing the needs of unaccompanied minors (UAMs), 17 June 2022
<https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/european-symposium-on-assessing-the-needs-of-unaccompanied-minors/>

[34] Conclusions of the extraordinary meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, 28 March 2022
<https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/press-release-main-results-of-the-extraordinary-meeting-of-the-justice-and-home-affairs-council-28-03/>

[35] European Commission press release of 28 March 2022, available on
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[36] The 10-Point Plan For stronger European coordination on welcoming people fleeing the war from Ukraine, available on
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[37] Common plan to combat trafficking in human beings to address the risks and support potential victims among potential victims among those fleeing the war in war in Ukraine, available on, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/Anti-Trafficking%20Plan_en.pdf

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[40] Meeting of the national reporters on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings from May 16 to 18, 2022
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[45] Global solidarity during the Covid-19 pandemic", Council of the EU website: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/policies/corona-virus/global-solidarity/>

[46] COVAX calls for urgent action to end inequities in terms of vaccination, Gavi.org, available on <https://www.gavi.org/news/media-room/covax-calls-urgent-action-close-vaccine-equity-gap>

[47] Programme of the Trio Presidency of the Council of the EU to be consulted on : <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/programme/trio-programme/>

CONCLUSION

Important legislative work has indeed been undertaken in the areas of ecological transition, digital technology, defense and economy. A more ambitious positioning of Europe was expected on the issues of international solidarity.

Action has indeed been taken on the response to contemporary crises. The war in Ukraine has affected the original agenda and priorities, but the EU has responded positively to some extent to our recommendations on the protection of human rights in times of crisis. The inclusion of climate issues in crisis management is also to be welcomed. It should be noted that the outbreak of the war in Ukraine has not only upset the agenda of the EUFP, but also the European commitments made to humanitarian NGOs, which have been more important than those made to human rights NGOs.

In addition, the French Presidency was expected to increase European funding for human rights protection projects. In this respect, it would be appropriate to accentuate the links with civil society on micro and meso projects, in a common perspective of development and protection of human rights, within the European territory, and at its borders.

The EU has highlighted its role in the fight against the growing shrinkage of civic space in Europe and the world. Major advances are to be noted, such as the European directive on the duty of vigilance of companies. More action against the shrinking civic space is now expected, through genuine cooperation between the EU and civil society organizations.

Among the four joint priorities of the trio of EU Council presidencies for 2022 and 2023 (France-Sweden-Czech Republic), one of them is "protecting citizens and freedoms" [47]. We hope that the Czech and Swedish presidencies of the Council of the European Union, which will take over from France, will place this priority at the heart of the European agenda.

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