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Subject: Council conclusions on EU priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe in 2023-2024

Delegations will find in the annex Council conclusions on EU priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe in 2023-2024, as approved by the Council at its 3929th meeting on 30 January 2023.

EU priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe in 2023-2024

1. Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its attempts to change the European security architecture by force run counter to the international rules-based order and the democratic foundations of the European political, social and economic order. In this context, the EU and the Council of Europe should intensify their relations in both qualitative and quantitative terms.
2. In a world where unilateralist approaches combined with geopolitical power shifts challenge multilateralism, the European Union and the Council of Europe have benefitted from each other's strengths, expertise and competences. Standing up for multilateralism is more important than ever. The European Union is convinced that effective multilateralism based on common rules remains the best way to preserve global peace and security, and to strengthen human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. In this context, the implementation of the 2021 Joint Communication on Strengthening the European Union's contribution to rules-based multilateralism will continue to guide the EU's cooperation with the Council of Europe, contributing in parallel to achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.
3. As a grave violation of international law and a major threat to global peace and security, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has serious consequences for Europe's multilateral architecture, including EU-Council of Europe relations. At this time, it is paramount to maintain unity, to reaffirm the importance of our common values and principles, and to strengthen the role of the Council of Europe as the reference for promoting and upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe.

4. The EU supports the holding of a Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, which will be instrumental in this regard. As suggested by the Council of Europe's High-Level Reflection Group, the summit will be an opportunity to recommit at the highest political level to the founding values of the Council of Europe and to define its role in the new geopolitical situation. The Union welcomes the report of the High-Level Reflection Group as an important contribution including to the Summit preparations.
5. In 2009, the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon placed human rights, democracy and the rule of law at the heart of the European Union's policies and created greater opportunities for cooperation with the Council of Europe. Over recent years, both organisations have developed a strategic partnership based on common values and shared priorities. The European Union has become the Council of Europe's main institutional partner in political, financial and legal terms as was reaffirmed at the Ministerial session of the Committee of Ministers held in Hamburg in May 2021.
6. In order to reinforce democracy in European States, it has become crucially important to join forces to reverse democratic backsliding, promote the rule of law and uphold human rights, protect the integrity of democratic processes against external interference and disinformation, safeguard the independence of the judiciary, ensure media freedom and safety of journalists, and improve the effectiveness of democratic institutions and decision-making, including through meaningful engagement of civil society actors and increased citizen engagement. The Conference for the Future of Europe, an unprecedented exercise of participatory democracy at the European Union level, has explored new ways to involve citizens in deliberations on how to develop the EU further in view of key challenges, and created opportunities for future cooperation with the Council of Europe – namely within the context of the World Forum for Democracy and the Conference of International NGOs of the Council of Europe – in the implementation of its proposals. The EU and the Council of Europe aim to further develop citizens' involvement in European affairs and to create new spaces for debates between Europeans.

7. Following the adoption of the Committee of Ministers' decision of 16 March 2022, the Russian Federation has ceased to be a member of the Council of Europe and is no longer a High Contracting Party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), taking away from more than 140 million people in Russia the human rights protection offered by the Convention. The European Union remains fully committed to the effective functioning of the Council of Europe Convention system and will continue to support the Council of Europe's initiatives aiming to strengthen the development of the organisation's values, not least its activities in support of Ukraine. The Council of Europe should also increase co-operation with Belarusian (including the newly-established Contact Group) and Russian democratic opposition and civil society actors, independent media and human rights defenders, active both inside and outside their home country, and via targeted focus on human rights and democracy commitments made in other multilateral platforms such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.
8. The EU underlines the centrality in EU law of human rights as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights and emphasises the importance of the EU's accession to the ECHR, allowing the EU to be formally involved, as a Contracting Party, in proceedings before the European Court of Human Rights. In that context, the EU will pay increased attention to the work of the Committee of Ministers in supervising the execution of the Court's judgments.

9. In addition, the EU will continue to support the activities of the Council of Europe's Partial Agreements and specialised bodies, notably the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), the Council of Europe International Co-operation Group on Drugs and Addictions (Pompidou Group), the Committee for the Prevention of torture (CPT), the Committee on artificial intelligence (CAI), the Lanzarote Committee, the European Committee of Social Rights, and other standard setting and monitoring mechanisms on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
10. The prospect of EU membership represents a significant factor of stability in Europe which the Council of Europe continues to reinforce. On 23 June 2022, the European Council recognised the European perspective of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia. The future of these countries and their citizens lies within the European Union. This gives a renewed impetus to making further progress on human rights, democracy and the rule of law in these countries and in the wider region.
11. The EU acknowledges the Council of Europe's important role in supporting the alignment with European Standards and strengthening the capacity building of important institutions during the reform processes in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries. The EU and the Council of Europe will continue working together to help candidate countries and potential candidates for EU accession make tangible progress in their overall reform process towards meeting the EU's membership criteria. Our joint programmes in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions will continue to support reform efforts in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

12. The Council of Europe's Southern Neighbourhood Policy and the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity have been key in improving dialogue and cooperation between North and South, fostering solidarity and promoting stability and democratic security in both Europe and its neighbouring regions. Today, the Council of Europe's impact reaches well beyond the European continent, as many of its conventions are open for global signature and several of its mechanisms extend around the world. The European Union will continue to promote the accession of non-European States to the most relevant Council of Europe conventions, including in the field of international legal cooperation.
13. In 2021, the global volume of the EU-Council of Europe Joint Programme cooperation reached EUR 207.4 million, with the annual receipts on these programmes accounting for 57% of all Council of Europe's extra-budgetary resources. A new path of cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe started in 2019 and amounts to a budget of more than EUR 17 million under the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument (TSI), providing support to EU Member States for the preparation and implementation of growth-enhancing administrative and structural reforms in areas including the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This excellent co-operation, which has been increasing over the last years, will continue under the current Multiannual Financial Framework running from 2021 to 2027.
14. In 2023-2024, the EU will continue to be at the forefront of support for a reformed and reinvigorated Council of Europe, with the aim of securing financial sustainability and a continued focus on efficiency. It will strive to improve the visibility of and communication on the Council of Europe's aims and activities, and the concrete results achieved through EU-Council of Europe cooperation, including through more frequent joint statements and high-level events on topics of common interest. Stronger civil society involvement can also contribute to improve such visibility.

15. In the next biennium, the mutually beneficial EU-Council of Europe cooperation will further develop through the three main pillars of the partnership, namely political dialogue, legal co-operation and programmatic cooperation, focusing on the following inter-linked and mutually reinforcing priorities in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Both organisations will strive towards intensifying their political dialogue, including through regular contacts at a high political level, and contributing to each other's normative and policy developments in these areas:

HUMAN RIGHTS

16. The EU will support the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights and the Human Rights Convention system as the principal instruments for upholding human rights in Europe. In this regard, the EU reiterates its commitment to acceding to the European Convention on Human Rights. The Union will continue to act in partnership with the Council of Europe in the implementation of the EU human rights priorities in its external relations, as guided by the EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024).
17. The abolition of the death penalty and the eradication of torture and other ill treatment are essential to ensure human dignity. The EU and the Council of Europe will continue to support, in cooperation with civil society and NGOs, increased public debate, awareness-raising and advocacy activities concerning the death penalty and its appalling impact on individuals, families and societies, the eradication of torture and the redress for victims. Strong commitment towards the elimination of capital punishment globally is demonstrated through the issuance of an annual Joint EU-Council of Europe Declaration against death penalty.

18. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, the EU will continue its work to promote gender equality, including women's full and equal enjoyment of human rights as well as their empowerment and participation both in its Member States and in its external relations. The EU will also cooperate with the Council of Europe on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Council of Europe's "Istanbul Convention" on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence has been ratified and is being implemented by 21 EU Member States. The EU and the Council of Europe will seek to identify synergies between legal frameworks on women's rights and political commitments such as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and explore joint activities and programmes on Women, Peace and Security and gender equality, as guided by EU external policy.
19. The EU will pursue its joint efforts with the Council of Europe aimed at advancing the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, as set out in the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the Council conclusions on the EU strategy on the rights of the child, and the new Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027): "Children's Rights in Action: from continuous implementation to joint innovation". This should include co-operation to strengthen the participation of children in political and democratic life, foster child-friendly justice, promote integrated child protection systems, protecting children from exposure to harmful or illegal online content, and ensuring that all relevant authorities and services work together to protect and support the child.

20. The Council of Europe is a key partner of the European Union in the fight against child sexual abuse, for example by marking 18 November as the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. The Union will continue to strengthen its cooperation with all the relevant entities within the Council of Europe as it moves forward with the implementation of its Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse and exploitation, covering three core aspects, namely prevention, support to investigations, and assistance to victims. Child sexual abuse and exploitation is a crime that knows no borders. In order to ensure a truly global response, and increase global standards for the protection of children against these crimes, the Union will continue to promote and pursue accession and ratification of the Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote convention).
21. The European Union will continue to engage with the Council of Europe and its Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), in line with the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025 and with Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, with the aim of enhancing the prevention of and response to trafficking in human beings, improving the protection, support and empowerment of victims, especially women and children, and strengthening regional cooperation on the international dimension of this crime.
22. The European Union will also continue to support the Council of Europe's efforts with respect to the human rights of migrants and refugees, with particular attention to women and persons in vulnerable situations such as unaccompanied children, LGBTI persons, persons with disabilities or those facing discrimination or violence. The Union is committed to human rights and procedural safeguards in relation to all migrants and asylum seekers, not least those fleeing the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The proposals under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum along with those relating to cases of instrumentalisation of migrants and the immediate activation of the Temporary Protection Directive bear testimony to this.

23. The EU and the Council of Europe will enhance exchanges and communication on policies and initiatives to combat racism and antisemitism. The EU will cooperate closely with the Council of Europe's specialised departments and its European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in the area of anti-discrimination, including in combatting antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, in line with the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life for 2021-2030 and the 2022 Council conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism.
24. Collaboration between the EU and the CoE will continue in the area of freedom of religion or belief, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities to express their religion through specific cultural, traditional and religious practices or their right not hold religious beliefs, in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
25. Persons belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups, including LGBTI persons, are often among the most adversely impacted in situations of conflict and humanitarian emergencies. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine has again demonstrated that more needs to be done to offer them support and protection. The EU will continue to cooperate with the Council of Europe in combating discrimination against LGBTI persons, considering joint initiatives aimed at supporting their human rights.
26. Joint activities are also envisaged to strengthen the rights of persons belonging to other minorities, especially those with a minority racial or ethnic background or belonging to Roma or Traveller communities¹.
27. In line with the relevant articles on non-discrimination of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the EU and the Council of Europe will work together with a view to promoting respect for diversity by protecting and promoting human rights of persons belonging to national minorities in accordance with applicable Council of Europe norms, standards and Venice Commission recommendations.

¹ C.f. EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025.

28. Joint activities to counter the spread of hate speech and hate crime in Europe, online and offline, will also be given particular attention, as set out in the European Commission Communication “A more inclusive and protective Europe: extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime”, adopted in December 2021.
29. In the context of economic and social rights, the EU will work jointly with the Council of Europe on respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights in line with the European Social Charter and revised European Social Charter (ESC), which place emphasis on the rights of older persons, women, children, persons with disabilities and migrant workers. Main strands of cooperation in this area will focus on promoting decent work for all and in particular implementing a zero-tolerance policy on child labour and the eradication of forced labour; curbing inequalities by combating poverty and social exclusion, promoting universal access to social protection and non-discriminatory access to social services; social dialogue; the right to safe and healthy working conditions for all, a world of work free of violence and harassment as well as a responsible management in global supply chains. Cooperation with the Council of Europe in promoting social rights is also reflected in its involvement in the biannual fora for monitoring the implementation of the commitments made at the EU’s Social Summit, in Porto in 2021. The EU will also promote the effective implementation of the ESC and its protocols, and follow with interest the ongoing reform process aiming to improve the ESC system.
30. The European Union will further enhance the long-standing co-operation with the Council of Europe expert groups in the policy area of blood, tissues and cells, mutualising resources, providing better protection for both donors and recipients, in line with human rights and Member states’ ethical requirements thus ensuring a better response to public health needs. The cooperation with the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and Health Care (EDQM) will also contribute to this aim.

31. The political recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right, as set forth by UN Human Rights Council Resolution 48/13 and UN General Assembly resolution A/76/L.75, is another crucial subject of collaboration where the two organisations can mutually contribute to a heightened awareness and possible new normative developments. The EU welcomes the adoption of the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on human rights and the protection of the environment; it will support its implementation as well as future CoE work on the matter.
32. The EU will also strive to ensure the long term institutional and financial stability of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention), to which the Union is a party, and that stresses the importance of responsibly and sustainably caring for nature, which will also have benefits for the wellbeing of humanity.
33. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine underscores in all clarity the crucial role of independent and credible media, in particular in times of conflict, and demonstrates the vulnerability of media workers reporting on the war and from war zones. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, the European Union will continue to address the challenges affecting media independence and viability, harming diversity, and compromising journalists' and other media professionals' safety and public trust in information. The EU will enhance communication with the Council of Europe in order to improve collaboration on freedom of expression, media freedom, safety of journalists and fighting manipulation of information, online and offline disinformation and strategic lawsuits against public participation, and to contribute to a more efficient coordination of international initiatives to avoid the risk of duplication. The EU recommends to EU Delegations to subscribe to the alerts for their specific country of the CoE Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists, as well as to promote meaningful participation of civil society, protection of human rights defenders and the freedom of association and peaceful assembly.

34. The EU will continue to support the work of national human rights institutions, human rights defenders (HRDs) and independent civil society organisations, including women-led and youth-led organisations, and will cooperate to ensure their effective and meaningful participation in Council of Europe processes. Cooperation with the Council of Europe is also important regarding EU mechanisms such as Protect Defenders.
35. In the area of human rights and artificial intelligence, the European Union will continue to work with the Council of Europe to ensure a responsible and human rights-centred approach to the development, design and application of artificial intelligence. In the framework of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence, the EU will contribute to the elaboration of a legally binding instrument of a transversal nature on artificial intelligence, based on the Council of Europe's standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law and conducive to innovation, while striving to ensure consistency of the Council of Europe instrument with the existing EU acquis and the proposed Artificial Intelligence Act, taking into account developments during the legislative process.
36. In the current geopolitical context, the human rights situation in the zones of protracted conflict will also continue to receive the European Union's full attention and support.

DEMOCRACY

37. The EU strives to protect and strengthen democracy globally by contributing to *building* more *resilient democratic* systems. As underpinned by the EU Global Strategy, strengthening democracy externally is in the Union's strategic interest, contributing to core aspects of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (peace and security, multilateralism, development, migration).

38. The 2019 Council Conclusions on Democracy and the EU Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 took note of a challenging and persistently worsening context for democracy worldwide. The EU will cooperate with the Council of Europe to counter manipulative interference, including disinformation campaigns and to address existing challenges to democracy by supporting digital literacy, civic education and greater transparency and inclusiveness of democratic processes.
39. The EU benefits significantly from the expertise of the Venice Commission, in particular its expertise in improving constitutional standards and electoral law. The EU will seek to strengthen its cooperation with the Venice Commission and its Secretariat in fostering electoral reforms, including those based on the recommendations of EU Electoral Observation Missions.
40. In the field of education, the EU and the Council of Europe will continue their fruitful cooperation through a number of successful flagship projects, focusing on the need to ensure effective, equal and inclusive access to mainstream quality education for all, including Roma children². The importance of the cooperation is further accentuated by the needs of the Ukrainian children who have taken refuge in European Union countries. The EU will continue its support for the Observatory of History Teaching in Europe through the HISTOLAB project, enhancing the importance of the role of history education in preserving democracy in Europe as well as fostering a sense of European identity and citizenship.
41. The EU and the Council of Europe will continue to work in cooperation for the development of an inclusive, innovative and interconnected European Higher Education Area, especially by promoting democratic principles and human rights.

² In line with the European Education Strategic Framework and the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation.

42. In the area of language teaching, common work, such as the current cooperation agreement with the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, aims to promote equality and non-discrimination through the definition of a common European approach to language learning. It also aims to quality education for migrant learners - highly developed linguistic competences become key transversal competences to support learning, integration, employability and social cohesion. Multilingual education is important in supporting democracy and the inclusive participation of all citizens, including persons belonging to minorities.
43. The EU and the Council of Europe have a longstanding and impactful cooperation in the field of youth. The EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership promotes participatory youth policies across a range of fields, including support for education and providing the right tools for young people in view of the digital transition. In 2023, the Youth Partnership will contribute to the legacy of the European Year of Youth 2022 and the achievement of its objectives. Another example of this cooperation relates to the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda, which provides a strategic framework to strengthen and shape youth work development. The EU will continue to work with the Council of Europe to empower young people, recognising their crucial role in policymaking. In mid-2023, the two partner institutions will start the dialogue for drafting the new work plan of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership for the period 2024-2025. The EU will consider opportunities for cooperation with the Council of Europe in the framework of the EU's 2023 Year of Skills.

44. Sport can be a valuable tool for the promotion of human rights and the well-being of European citizens, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic. The EU will continue its constructive cooperation with the Council of Europe on a number of topics of mutual interest in this field, such as the fight against hate speech in sport and safe sport. The European Union engaged closely with the Council of Europe on the adoption of the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (Macolin Convention), supports its objective and principles and affirms the importance of pursuing the fight against the manipulation of sports competitions. The EU also follows the evolution of the work carried out in the framework of the Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (the St. Denis Convention).
45. Respecting cultural rights is a key factor in achieving sustainable development. The EU will continue to cooperate with the Council of Europe in promoting access to cultural and artistic activities, and in understanding culture and intercultural dialogue as the foundation of a modern society that creates the conditions for the expression, preservation and development of distinct identities. Cultural diversity– is an essential value of democracies and societies based on respect and peaceful coexistence. The EU and the Council of Europe should continue their cooperation to create conditions which enhance cultural diversity, creativity and due recognition of the rights of authors and artists, promoting the valorisation of cultural goods and services.
46. The EU will continue to cooperate with the Council of Europe in the organisation of the European Heritage Days aiming to raise European citizens’ awareness of their shared cultural and natural heritage and to encourage them to become actively involved in the safeguarding of this heritage for present and future generations. Cooperation should be explored in the protection of landscape quality and diversity in public policy, in particular under the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Landscape relating to international cooperation and taking into account EU legislation and ongoing initiatives. Protecting and safeguarding cultural and natural heritage, as well as protecting and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, are fundamental to preventing violent extremism, to fighting against disinformation and to generating positive dialogue and inclusion.

47. The EU and its Member States acknowledge the role of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe for the promotion of European identity and citizenship through knowledge and awareness of Europe's common heritage, and the development of cultural links and dialogue within Europe as well as with other countries and regions. They will continue to promote the potential of the CoE Cultural Routes for cultural cooperation, sustainable territorial development, social cohesion and European unity.

RULE OF LAW

48. The Council of Europe's expertise and benchmarking role is crucially important in the context of the EU's annual Enlargement package and the European Rule of Law Mechanism, including the preparation of the next editions of the annual Rule of Law Report, the EU Justice Scoreboard and the continuous improvement of EU tools aimed at protecting the rule of law. Cooperation with the Venice Commission, GRECO, CEPEJ and all other relevant bodies of the Council of Europe will remain a top priority for the coming years.

49. The EU's commitment to fostering human rights, democracy and the rule of law extends to the candidate countries and potential candidates and the EU's neighbourhood, where the EU will continue its cooperation with the Council of Europe to support countries in carrying out essential reforms and training, regarding justice, the fight against corruption, the promotion of human rights, and the role of free and independent media and civil society, and – with regard to candidate countries and potential candidates – to monitor the progress realised in those areas, in line with, where applicable/relevant, the strengthened methodology of the accession process.

50. The EU will also continue its close cooperation with GRECO to promote the implementation of standards to strengthen the fight against corruption, and with MONEYVAL on the fight against money laundering. The EU will continue working with the Council of Europe to support efforts to strengthen the rule of law and fight corruption in the Enlargement and EU Neighbourhood area, build the capacities on the prevention and repression of corruption, on anti-money laundering and ensuring effective judicial responses.

51. In line with the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 and the EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025 setting out the political framework and priorities for the EU's drug policy in the coming years, the EU will continue its close cooperation with the Council of Europe International Co-operation Group on Drugs and Addictions (Pompidou Group) to provide knowledge, support and solutions for effective, evidence-based drug policies, which fully respect human rights.
52. Terrorism and violent extremism constitute serious threats to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The EU is committed to work closely with the Council of Europe to improve its criminal justice response in areas such as radicalisation leading to terrorism and violent extremism, and the reintegration and rehabilitation of terrorist offenders. Special attention will be devoted to internet abuse by extremists and terrorists, and radicalisation in prisons.
53. In the field of fight against cybercrime, the EU will continue to work with the Council of Europe in the framework of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and its additional protocols. It will promote the Budapest Convention as a framework for international cooperation and capacity building.
54. In the field of cultural goods trafficking, the EU will work together with the Council of Europe with regard to the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property (the Nicosia convention), also bearing in mind the principles and obligations set out in the 1970 UNESCO International Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer in Ownership of Cultural Property. The EU will promote the convention and its aims to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking and destruction of cultural property, notably in the context of the upcoming EU Action Plan on Trafficking in Cultural Goods.
55. The EU will work together with the Council of Europe in support of UN and other multilateral initiatives related to the rule of law.