

1. Executive summary

Human rights and democracy, founding values of the European Union (EU), are a cornerstone of EU's external action. The international human rights framework sets norms and standards for everyone in all cultures, with no exception. Human rights instruments, mechanisms and processes are however not self-fulfilling. Incisive action is the only way forward to close the gap between the solemn declarations and commitments and their concrete implementation on the ground.

The EU's leadership has a political agenda in which reinforcing the EU's role as responsible global actor for human rights and democracy is a key priority. The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the period 2020-2024, adopted by the Council, is the new compass for the EU's external action in this field. Built upon the achievements of the previous Action Plans, the new Action Plan commits, by identifying priorities and key actions for the next five years, to ensure that the EU plays a greater role in promoting and defending human rights and democracy throughout its external action. This includes the EU's development policy and regional policy frameworks, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy, the comprehensive strategy with Africa, the new strategy on Central Asia and the new Indo-Pacific strategy. It also intersects with the EU's humanitarian policy, trade policy and external dimension of internal policies.

The programme on human rights and democracy, built upon the key features of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), is a major flagship tool of the EU. The overall objective of the thematic programme on human rights and democracy is to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law worldwide.

The multi-annual indicative programming for the thematic programme on human rights and democracy follows the structure of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 with its five overarching priorities:

1. Protecting and empowering individuals;
2. Building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies;
3. Promoting a global system for human rights and democracy;
4. Harnessing the opportunities and addressing challenges of new technologies;
5. Delivering by working together.

It identifies the following key priorities and axes of action over the period 2021-2027:

1. Priority 1: Protecting and empowering individuals

The overall objective of Priority 1 is to contribute to the full enjoyment of all human rights, be they civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, by all.

Priority 1 is articulated around four axes of action:

- i. Uphold all human rights as essential to human dignity, which includes progressing towards the universal abolition of the death penalty, striving for the eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, responding to basic necessities of adequate food, housing, health care, education and culture, promoting decent working conditions for all, and addressing the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on human rights;
- ii. Promote equality, inclusion and respect for diversity for all, including women and girls, children and youth, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) persons, indigenous peoples, persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons;
- iii. Support human rights defenders and counter shrinking space for civil society, including by means of short-, medium- and long-term holistic support;
- iv. Strengthen the rule of law, ensure fair and effective administration of justice and close the accountability gap, which include support to transitional justice multi-stakeholders processes in post-conflict or post-authoritarian contexts.

2. Priority 2: Building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies

The overall objective of Priority 2 is to foster a functioning pluralistic, participatory and representative democracy and protect the integrity of electoral processes.

Priority 2 is articulated around two axes of action:

- i. Strengthen democratic, accountable and transparent institutions, including enhancing the effectiveness, accountability and transparency of Parliaments, improving the integrity of electoral processes (EU Election Observation Missions and their recommendations), engaging civil society observers in election observation, and promoting pro-democracy organisations, networks and alliances;
- ii. Promote participatory and representative decision-making, including supporting political pluralism and inclusiveness, promoting active citizenship in public and political life and fostering the role of civil society in oversight and accountability mechanisms.

3. Priority 3: Promoting a global system for human rights and democracy

The overall objective of Priority 3 is to work together with all key actors to advance the realisation of all human rights for all.

Priority 3 enhances strategic partnership with the following key international, regional and national actors:

- i. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, including human rights treaty bodies and special procedures;
- ii. The International Criminal Court;
- iii. Regional human rights systems, such as Inter-American mechanisms and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights;
- iv. National Human Rights Institutions, including global and regional networks of National Human Rights Institutions;
- v. Private sector;
- vi. The Global Campus of Human Rights.

4. **Priority 4: Safeguarding fundamental freedoms, including harnessing the opportunities and addressing challenges of digital and new technologies**

The overall objective of Priority 4 is to create and maintain an environment conducive to the full exercise of all fundamental freedoms, online and offline.

The specific objective of Priority 4 is to harness the opportunities and address challenges of digital and new technologies.

5. **Priority 5: Delivering by working together**

The overall objective of Priority 5 is to develop a compelling narrative on human rights and democracy with a multiplying effect as well as to ensure civil society's contribution to human rights dialogues the EU conducts with partner countries.

Financial Envelope

The financial envelope for the implementation of the programme on human rights and democracy is **EUR 1,511,852,228** for the period **2021-2027**, of which EUR 200,000,000 from the emerging challenges and priorities cushion.

Priority	Amount (MEUR)	% of total MIP allocation
1. Protecting and empowering individuals	703,682,228	45-50%
2. Building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies	462,877,000	28-33%
3. Promoting a global system for human rights and democracy	143,632,000	9-12%
4. Safeguarding fundamental freedoms, including harnessing the opportunities and addressing challenges of digital and other new technologies	195,036,000	10-13%
5. Delivering by working together	6,625,000	0.4-1%
<i>Support measures should be included under Priority 5</i>		
TOTAL for 2021-2027	1,511,852,228	100%

The supplementary funding, corresponding to EUR 200,000,000, from the NDICI-Global Europe emerging challenges and priorities cushion, shall be devoted to:

1. Support actions at country level and in all social contexts to prevent and eliminate child labour and forced labour in global supply chains;
2. Fight impunity, by building the knowledge base for accountability;
3. Strengthen democratic support and electoral institutions and practices, including through following-up medium- and long-term commitments that emerge from the US Summit for Democracy;
4. Support political pluralism and inclusiveness;
5. Enhance professional skills, abilities and capacities of journalists, bloggers and media workers, in particular by means of country-to-country exchange programmes/schemes, and sub-regional and regional networks;
6. Support civil society actions to counter the misuse and abuse of digital and new technologies.

2. Overall context

➤ *The international situation: problems and challenges*

Human rights and democracy, founding values of the European Union (EU), are a cornerstone of EU's external action. The international human rights framework sets norms and standards for everyone in all cultures, with no exception.

Human rights, alongside peace and security and development, are one of the three founding pillars of the United Nations (UN). The UN system has come far in 75 years, but the world is not yet the world that founders envisaged 75 years ago.

With the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all nations recognised human rights as belonging to the universal and indivisible core values and principles of humanity. The Declaration continues to represent one of humanity's most shining achievements, a unifying force within and among all cultures, and constitutes a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations.

Human rights instruments, mechanisms and processes are not self-fulfilling. The 2020 Call for Action for Human Rights¹ by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is a call for the universal implementation of human rights. Incisive action is the only way forward to close the gap between the solemn declarations and commitments and their concrete implementation on the ground.

Recent data show that globally, most countries are far from having acceptable human rights and democracy track records². In fact, last year was the first since 2001 in which the majority of the world's countries were considered autocracies: 92 countries, home

¹ The Call to Action sets out overarching guiding principles and identifies seven key areas for action in the near term to advance the human rights agenda: (1) human rights at the core of sustainable development, (2) human rights in times of crisis, (3) gender equality and equal rights for women, (4) public participation and civic space, (5) rights of future generations, especially climate justice, (6) rights at the heart of collective action, and (7) new frontiers of human rights. Cfr.: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/2020_sg_call_to_action_for_hr_the_highest_aspiration.pdf.

² Cfr.: OHCHR Annual report 2020: Human rights at the heart of COVID-19 response and recovery, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/OHCHRreport2020.pdf>; Human Rights Watch's World Report 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020>; Amnesty International Report 2020/2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/3202/2021/en/>; RSF Report 2020, <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>; Freedom House 2020; <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>.

to 54% of the global population and this trend has accentuated, not least due to the effects of the COVID-19 crisis³. Levels of inequality, intolerance, prejudice and discrimination in both public and private spheres are on the rise⁴. In many contexts, inclusion remains elusive while decision-making remains highly and arbitrarily concentrated. Arguments related to religious, historical or cultural background, national security or economic growth are increasingly advanced to justify human rights violations and discriminatory measures against persons in vulnerable and marginalised situations such as migrants and refugees, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, indigenous peoples, persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities. Gender equality and the full enjoyment of girls' and women's rights remain far from reality in nearly every sphere of society. Women human rights defenders as human rights defenders and as women are in a situation of high vulnerability and exposure. Young people face discrimination and obstacles to the enjoyment of their rights by virtue of their age, limiting their potential and engagement.

The lack of decent work opportunities and inadequate working conditions continue to be the norm in many parts of the world. Labour rights abuses are pervasive, in many cases exacerbated by globalisation and cross-border activities. Whereas in recent years ratification of International Labour Organisation (ILO) fundamental Conventions has progressed, effective implementation remains a major challenge. Many national labour laws and social policies are still not in line with international labour standards. Cases of homicides, arbitrary arrests and detentions, injuries and intimidation of trade unionists continue to be reported worldwide. Around 160 million children across the globe are subject to child labour, almost half of whom are in hazardous forms of work⁵. In large parts of the world, women in the workplace face significant obstacles at every level, and are exposed to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence, and are vulnerable to forced labour.

Global challenges such as climate change and environmental degradation, natural and man-made disasters and pandemics have also a direct negative impact and can multiply the challenges to the full enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, in particular right to health, food, water and adequate living standards, secure access to affordable energy, universal education and even life itself. Today's degradation has led to increased competition over scarcer natural resources and disputes over land and natural resources tenure. Environmental human rights defenders and indigenous peoples are being increasingly exposed to violence and losing their lives for standing up against injustice across the world.

Fundamental freedoms are being severely curtailed and the level of citizens' participation in political and public life is far from being free and meaningful in many parts of the world⁶. More specifically, freedom of expression and media freedom are under attack around the globe. Politically motivated censorship and internet shutdowns are increasingly becoming common practice. Although digital technologies may have a positive impact on human rights, for instance by facilitating the gathering of evidence

³ Cfr. V-Dem annual reports 2020 and 2021, <https://www.v-dem.net/en/publications/democracy-reports/>.

⁴ Cfr. Trends identified in the JRC Science for Policy Report, Cagnin, C., Muench, S., Scapolo, F., Störmer, E., Vesnic-Alujevic, L.; Shaping and securing the EU's open strategic autonomy by 2040 and beyond, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC125994>

⁵ Cfr.: <https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-labour>

⁶ Civicus Monitor lists 108 countries as 'obstructed', 'repressed', or 'closed', cfr.: <https://findings2020.monitor.civicus.org/>

of alleged human rights violations and abuses, political participation and civic engagement, better collaboration across borders or by allowing access to education and health services in remote areas, technologies may also be misused by State and non-State actors, leading to human rights violations and abuses. Internet shutdowns, censorship, cyberattacks and surveillance undermine the full exercise of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, while civil society actors, human rights defenders and journalists are often arbitrarily subjected to surveillance and censorship.

In a context of growing geopolitical competition around digital technologies and anti-democratic rhetoric, it is increasingly challenging to guarantee access to free, open, interoperable, secure, reliable and human rights-based internet.

Increased use of restrictions on civil society threatens its existence and undermines the ability of civil society actors to carry out their legitimate tasks, free from political or any other undue interference. There can be no full realisation of human rights without the space to defend those rights. Human rights defenders, including journalists and bloggers, are increasingly persecuted, defamed, harassed, arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned, tortured, and even killed⁷. As human rights defenders have become more effective in challenging injustice, oppression and brutality, so has the repression against them. A pervasive climate of impunity has often led the vicious cycle of more abuse. The effectiveness of accountability mechanisms - criminal prosecutions, civil lawsuits, and non-judicial systems such as truth commissions, ombudsmen, national human rights commissions and intergovernmental bodies – has faltered. The international accountability framework with the International Criminal Court at its core also faces criticism and attacks on its credibility and effectiveness.

The challenge to democratic institutions and processes is significant and growing. Despite improvements in electoral processes, essential elements of democracy, such as the separation of powers with institutional checks and balances⁸, the rule of law, political pluralism and media autonomy are undermined⁹. Peaceful pro-democracy protests are banned and the rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly are eroded in many countries. Political parties have limited space to operate as many countries repress any form of political dissent or opposition. An increased participation of women in decision-making has been reported but there is still a long way to go towards achieving gender parity globally. Youth is not represented adequately in institutions, decisions and processes. Non-democratic alternatives grow in influence, simultaneously constricting space for debate, oversight and opposition.

Moreover, online disinformation, including in social media, often aimed at the manipulation of public opinion, and the growing use of hate speech, online and offline, pose new challenges to democracy, in particular to electoral integrity and democratic decision-making. Rising levels of corruption are also distorting the democratic process, thereby undermining the rule of law and confidence in democratic institutions,

⁷Cfr.:FrontlineDefender Global Analysis 2020, https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/fl_d_global_analysis_2020.pdf

⁸ The factor score for Constraints on Government Powers, which measures the extent to which those who govern are bound by governmental and non-governmental checks, such as an independent judiciary, a free press, the ability of legislatures to apply oversight, has declined in more countries than any other factor worldwide over the last year. Cfr.: The World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index 2019, <https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/research-and-data/wjp-rule-law-index-2019>.

⁹ V-DEM 2020 and 2021 reports - https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/de/39/de39af54-0bc5-4421-89ae-fb20dcc53dba/democracy_report.pdf and https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/74/8c/748c68ad-f224-4cd7-87f9-8794add5c60f/dr_2021_updated.pdf

particularly amongst the youth. Public trust in the functioning of governments and political parties is at historically low levels, especially concerning transparency and accountability. Many countries globally are already demonstrating clear signs of state capture, where systemic political corruption allows private interests and organised crime to influence a state's decision-making and law enforcement processes to their own advantage.

➤ ***The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international situation***

The COVID-19 pandemic took the world by surprise at the very beginning of 2020, and suddenly changed the way we live. In the course of the year, it has turned into a multi-faceted crisis, affecting not only people's health and straining national medical services but also impacting the social fabric, the right to life, health, housing, food and water, education and decent work and the care for the most vulnerable persons in society, the functioning of state institutions and the global economy. The pandemic has, on one side, amplified long-standing human rights concerns, and, on the other side, shed light on specific human rights issues.

Some governments have used the state of emergency to justify lockdowns and social distancing measures that have de facto reduced the civic and democratic space¹⁰. Greater restrictions of fundamental freedoms and mass surveillance have hindered the work of human rights defenders, journalists, trade unionists, lawyers and other professionals. Many countries have considerably and unduly restricted the freedom of expression, online and offline, under the pretence of fighting information manipulation. Hoaxes and disinformation were rife, amounting to an unprecedented so-called "infodemic"¹¹. Moreover, many countries have postponed elections sine die. Constraints on institutional checks and balances are also reducing oversight of the executive, and laxer controls over public finance management are facilitating mismanagement and corruption. Land grabbing and illegal resource extraction have significantly increased also due to COVID19-induced budgetary cuts for environmental institutions.

The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and widening socio-economic gaps. The economically weakest individuals, in particular women, and all persons in vulnerable situations, including children, LGBTI persons, persons with disabilities, the elderly, minorities and indigenous peoples, refugees, migrants, internally displaced and stateless persons, are particularly exposed to the negative impact of the crisis. Previously positive trends in poverty reduction¹² and fight against forced and child labour¹³ have reversed. Reports from many countries indicate a significant increase in sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence. In some contexts, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an increase in racist and xenophobic attacks, discrimination and violence, stigmatisation and hate crimes. In many countries, there have been outbreaks of violence in overcrowded, and at times insalubrious, prisons and detention centres.

¹⁰ Cfr.: <https://www.idea.int/gsod-indices/#/indices/world-map?covid19=1>

¹¹ Cfr.: <https://www.who.int/news/item/11-12-2020-call-for-action-managing-the-infodemic>

¹² Cfr.: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/07/covid-19-to-add-as-many-as-150-million-extreme-poor-by-2021>

¹³ Cfr.: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_797515.pdf

Digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, e-Health solutions and digital Covid-19 certificates and tracing apps, are key tools to prevent onward transmission and defeat the virus. However, the risk of misuse of big data and artificial intelligence to track everyone's health could be high in certain countries and could lead to breaches of data privacy and illegal surveillance.

In sum, the crisis has further weakened overall respect for human rights and democracy, a trend to which no country is immune. The underlying and deep-rooted human rights concerns have contributed to exacerbate the vulnerability of the world's population to the negative effects of the pandemic on the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

➤ **Overall external goals and priorities of the EU**

Articles 2, 3(5) and 21(1) of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) constitute the legal basis for the EU's human rights policy in external actions.

Founded, as per Article 2 of the TEU, on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, the EU is bound by Article 3(5) of the TEU to contribute, in its relations with the wider world, to peace, security, sustainable development, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the UN Charter.

Furthermore, Article 21(1) of the TEU states that the Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the UN Charter and international law.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union constitutes the overarching framework for human rights in the EU, against which actions of EU institutions and bodies are measured.

The EU's leadership has a political agenda in which reinforcing the EU's role as responsible global actor for human rights and democracy is a key priority. On the occasion of the World Human Rights Day 2020¹⁴, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell stated that "the coronavirus pandemic has magnified and exacerbated some of the world's greatest challenges, including in relation to human rights, democracy and the rule of law". However, it "has also created an opening for stronger collective action".

¹⁴ Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2020, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/12/09/declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-human-rights-day-10-december-2020/>.

The EU has achieved some remarkable progress in 2020: the adoption of the new EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024¹⁵, the establishment of the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime¹⁶, the adoption of the new EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations 2020-2025¹⁷, and cooperation in the building of cross-regional coalitions in support of UN action. Actions on the ground have been substantial and targeted at addressing human rights and democracy issues during the Covid-19 crisis: political and financial support to civil society organisations and human rights defenders; trial observations in many parts of the world; projects promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls, children, persons in vulnerable situations; projects promoting media freedom and protecting journalists and media workers, global monitoring of human rights and democracy restrictions, just to mention a few.

The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the period 2020-2024, adopted by the Council, is the new compass for the EU's external action in this field. Built upon the achievements of the previous Action Plans, the new Action Plan commits, by identifying priorities and key actions for the next five years, to ensure that the EU plays a greater role in promoting and defending human rights and democracy throughout its external action. This includes the EU's development policy and regional policy frameworks, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy¹⁸, the comprehensive strategy with Africa¹⁹, the new strategy on Central Asia²⁰ and the new EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy²¹. It also intersects with the EU's humanitarian policy, trade policy and external dimension of internal policies. Furthermore, it ensures full coherence with EU's internal policies, including the 2020 European Democracy Action Plan²².

The similar time horizon of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy and the multi-annual indicative programming for Human Rights and Democracy ensures the greatest possible policy and funding coherence and synergy. The third generation of Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategies (HRDCS) 2021-2024 as well as the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III) country implementation plans (CLIP) contribute to achieve globally optimal synchronisation. Built on the results achieved and best practices of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the present programming exercise represents a concrete way to deliver on the EU's values and interests in the human rights and democracy field over the next 7-year period.

3. EU's strategy

The programme on human rights and democracy is a major flagship tool of the EU.

¹⁵ Council Conclusions on the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/46838/st12848-en20.pdf>

¹⁶ Cfr.: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/12/07/eu-adopts-a-global-human-rights-sanctions-regime/>.

¹⁷ Cfr.: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/gender-equality-and-empowering-women-and-girls_en#header-5139

¹⁸ https://eeas.europa.eu/diplomatic-network/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp/330/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp_en;

¹⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020JC0004>;

²⁰ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/06/17/central-asia-council-adopts-a-new-eu-strategy-for-the-region/>;

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_21_4709

²² Cfr. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0790&from=EN>

Built upon the key features of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and taking into account the findings and recommendations of the EIDHR mid-term evaluation, which defined the EIDHR as a value-added niche instrument to address highly sensitive issues in the most difficult contexts where no alternative exists, the programme for human rights and democracy preserves the following unique features:

- Independence of action from the consent of partner countries' governments and other public authorities;
- Global nature in any country outside the EU, including in upper-middle and high-income countries;
- Local, national, regional or international civil society organisations, including non-registered organisations and natural persons, at the forefront of action²³;
- Specific mandate to deploy EU Election Observation Missions (EOMs).

A set of operational principles makes the programme for human rights and democracy a flexible and effective instrument. The programme is:

- Context-sensitive, tailor-made and reactive;
- Content-wise confidential, whenever needed;
- Untied in terms of resources and flexible as regards procedures;
- Risk-exposed, especially in the implementation phase.

The programme on human rights and democracy shall be implemented at local, country, regional and global levels.

A substantial part of the programme shall be implemented at country level. Country-specific allocations shall allow for context-sensitive actions with local civil society organisations working on human rights and democracy at the forefront. Punctual actions at country level shall be considered to respond to immediate and unforeseen circumstances.

Actions managed at headquarters' level shall only address issues that are either (i) global or regional (ii) politically sensitive (iii) emerging.

All actions taken under this programming exercise shall comply with EU legislation, in particular EU restrictive measures (sanctions) adopted pursuant to Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Full complementarity and coordination between the present thematic programming, other thematic programming, geographical programming and the rapid response pillar shall be ensured with the ultimate goal to serve and preserve EU values and interests. Synergies shall be sought with other EU-funded programmes, in particular Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, with relevance for the objectives of Programme²⁴.

²³ NDICI-Global Europe recitals, Article 2(6) "Definitions" and Article 24 "Eligible persons and entities", <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0947>

²⁴ Cfr. https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/social-sciences-and-humanities/democracy-and-governance_en

The right balance between bottom-up actions (CSO) under thematic programmes, including the programme for human rights and democracy, and top-down actions (government) under geographical programmes will be decisive to uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law at country and regional levels. The new cycle of Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategies and the annual implementation reports will indicate the way forward.

A human rights-based approach, including gender mainstreaming, shall be consistently integrated throughout the NDICI-Global Europe. The present programme follows, in a systematic manner, this approach and applies it to its programming and implementation. A gender perspective is equally integrated at all stages and levels of action.

The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 identifies five overarching priorities:

1. Protecting and empowering individuals;
2. Building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies;
3. Promoting a global system for human rights and democracy;
4. Harnessing the opportunities and addressing challenges of new technologies;
5. Delivering by working together.

4. Priorities selected for financing by the EU

The overall objective of the thematic programme on human rights and democracy is to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law worldwide.

The multi-annual indicative programming for the thematic programme on Human Rights and Democracy follows the structure of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 and identifies the following key priorities and axes of action over the period 2021-2027.

1. Priority 1: *Protecting and empowering individuals*

Protecting and empowering individuals are two sides of the same coin. Protecting individuals means ensuring the full enjoyment of all human rights, be they civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights by all, free from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse. Empowering individuals means enabling them, through the full enjoyment of all human rights, to reach their full potential, gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives and realise their legitimate aspirations.

The overall objective of Priority 1 is to contribute to the full enjoyment of all human rights, be they civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, by all.

Priority 1 is articulated **around four axes of action**: i. Uphold all human rights as essential to human dignity; ii. Promote equality, inclusion and respect for diversity; iii.

Support human rights defenders and counter shrinking space for civil society; iv. Strengthen the rule of law, ensure fair and effective administration of justice and close the accountability gap.

i. **Axis of action: Uphold all human rights as essential to human dignity**

Human dignity captures the notion that every human being is uniquely valuable and therefore deserves utmost respect. Human rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person. Human dignity goes hand in hand with the universality of human rights: dignity is inherent to everyone, and therefore forms the basis of universal rights.

Built upon this assumption, actions aim at:

- ***Progressing towards the universal abolition of the death penalty***

The present programme aims to accelerate progress towards the worldwide abolition of the death penalty. It shall support civil society actions that, consistent with the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty²⁵, contribute to reforming criminal justice systems and repealing death penalty laws. To that end, civil society shall engage with all key actors, including political leaders, youth and less-conventional actors such as TV, cinema and sports stars. These actions shall also contribute to guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty by promoting full respect for international norms and standards such as acceding to adequate legal assistance at all stages of the proceedings, affording all the judicial guarantees (i.e. the highest of evidentiary standards) as indispensable for a fair trial, seeking clemency by pardon or commutation of sentence and guaranteeing the right to appeal to a court of higher instance.

- ***Striving for the eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment***

The programme gives a boost towards a torture-free world. Civil society actions shall, in line with the revised Guidelines on EU Policy towards third countries on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment²⁶, contribute to setting up a legal and regulatory framework that prohibits all harmful and unlawful conducts amounting to torture, ensuring its full and effective implementation and establishing monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Preventive and protective measures shall be an integral part of these actions ranging from training and education for all, including professionals, regular monitoring of places of detention – *mitigation* – to investigation, evidence collection and documentation of past cases, reporting, litigation, prosecution, conviction and sanctions for perpetrators – *deterrence* - and reparation, rehabilitation and compensation for victims.

Since 2005, the EU has led the way towards “Torture-free Trade”. The EU’s regulatory framework reflects the EU’s commitment to the eradication of torture and the abolition of the death penalty. Furthermore, the EU is also a driving force supporting the Alliance

²⁵ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en ;

²⁶ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

for Torture-Free Trade, a cross-regional initiative bringing together more than 60 countries committed to ending trade in goods used for torture and capital punishment across the globe, launched in 2017. The EU Regulation concerning trade in certain goods which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment²⁷ serves as a model for global and regional initiatives banning trade in goods that can be used for the death penalty, and controlling trade in goods that can be used for torture. This programme shall foster and support similar initiatives and measures at local and national level for more effective regulation in this area.

- ***Responding to basic necessities of adequate food, housing, health care, energy, education and culture***

The programme aims at securing a decent and dignified life for all, by making all basic necessities of food, housing, health care, energy, education and culture adequately and equitably available to everyone. It shall support civil society actions that contribute to eradicating extreme poverty and ensuring the satisfaction of minimum subsistence by countering, as per the EU Guidelines on safe drinking water and sanitation²⁸, water scarcity for personal and domestic uses, energy poverty, shortage of food and inaccessibility of decent affordable housing, advocating for removing physical and social barriers to accessing health-care facilities, goods, services and conditions, ensuring fair and equitable access to and control over land and natural resources for all, and promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. These actions shall also respond to the COVID-19 hit, from halting and reversing degradation of essential services such as adequate health care and social security, restrictions in their access and sharp declines in the circulation of goods and services to countering shocks to both demand and supply, and restoring and enhancing the enforcement of tenure rights over land and natural resources.

These actions shall go hand in hand with actions envisaged under the thematic programme for Global Challenges and geographic programmes, contributing thus to the full enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights by all.

- ***Promoting decent working conditions for all***

The programme promotes full respect for and implementation of international labour standards²⁹. It shall support civil society and social partners' actions that contribute to promoting decent working conditions, fair wages and reasonable working time, universal social protection, healthy and safe working environment, appropriate training for the changing skills' needs and equal treatment. These actions shall also provide the basis for effective social dialogue, boost women's leadership and bargaining power in social dialogue and economic decision-making, promote non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection and reduce inequalities. This includes supporting the work

²⁷ Regulation (EU) 2019/125 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 concerning trade in certain goods which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (codification), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019R0125>;

²⁸ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

²⁹ Cfr.: <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm>;

of trade unionists and human rights advocates and engaging with employers to improve working conditions and encourage decent work creation.

This programme shall also contribute to eradicating child labour³⁰, forced labour and human trafficking. It shall support actions contributing to monitoring, preventing, remediating and raising awareness on child labour and forced labour, which are particularly pervasive in the informal economy and in certain economic sectors, and are increasingly present in local and global supply chains. These actions shall also contribute to strengthening the engagement of civil society with the private sector, building and reinforcing capacity to prevent the use of child labour and forced labour by embedding standards of responsible business conduct in business operations and supply chains.

Supplementary funding from the NDICI-Global Europe cushion shall be devoted to support actions at country level and in all social contexts to prevent and eliminate child labour and forced labour in global supply chains. Actions shall also respond to the deterioration in working conditions as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These actions shall complement actions envisaged under other thematic programmes, in particular the Thematic Programme on Civil Society Organisations and the Global Challenges Programme, and geographic programmes aimed at promoting decent working conditions for all.

- ***Addressing the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on human rights***

The programme promotes full respect for and implementation of environmental laws, regulations and policies, including environmental assessments, safeguards and corporate environmental and social responsibility obligations, as conducive to the full realisation of all human rights. It shall boost the role of civil society working on human rights and democracy as an influential driver for a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Civil society actions shall promote access to information and participative decision-making, contribute to bringing persistent and emerging environmental issues and incidents that impact on human rights to the attention of policy makers and the justice system, denouncing and opposing corrupt practices in environmental and natural resources decision-making, addressing the misuse of international climate and development financing and providing a safe space to collect and show evidence of malpractice, holding corporations to account for their environmental impacts, and promoting education and public awareness on the link between the protection of the environment and the realisation of human rights and the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on human rights. Actions shall also contribute to preserving a safe and enabling environment in which those working on human rights and environmental issues can operate free from threats, harassment, intimidation and violence.

- ii. **Axis of action: Promote equality, inclusion and respect for diversity**

³⁰ EU strategy on the rights of the child (2021-24), https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-strategy-rights-child-and-european-child-guarantee_en;

An inclusive society is a society for all, in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. Inclusive societies are based on respect for all human rights and recognise the dignity, value and importance of each person, not only as an ethical norm and moral imperative, but also as a legal principle, a societal goal, and ultimately, practice. Inclusion does not mean a uniformity of people but a society, which has room for diversity.

The programme aims at creating, by adopting an intersectional approach, equal opportunities to flourish for those persons in vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised situations. It shall support civil society actions that contribute to unlocking the full potential of:

- Women and girls³¹;
- Children and youth³²;
- LGBTI persons³³;
- Indigenous peoples³⁴;
- Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities³⁵;
- Persons with disabilities³⁶;
- Migrants, refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons³⁷.

Actions shall contribute to adopting and enforcing equality and non-discriminatory laws, policies and practices, preventing and eradicating all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, ensuring access to basic needs/livelihoods and use of public facilities and access to public information, guaranteeing quality education and vocational education and training accessible for all, providing with opportunities from participation in decision-making and policy formulation processes to economic empowerment, and acceding to management and leadership positions.

These actions shall go hand in hand with actions envisaged under other thematic programmes, in particular the Thematic Programme on Civil Society Organisations, and geographic programmes, contributing thus to building inclusive societies for all.

iii. Axis of action: Support human rights defenders and counter shrinking space for civil society

The work of human rights defenders and civil society working on human rights and democracy (hereinafter-civil society) is essential for the advancement of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Human rights defenders and civil society play a central role in making state laws, policies, initiatives human rights-compliant, and authorities accountable in decision-making. They play an essential-watchdog role in monitoring the conduct of government officials, putting the spotlight on wrongdoing and injustices in governments and keeping a check on the misuse of power by non-state actors.

³¹ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

³² Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

³³ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

³⁴ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

³⁵ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

³⁶ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

³⁷ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

Human rights defenders and civil society are also instrumental in raising the alarm and demanding actions when marginalised individuals are being adversely affected by state laws, decisions and policies or forgotten, and ensuring their access to redress and remedy. Furthermore, they are key allies to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and overcome it in a way that is inclusive and respectful of human rights.

Although there is broad acknowledgement of their work, human rights defenders and civil society fight, today more than ever, for their legitimate place. The global phenomenon of shrinking civic and democratic space is no longer new, but has become a decade-long trend as governments continue to impose legal and extra-legal restrictions amid a worsening larger political environment for human rights defenders and civil society. Daily obstacles have multiplied from judicial harassment, smear campaigns, threats, intimidation and ill treatment, unlawful arrest and arbitrary detention, abusive control and surveillance, to legal and administrative restrictions impeding the registration of non-governmental organisations and their access to funding, excessive financial and reporting requirements, and confiscation and destruction of working materials. More specifically, young human rights defenders face age-based discrimination intersecting with other forms of discrimination, including but not limited to discrimination based on gender, race and socio-economic status. In many countries, human rights defenders are abducted or even killed. The absence of effective investigations into violations and abuses committed by state and non-state actors against human rights defenders targeted because of their human rights work remains a major problem. This results in the impunity of perpetrators and the recurrence of violations, which also facilitate reprisals. The programme assists human rights defenders and civil society to continue with their work in spite of threats and spearhead positive changes. It shall support, in line with the EU guidelines on human rights defenders³⁸, civil society actions that:

- ***Provide short-, medium- and long-term holistic support to human rights defenders.*** Support shall take many forms, from physical protection, medical care and rehabilitation, psycho-social assistance, legal counselling, prison visits and trial monitoring, emergency sheltering, relocation and return plans, family assistance, lifeline training modules, including on digital security and privacy protection tools, capacity reinforcement, risk prevention and security, networking, monitoring, documenting, reporting and advocacy, mediator skills development to access to international and regional human rights mechanisms and engagement with the international community.
- ***Reverse the shrinking space for civil society:*** The shrinking space for civil society has become a global phenomenon, but does display specific characteristics at country level. Actions shall contribute to developing and implementing shrinking space responses for in-country developments, documenting and analysing the impact of governments' restrictions and other barriers on the existence itself and actions of civil society organisations, helping defining strategies for dialogue with duty bearers/governments, identifying new and innovative ways to work in contexts where restrictive laws and policies

³⁸ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

prevail coupled with funding restrictions, engaging in strategic litigation, strengthening advocacy capacity and promoting vocal initiatives, stimulating the exchange of best practices, and creating capacity building and peer-learning platforms. Moreover, global initiatives shall be envisaged to address in particular the most sensitive situations where human rights and fundamental freedoms are severely restricted.

Over the past few years, long-term efforts of civil society partnerships have borne fruits. This programme shall continue to connect civil society actors and create global, regional and national platforms and spaces for mutual learning, synergies and inspiration.

These actions shall complement actions under the Thematic Programme on Civil Society Organisations, including the new global initiative “Monitoring and Engagement System”, aimed at creating an enabling environment for civil society action.

iv. **Axis of action: Strengthen the rule of law, ensure fair and effective administration of justice and close the accountability gap**

The rule of law helps protect individuals from the rule of the powerful. No society can thrive without independent, effective and functioning justice systems, anti-corruption normative frameworks in place and systems of institutional checks and balances through its three branches - the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. All duty bearers, institutions and entities, public or private, must be accountable to laws thus promulgated, equally enforced, independently adjudicated, and consistent with international human rights norms and standards. This applies also to good governance in natural resources management and the rule of law, access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice on environmental and climate matters.

The programme promotes and strengthens respect for rule of law standards and processes. The role of civil society as watchdog is of critical importance to hold decision-makers accountable for specific decisions or behaviours. This programme shall therefore support civil society actions that contribute to addressing serious human rights violations and abuses, denouncing deficiencies of good governance, including lack of transparency and predictability and non-involvement in decision making processes, and raise awareness regarding the existence, causes, gravity of and harm to the public interest posed by corruption. These actions shall also contribute to safeguarding judicial independence and impartiality as a fundamental prerequisite for the rule of law. They shall therefore promote equal access to justice for all and equality before the law, fulfilment of due process requirements, fair sentencing and fair and appropriate compensation for the injuries suffered, as well as advocate adequate detention conditions.

This programme shall also support transitional justice multi-stakeholders processes in post-conflict or post-authoritarian contexts for human rights violations and abuses, and, where relevant, violations of international humanitarian law, including those against civilians and civilian infrastructures, such as schools and hospitals. Transitional justice encompasses the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's

attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, with the ultimate goal to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation³⁹. Civil society actions shall contribute to ending impunity, providing recognition and redress to victims, fostering trust, strengthening the rule of law and facilitating reconciliation. Supported actions shall cover both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.

Supplementary funding from the NDICI-Global Europe cushion shall be devoted to fight impunity, by building the knowledge base for accountability. To be sustainable, accountability efforts must be nationally owned by all those directly concerned, including local and national civil society organisations working on human rights and democracy. Civil society actions shall respond to the lack of sufficient legal or factual evidence of human rights violations and abuses, which de facto derails the proper functioning of the criminal justice system and fuels a climate of near-absolute impunity for perpetrators. This shall require setting up specialized inquiry structures and developing comprehensive strategies and tools to address knowledge, capacity and commitment gaps, whenever and wherever they occur.

These actions go hand in hand with actions envisaged under the thematic programme for Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention, geographic programmes and the rapid response pillar of the NDICI-Global Europe.

2. Priority 2: *Building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies*

Building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies entails addressing in a comprehensive way all aspects of democratic governance and contributes to strengthen the rule of law.

The overall objective of Priority 2 is to foster a functioning pluralist, participatory and representative democracy - with a dedicated focus on women and youth- and to protect the integrity of electoral processes.

Priority 2 is articulated around two axes of action: i. Strengthen democratic, accountable and transparent institutions, and ii. Promote participatory and representative decision-making.

i. Axis of action: Strengthen democratic, accountable and transparent institutions

The legitimacy of institutions and hence their capacity to be net providers of legitimacy to the overall system of governance depend on their capacity to fulfil their functions in a way that is demonstrably impartial and non-partisan.

Built upon this assumption, actions aim at:

- ***Enhancing the effectiveness, accountability and transparency of Parliaments***

³⁹ See also EU Policy framework on support to Transitional Justice, https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/the_eus_policy_framework_on_support_to_transitional_justice.pdf;

The programme aims at strengthening institutional and technical capacity of Parliaments to exercise their core democratic functions of representation, legislation, oversight and budgetary power in an effective, accountable and transparent manner. It shall complement geographic programmes by supporting broader inter-parliamentary cooperation, peer-to-peer exchanges and research studies on parliamentary development.

In order to increase parliamentary accountability and transparency, the programme shall foster participation of civil society in parliamentary monitoring, by supporting parliamentary monitoring organisations (PMOs). It shall also promote the adoption of codes of conduct or ethics for members of parliaments (MPs).

- ***Improving the integrity of electoral processes***

The quality, credibility and transparency of electoral processes remain a serious challenge globally. The programme promotes and safeguards electoral integrity by means of EU election observation missions (EOMs) and their recommendations. EOMs contribute to strengthening transparency in the management of electoral processes, mitigating the risks of fraud and irregularities and increasing overall confidence in the electoral process. The programme shall continue to support the deployment of electoral missions (e.g. exploratory missions, election observation missions, election expert missions, election follow-up missions) and necessary complementary activities.

The observation methodology, built upon lessons learnt, is constantly evolving. The programme shall facilitate developing, refining and consolidating the methodology, including the assessment of the use of social media and other digital technologies, during election and between electoral cycles, against international standards, in order to prepare for and pre-empt attempts to distort elections. This shall include monitoring and reporting on electoral campaigns, political party financing, electoral violence, and the participation of women, youth, persons belonging to minorities and persons with disabilities in electoral processes.

The programme shall strengthen cooperation between the EU and other signatories of UN Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation to develop and promote international election observation standards. It shall also deepen EU partnership with other key bodies such as the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Council of Europe and UNESCO to build capacity of governments, regulatory bodies and civil society, including by exchanging best practices in protecting electoral integrity from both foreign interference and manipulation.

The programme shall also reinforce the follow-up process of the implementation of the Election Observation Missions' recommendations to ensure a sustainable impact of EU election observation, notably through the deployment of Election Follow-up

Missions and the provision of experts to engage with key stakeholders, including civil society, domestic observers and institutions in the aftermath of an electoral mission⁴⁰.

The programme shall also contribute to foster a common approach to follow-up in the international observer community, in particular with the UN, the African Union (AU), Organisation of American States (OAS), OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Commonwealth.

- ***Engaging civil society observers in election observation***

Civil society observers are key actors to hold credible, inclusive and transparent elections. Their role is particularly important when international missions are impractical, such as under COVID-19 related restrictions, or when not invited by partner countries. The programme shall strengthen the role and capacities of domestic election observers' organisations and their regional and international networks. This shall include support to civil society organisations in integrating the findings and recommendations of domestic electoral observers into EU-funded actions and in promoting their proper implementation by national authorities.

- ***Promoting pro-democracy organisations, networks and alliances***

The programme shall assist pro-democracy organisations and networks in monitoring democratic processes and producing research and evidence-based studies. Furthermore, it shall foster alliances and coalitions between democracies, and promote collaboration between civil society organisations, networks, media and states to promote democracy. It shall provide a European hub for democracy support, developing and standardising best practices.

Supplementary funding from the NDICI-Global Europe cushion shall be devoted to strengthen democratic support and electoral institutions and practices, including through following-up medium- and long-term commitments that emerge from the US Summit for Democracy.

- ii. **Axis of action: Promote participatory and representative decision-making**

The adoption of a bottom-up approach to democracy empowers individuals, without discrimination of any kind, to make their needs and aspirations known, and by doing so to shape their own destiny.

By adopting and promoting a bottom-up approach to democracy, actions aim at:

- ***Supporting political pluralism and inclusiveness***

The programme shall support multi-party systems and reinforce political parties' capacities in a non-partisan manner with a dedicated focus on women and youth.

⁴⁰ Support to EU Delegations in implementing actions for electoral reform informed by the recommendations of the EOMs should be provided by the technical assistance facilities (trainings, technical assistance, etc.) which can be financed by the geographical or thematic lines of the NDICI-Global Europe.

Actions shall, inter alia, assist in the application of international standards on transparent party financing, promote internal democracy and inclusivity in the selection of candidates and officeholders with equal opportunities for women to run for winnable seats, foster the inclusion of young people and eliminate barriers for running for offices, address polarization, monitor online political campaigns, counter political violence offline and online (with a specific attention to violence against women in politics) and promote cross-party alliances and multi-party dialogues on policy issues of common concern. It shall also enhance support to the development of cross-party codes of conduct aimed at preventing electoral fraud and electoral violence.

Supplementary funding from the NDICI-Global Europe cushion shall be devoted to support political pluralism and inclusiveness.

- ***Promoting active citizenship in public and political life***

Active citizenship and effective participation of all individuals and groups in political and public affairs is a pre-condition of participatory democracy. The programme promotes public participation in the development, management and oversight of all sectors of state policies and global agendas, while boosting civic education and tackling existing social and economic barriers that threaten social cohesion, hinder inclusiveness and may undermine political participation. Actions shall facilitate the representation and presence of women and persons in vulnerable and marginalised situations within political parties, national and local legislatures and other formal bodies, as well as through informal networks and organisations. The programme shall also support new forms of participation and civic activism, including through the use of new technologies, and dialogue between new participation or protest movements, well-established civil society organisations and decision-makers and institutions.

The programme shall promote meaningful participation of young people as agents of change in political processes and decision-making. Actions shall contribute to empowering young people and creating an open environment for their engagement, including through support to youth organisations, coalition building and platforms to channel their voices and promote legal and policy reforms, and advocacy and political education.

- ***Fostering the role of civil society in oversight and accountability mechanisms***

The active participation of civil society in defining policies and overseeing the structures and practices of public⁴¹ and private sectors ensure that the law is enforced fairly and equally and serves the interests and priorities of all individuals and their communities.

The programme shall strengthen, through inter alia technical assistance and capacity building, civil society's capacities to countering off and online threats to democracy and the rule of law. Civil society actions shall contribute to reinforcing the social and financial accountability of the executive, and raising awareness on corruption issues,

⁴¹ Examples may include participatory budgeting processes, gender-responsive budgets, public expenditure tracking systems, oversight of international aid, and performance monitoring, including monitoring of relevant criminal trials.

mobilising support for anti-corruption reforms through advocacy and supporting governments in the implementation of anti-corruption measures.

3. Priority 3: *Promoting a global system for human rights and democracy*

A global system for human rights and democracy brings together key actors with diverse competencies but united behind a common goal, which is the full realisation of all human rights for all.

The overall objective of Priority 3 is to work together with all key actors to advance the realisation of all human rights for all.

The programme enhances strategic partnership with the following key international, regional and national actors:

➤ *The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

The opportunities for upholding human rights are many but resources remain too modest. Financial support is crucial to help the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), including human rights treaty bodies and special procedures, to fulfil its core mandate worldwide.

At a time when the OHCHR is facing funding shortfall, this programme continues to step in with yearly financial investment. It shall reinforce the Office's speaking out in the face of human rights violations and abuses, and, where relevant, violations of international humanitarian law. It shall also help advance human rights mainstreaming efforts within the UN system.

The programme shall also support ad-hoc actions to address specific human rights issues, in relation to which the EU and the OHCHR have converging interests and common goals. Areas of intervention are jointly identified in the framework of regular exchanges between the EU and the OHCHR, including the recently established strategic dialogue between the EU and the OHCHR.

➤ *The International Criminal Court*

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the first and only permanent international criminal court to address and help prevent atrocious crimes of concern to the international community, namely war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Its mandate is crucial to help re-building a world free of violence and conflicts, and with respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law (IHL).

The programme continues to support the ICC in the performance of its functions, in accordance with the overarching principle of the rule of law. It reflects the principle that the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute crimes remains with each and every State, while the role of the ICC is to complement, rather than replace, existing national judicial systems.

This action shall be seen in complementarity with actions aimed at strengthening the rule of law, ensure fair and effective administration of justice and close the accountability gap – Priority 1. Protecting and empowering individuals, Axis of action iv. Strengthen the rule of law, ensure fair and effective administration of justice and close the accountability gap.

➤ ***Regional human rights systems***

Regional human rights systems, consisting of regional instruments and mechanisms, play an increasingly important role in the promotion and protection of human rights. Regional human rights instruments - treaties, conventions, declarations - help to localise international human rights norms and standards, reflecting the particular human rights concerns of the region. Regional human rights mechanisms - commissions, special rapporteurs, courts - help to implement these instruments on the ground.

The programme enhances capacities and supports actions by regional human rights mechanisms, such as:

- Inter-American mechanisms, in particular the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights;
- The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR).

In order to make the most effective use of available resources, geographic programmes envisage structural support to the Council of Europe's human rights system and the African Governance Architecture (AGA).

➤ ***National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)***

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)⁴² are a vital part of the country-level human rights protection system. They spotlight country-specific human rights issues and intervene, as appropriate, before national, regional and international authorities.

The programme supports:

- NHRIs as independent and effective interlocutors vis-à-vis national public authorities and their own citizens. Actions shall strengthen NHRIs' capacity of human rights education and awareness raising, monitoring and reporting, handling individual complaints on alleged human rights violations and abuses, and making recommendations to harmonise national laws, policies and practices with the international human rights standards.
- NHRIs as bridge-builders between civil society, human rights defenders, national authorities and regional and international human rights bodies. Actions shall strengthen NHRIs' independence, facilitate their access to and engagement with regional and international human rights mechanisms to draw attention to human rights pressing issues in a given country. Regional and

⁴² Six models of NHRIs exist today across all regions of the world, namely: human rights commissions, human rights ombudsman institutions, hybrid institutions, consultative and advisory bodies, institutes and centres and multiple institutions.

international instances shall also serve as a platform for exchanging experiences and identifying promising practices.

The programme shall also support the work of global and regional networks of NHRIs.

This action shall be seen in complementarity with actions aimed at supporting human rights defenders and promote safe space for civil society – Priority 1. Protecting and empowering individuals, Axis of action iii. Support human rights defenders and promote safe space for civil society.

➤ **Private sector**

Business activity is one of the main drivers of economic growth, but can lead to negative human rights impacts.

The EU encourages companies to carry out due diligence throughout their supply chains in line with established international instruments and guidelines, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights⁴³, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises⁴⁴ and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO MNE)⁴⁵.

The 2011 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) provides the global framework for governments and businesses to identify, prevent, mitigate and remedy human rights abuses resulting from, or linked to business activities. The implementation of the UNGPs differs widely across countries, sectors and individual companies.

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are recommendations addressed by governments to multinational enterprises operating in or from adhering countries. They provide non-binding principles and standards for responsible business conduct in a global context consistent with applicable laws and internationally recognised standards.

The ILO MNE Declaration provides guidance to enterprises - multinational and national - on social policy and inclusive, responsible and sustainable workplace practices.

The programme contributes to the global implementation of the UNGPs, OECD MNE guidelines and the ILO MNE Declaration by empowering civil society to promote respect for human rights in business activities. It shall include civil society actions, including social partners, supporting education and awareness-raising campaigns on responsible business conduct, protecting human rights defenders working on business and human rights, monitoring the implementation of international treaties and their domestication, facilitating access to remedy for victims of corporate human rights abuses, promoting implementation of the right to prior consultation or supporting initiatives for community-based monitoring, auditing, benchmarking and product sourcing. It shall also promote multi-stakeholder initiatives, including in multilateral

⁴³ https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf;

⁴⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/corporate/mne/>;

⁴⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---multi/documents/publication/wcms_094386.pdf

instances, between civil society, governments and businesses to enhance on the ground impact of responsible business practices and the promotion and implementation of international standards as well as to contribute to levelling the playing field for businesses that integrate human rights and responsible business considerations into their operations and supply chains.

This action shall be seen in complementarity with actions aimed at promoting decent working conditions for all – Priority 1. Protecting and empowering individuals, Axis of action i. Uphold all human rights as essential to human dignity.

➤ ***The Global Campus of Human Rights***

Built on two decades of excellence in education, training and research in human rights and democratisation, the Global Campus of Human Rights is a strategic hub for advancing human rights and democracy education across the world. It brings together about 100 leading universities, and relies on a worldwide network of more than 3000 alumni.

The programme continues to support the Global Campus, ensuring quality and relevance of education, training, research and outreach on human rights and democracy.

4. Priority 4: Safeguarding fundamental freedoms, including harnessing the opportunities and addressing challenges of digital and new technologies

The exercise of freedom of expression, including media freedom, freedom of association and peaceful assembly is at the heart of an active, free, pluralist and tolerant civil society. It enables individuals to express their views and opinions both individually and as part of a collective, including by engaging in peaceful public marches, protests and demonstrations.

The overall objective of Priority 4 is to create and maintain an environment conducive to the full exercise of all fundamental freedoms, online and offline.

The programme shall therefore support civil society actions that, consistent with the EU Guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline⁴⁶, promote an environment respectful of ideas, views and opinions of any kind or nature whatsoever, ensure access to pluralistic, quality-based and diverse sources of information of public interest, facilitate the establishment of inclusive dialogue platforms with national authorities and institutions, advocate for legislation or policy reforms safeguarding the full exercise of freedom of expression while respecting privacy and protecting personal data and enhance global knowledge and awareness within societies. This shall apply equally offline and online. The programme shall contribute to strengthening the capacity of civil society, independent media, journalists, bloggers and fact-checkers to provide the public with reliable information through responsible and professional reporting as well as facilitating their collaboration in preventing and countering undue interference in their work, reporting signals of repression and violations of media

⁴⁶ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

freedom and fighting online disinformation. Civil society actions shall contribute to detecting, preventing and countering digital, physical, and legal threats and attacks to the safety of journalists, bloggers and other media workers. They shall strengthen citizens' skills and understanding of benefits and threats of the online environment.

The exercise of these freedoms enables the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion and belief. The programme shall support civil society actions that, consistent with the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief⁴⁷, contribute to countering misperceptions, falsehoods and misuse of religion or belief, including by facilitating dialogue between members of different religious or belief communities and non-religious actors, against any allegation of sectarianism. These actions shall promote the right of all individuals to manifest, change or abandon their religion or belief, and prevent and combat any act of intolerance, discrimination and violence against individuals on the grounds of religion or belief.

These actions shall address the misuse of fundamental freedoms to serve political purposes, to incite racial or religious hatred, to promote war propaganda or to encourage others to commit crimes. They shall also tackle the manipulation of the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergency situations to limit all fundamental freedoms, in particular freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, to an extent rarely experienced in peacetime.

Media freedom and pluralism are crucial components of democratic processes. By providing reliable and evidence-based information, independent media play an important role in informing the public, exposing disinformation and tackling the manipulation of the democratic debate, so that citizens can make informed decisions, free from bias and interferences.

The programme shall foster the capacity of independent, pluralistic and quality media around the world, including investigative journalists, bloggers and fact checkers to report objectively on democratic and electoral processes. This shall include facilitating the access to and the use of digital and new technologies, in particular the open internet, and bridging the gap between offline and online. Furthermore, the programme shall address the gender gap in digital access and in meaningful digital use. The programme shall also support media organisations to increase transparency in decision-making and spending and to ensure accessibility and timely publication of data for scrutiny.

Furthermore, this programme shall contribute to counter disinformation, interference in democratic and electoral processes, and hate speech, while safeguarding the full exercise of fundamental freedoms. It shall support civil society actions that foster online media literacy and digital skills, promote a global, open, free and secure internet equally accessible to all, and monitor and advocate against internet shutdowns and online censorship, especially in the context of elections.

The programme shall reinforce civil society's capacities in monitoring and assessing the development of new Information Communication Technology (ICT) and online tools and standards, including in relevant multistakeholders and multilateral bodies, as well as their use and the effectiveness of measures taken by institutions and regulatory

⁴⁷ Cfr.: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/human-rights-democracy/6987/eu-human-rights-guidelines_en;

bodies to prevent and counter online threats. It shall also assist civil society in advocating for legislation and policy reforms that apply offline rules on elections and democratic processes to the online context⁴⁸.

Supplementary funding from the NDICI-Global Europe cushion shall be devoted to enhance professional skills, abilities and capacity of journalists, bloggers and media workers, in particular by means of country-to-country exchange programmes/schemes, and sub-regional and regional networks as well as by supporting self-regulatory and standard-setting initiatives developed by medias. Against the backdrop of government-controlled news media amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, these programmes/schemes shall enable journalists to gain a broader and more comprehensive understanding and to get easier access to tools and methodologies, such as fact-checking, cybersecurity techniques and tips and techniques on investigative reporting, and bring international insights to their home audiences.

The specific objective of Priority 4 is to harness the opportunities and address challenges of digital and new technologies.

Digital and new technologies can empower our societies and economies and get the most out of innovation and competition. They can present great utility and promise, including for human rights. Digital and new technologies are increasingly used to monitor and document human rights violations and abuses, to encourage citizens' involvement and participation in political and public life, to widen access to information and knowledge and ease communication of information and ideas or improve the delivery of basic services, including to remote areas. New media platforms have given human rights defenders fast ways to operate and share messages at scale. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, may significantly expand the availability and quality of data that informs decision-making. Moreover, digital technology holds considerable prospects for empowering young people to become informed and active advocates of their rights. At the same time, digital and new technologies can also be used in ways that violate human rights at an unprecedented reach and matchless speed. Online freedom of speech and expression is being curtailed through governmental content and censorship, while both targeted and mass surveillance of civil society actors is becoming common practice. Hate speech, intentional manipulation of information and non-intentional misinformation and cyber-harassment are spreading online, and often lead to hate crime and physical violence. Moreover, mass data collection can lead, among other issues, to violations of the right to privacy.

Rapid developments in artificial intelligence, automation, and robotics raise questions about their accessibility for all and their impacts on human rights. The use of machines to increase productivity risks resulting in economic re-structuring that might heighten social inequality. Artificial intelligence-driven decision-making can lead to various types of discrimination due to historical biases in the collected data.

As of today, the EU has led the regulatory response to the challenges caused by the rapid progress of technological change. Yet, debates continue to proliferate about how

⁴⁸ Build on the EU's efforts in this regard, including the action plan against disinformation, the Commission's electoral package, the code of practice on disinformation, the European Democracy Action Plan and Digital Service Act.

international human rights should be protected and promoted with respect to science and technology, in particular due to growing influence of models promoting internet as a model of State-control by non-democratic countries. New concrete solutions to these fundamental challenges are needed, in particular in authoritarian countries, in order to foster an empowering digital environment.

The programme gives centrality to human rights and democracy in the regulation and use of digital and new technologies. It shall support civil society actions that contribute on one hand to revealing the full potential of digital and new technologies for the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy, and on the other hand to countering their misuse and abuse. These actions shall therefore enhance general knowledge and understanding of digital and new technologies and their impacts on human rights, help young people understand the value of the open internet and make informed choices while using the Internet and digital technologies, disseminate knowledge, build or reinforce skills, including on digital security matters, for their strategic use at grassroots level, and promote close collaboration with experts to anticipate and counter harmful effects in terms of personal data protection, privacy and security.

The programme also promotes understanding of the tension between advantages of artificial intelligence technology and risks for human rights, and advocates a trustworthy artificial intelligence system, as foreseen in the EU regulation⁴⁹, which is lawful, human-centred, ethical and robust. Civil society actions shall promote a human rights-based approach to artificial intelligence, which employ internationally agreed human rights standards and ensure moral conduct in the design, development, use and deployment of Artificial Intelligence technologies. Joint actions by civil society, business and academia shall contribute to closing skills gaps, developing innovative solutions and ensuring greater inclusivity in the technical development and decision-making processes.

Supplementary funding from the NDICI-Global Europe cushion shall be devoted to support civil society actions to counter the misuse and abuse of digital and new technologies.

5. Priority 5: Delivering by working together

The imperative of “Working together” underpins all four priorities, and is key to achieve concrete results.

The overall objective of Priority 5 is to develop a compelling narrative on human rights and democracy with a multiplying effect as well as to ensure civil society's contribution to human rights dialogues the EU conducts with partner countries.

A multitude of human rights actors generates a multitude of motivational stories and moments. These stories reveal how many persons around the globe work every day

⁴⁹ Cfr.: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-approach-artificial-intelligence>

to make the world a better, fairer, and more just place. The programme contributes to making these stories visible, and to inspiring others to create waves of positive change.

This programme shall also continue to maintain a space for civil society's engagement with national authorities, including in the framework of human rights dialogues the EU conducts with partner countries.

5. Financial overview

The financial envelope for the implementation of the programme on human rights and democracy is **EUR 1,511,852,228 for the period 2021-2027**, of which EUR 200,000,000 from the emerging challenges and priorities cushion⁵⁰.

Programme for human rights and democracy	Indicative amount	Of which top-up from the cushion	%range⁵¹
Protecting and empowering individuals	703,682,228		45-50%
<i>Uphold all human rights as essential to human dignity</i>	160,733,000	50,000,000	
<i>Promote equality inclusion and respect for diversity</i>	132,262,228		
<i>Support human rights defenders and counter shrinking space for civil society</i>	326,593,000		
<i>Strengthen the rule of law, ensure fair and effective administration of justice and close the accountability gap</i>	84,094,000	50,000,000	
Building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies⁵²	462,877,000		28-33%
<i>Strengthen democratic, accountable and transparent institutions</i>	364,061,000	25,000,000	
<i>Promote participatory and representative decision-making</i>	98,816,000	25,000,000	
Promoting a global system for human rights and democracy	143,632,000		9-12%
<i>Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights</i>	36,500,000		
<i>International Criminal Court</i>	7,000,000		
<i>Regional Human Rights systems</i>	7,000,000		
<i>National Human Rights Institutions</i>	33,767,000		
<i>Private Sector</i>	24,365,000		
<i>Global Campus of Human Rights</i>	35,000,000		
Safeguarding fundamental freedoms, including harnessing the opportunities and addressing challenges of digital and new technologies	195,036,000		10-13%
<i>Safeguarding fundamental freedoms</i>	152,290,000	30,000,000	
<i>Harnessing the opportunities and addressing challenges of new technologies</i>	42,746,000	20,000,000	
Delivery by working together	6,625,000		0.4-1%
<i>CS seminar in the framework of human rights dialogues with partner countries</i>	2,262,000		
<i>Support measures⁵³</i>	4,363,000		
TOTAL	1,511,852,228	200,000,000	

⁵⁰ As per recital of the NDICI-Global Europe regulation, "The emerging challenges and priorities cushion should guarantee at least the following additional resources: EUR 200 000 000 for the Human Rights and Democracy programme, EUR 200 000 000 for the Civil Society Organisations thematic programme and EUR 600 000 000 for the Global Challenges thematic programme"

⁵¹ Percentage ranges indicate the minimum and maximum spending limits estimated over the 7-year period. The estimates may be subject to adjustments under the mid-term review.

⁵² As per recital of the NDICI-Global Europe regulation, "Indicatively up to 25% of the resources initially allocated to the programme for Human Rights and Democracy should be devoted to the funding of EU election observation missions".

⁵³ Support measures may be needed to reinforce efficiency, performance and impact of the thematic programme implementation. They could allow preparation, follow-up, monitoring, audit and evaluation activities, as well as other relevant activities directly linked to the achievement of the thematic programme's specific objectives, such as studies, meetings and consultations, exchanges of best practices, training, information sessions, and communication and publication activities.

The financial envelope for country allocations is **EUR 752,787,000** corresponding approximately to 50% of the financial envelope for the implementation of the programme for human rights and democracy at country level.

Region / Sub Region	Indicative amount	% range⁵⁴
Western Balkans & Turkey	52,706,000	7-8%
ENP and Russia	161,850,000	20-22%
LAC	122,321,000	15-17%
East, Central and West Africa	173,141,000	20-23%
Southern Africa and Indian Ocean	45,167,000	5-7%
Central Asia	30,112,000	3-5%
East, South, Southeast Asia and the Pacific	152,434,000	18-21%
Middle East ⁵⁵ and Gulf countries	15,056,000	1.5-3%
TOTAL	752,787,000	

⁵⁴ Percentage ranges indicate the minimum and maximum spending limits estimated over the 7-year period. The estimates may be subject to adjustments under the mid-term review.

⁵⁵ Allocations are foreseen for the following countries: Yemen, Iran, Iraq

ANNEX 1. Specific objectives, expected results, performance indicators

<p>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES PER MIP PRIORITY</p>	<p>EXPECTED RESULTS</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</p>
<p><i>PRIORITY 1: Protecting and empowering individuals</i></p>		
<p>Axis of action i.: Uphold all human rights as essential to human dignity.</p> <p>To enhance alignment of national legal frameworks and policies with international human rights norms and standards.</p> <p>To facilitate implementation and enforcement of public human rights-related policies and improve their effectiveness in terms of transparency, inclusiveness, equal opportunities and accessibility, reach, service quality, environmental protection and gender-responsiveness.</p>	<p>Strengthened capacities of civil society, including advocacy and public awareness, to effectively operate for the worldwide abolition of the death penalty, the eradication of all forms of torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment, the equal satisfaction of basic necessities, effectiveness of social dialogues and full respect for environmental standards.</p> <p>Enhanced oversight and strengthened role of civil society in</p>	<p>Number of state ratifications of international human rights instruments.</p> <p>Number of national and sub-national laws and public policies, which directly or indirectly protect and promote human rights, adopted or amended thanks to the critical role played by civil society organizations through EU support (EU RF level 2, also valid for priority 1.2 and priority 4.).</p> <p>Number of inclusive social dialogues in partner countries, promoted and facilitated by EU-funded actions.</p>

	<p>monitoring, preventing and responding to human rights violations and abuses.</p> <p>Increased participation of civil society representatives in decision-making processes.</p>	<p>Number of government policies developed or revised with civil society organizations' participation through EU support (EURF level 2)</p> <p>Number of grassroots civil society organizations active in the human rights field benefitting from or reached by EU support (EURF level 2, also valid for priority 1.2 and 1.3).</p> <p>Number of victims (sex- and age-disaggregated) of human rights violations and abuses, directly benefitting from assistance funded by the EU (EURF level 2).</p> <p>Number of children removed from child labour and reintegrated into education or training through EU support</p>
<p>Axis of action ii.: Promote equality, inclusion and respect for diversity in all spheres of life.</p> <p>To make strides towards equality, inclusion and respect for those persons in vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized situations – women and girls, children and youth,</p>	<p>Strengthened capacities of civil society, including advocacy and public awareness, to contribute to</p>	<p>Number of persons benefitting from EU-funded programmes to counter sexual and gender-based violence (EURF level 2).</p>

<p>LGBTI persons, indigenous peoples, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities and migrants, refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons.</p>	<p>repealing discriminatory laws, policies, measures and practices.</p> <p>Strengthened capacities of civil society, including advocacy and public awareness, to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence, including gender-based violence.</p> <p>Increased engagement opportunities and participation of persons in vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized situations in decision-making processes.</p>	<p>Number of civil society organisations participating in national human rights dialogues, disaggregated by thematic topic covered and type of organization.</p>
<p>Axis of action iii.: Support human rights defenders and counter shrinking space for civil society.</p> <p>To protect and empower Human Rights Defenders and civil society to continue with their work in spite of threats and spearhead positive changes.</p>	<p>Effective protection of and material support to Human Rights Defenders as well as their families.</p> <p>Strengthened capacities of human rights defenders and civil society, including strategic litigation, advocacy and public awareness, to work in contexts where</p>	<p>Number of human rights defenders (sex-disaggregated) and civil society organizations that received concrete assistance from the EU (physical protection, medical care and rehabilitation, legal counselling, prison visits and trial monitoring, emergency sheltering, relocation and return plans, among others).</p>

	<p>restrictive laws and policies, coupled with funding restrictions, prevail.</p> <p>Broadened network of civil society platforms to exchange best practices and promoting mutual-learning initiatives.</p>	<p>Number of national and local laws and public policies protecting human rights defenders and civil society and safeguarding the space they operate in, adopted or revised thanks to EU support</p> <p>Number of EU-funded interventions in support of CS-led initiatives that have, directly or indirectly, contributed to countering shrinking space.</p>
<p>Axis of action. iv.: Strengthen the rule of law, ensure fair and effective administration of justice and close the accountability gap.</p> <p>To promote and strengthen full respect for the rule of law</p> <p>To ensure equal access to justice for all, full respect for the right to equality before the law and the right to a fair trial, and fulfilment of due process requirements.</p> <p>To enhance effectiveness of crime prevention and criminal justice mechanisms, truth, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence for serious and widespread human rights violations.</p>	<p>Improved efficiency, quality, accountability, transparency and credibility of justice systems.</p> <p>Enhanced effectiveness of criminal justice systems and processes, in particular guaranteed protection and redress for victims.</p> <p>Enhanced effectiveness of transitional justice processes in</p>	<p>Number of persons directly benefitting from legal aid interventions supported by the EU (EURF level 2).</p> <p>Number of CS-led actions in support of transitional justice judicial and non-judicial mechanisms and processes funded by the EU.</p> <p>Number of CS-led advocacy strategies and campaigns to promote full respect for the rule of law standards and processes funded by the EU.</p>

	post-conflict or post-authoritarian contexts.	
<i>PRIORITY 2: Building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies</i>		
<p>Axis of action i.: Strengthen democratic, accountable and transparent institutions.</p> <p>To improve public trust in representative democracy.</p> <p>To improve transparency and accountability of democratic institutions.</p>	<p>Improved effectiveness of parliamentary functions.</p> <p>Improved integrity, transparency and accuracy of electoral processes.</p>	<p>Number of parliaments receiving support through EU-funded actions.</p> <p>Number of electoral processes and democratic cycles supported, observed and followed by means of Electoral Missions (Election Observation Missions, Election Experts Missions, Election Follow-up Mission and complementary activities).</p> <p>Number of countries supported by the EU to conduct elections and/or improve their electoral process (EURF level 2).</p> <p>Number of Domestic electoral Observers receiving EU-funded trainings with increased knowledge and/or skills.</p>

<p>Axis of action ii.: Promote participatory and representative decision-making</p> <p>To improve inclusiveness of the democratic process.</p> <p>To enhance civil society's role in oversight of public and private sectors.</p>	<p>Political party systems are conducive to political participation. Strengthened capacity of civil society and institutional oversight bodies.</p>	<p>Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (SDG 5.5.1 under (a)).</p> <p>Number of non-EU countries improving their country situation score in public sector corruption under Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International.</p> <p>Number of non-EU countries improving V-DEM Participatory Component Index (PCI).</p> <p>Number of EU-funded actions increasing access to public sector information (PSI), or government data.</p>
<p><i>PRIORITY 3: Promoting a global system for human rights and democracy</i></p>		
<p>To enhance strategic partnership with and improve effectiveness of key international, regional and national actors to advance the realization of all human rights for all.</p>	<p>Strengthened capacities of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, including human rights treaty bodies and special procedures.</p>	<p>Number of multi-stakeholder initiatives undertaken by international and regional human rights actors, thanks to EU support.</p>

<p>To enhance private sector engagement to advance the realization of all human rights for all.</p>	<p>Enhanced capacities of the International Criminal Court in the performance of its functions.</p> <p>Enhanced capacities of regional human rights mechanisms to implement regional human rights instruments.</p> <p>Strengthened capacities of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and broadened engagement platforms between NHRIs, civil society organizations, national authorities and regional and international human rights bodies.</p> <p>Enhanced implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.</p> <p>Enhanced capacities of the Global Campus of Human Rights and further expansions of its worldwide network.</p>	<p>Number of countries, which have ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and related Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court, thanks to EU-funded actions.</p> <p>Number of internationally recognized national human rights institutions (NHRIs), as per the United Nations Paris Principle.</p> <p>Number of persons trained with EU support with increased knowledge on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and Corporate Social Responsibility, disaggregated by sex and type of actor.</p> <p>Number of CS-led advocacy strategies and campaigns to raise awareness on responsible business conduct funded by the EU.</p> <p>Number of universities, which are members of the Global Campus of Human Rights.</p>
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<i>PRIORITY 4: Safeguarding fundamental freedoms, including harnessing the opportunities and addressing challenges of digital and new technologies</i>		
<p>To safeguard an environment conducive to the full exercise of all fundamental freedoms, online and offline.</p> <p>To promote a human rights-based approach to digital and new technologies.</p>	<p>Strengthened capacities of civil society and independent media to exercise fundamental freedoms.</p> <p>Effective protection of and support to journalists, bloggers and other media workers.</p> <p>Strengthened public awareness and inclusive debate on the centrality of human rights and democracy in the regulation and use of new technologies.</p>	<p>Number of non-EU countries improving their country situation score under the Press Freedom Index and the Freedom House Index on Freedom of the Net.</p> <p>Number of journalists, bloggers and other media workers that received concrete assistance from the EU (physical protection, legal counselling, emergency sheltering, relocation and return plans, among others).</p> <p>Number of journalists, bloggers and other media actors who benefitted from EU-funded trainings, including for adapting to digitalization and online platforms.</p> <p>Number of CS-led advocacy strategies and campaigns to raise awareness on unlawful restrictions on fundamental freedoms funded by the EU.</p>

		<p>Number of inclusive dialogues and consultations on the regulation and use of new technologies with government's authorities in partner countries, promoted and facilitated by EU-funded actions.</p> <p>Number of countries in which the EU has actively supported the capacities and expertise of NGOs in the detection and oversight of compliance of online activities and policies with human rights and democratic standards.</p>
<p><i>PRIORITY 5: Delivering by working together</i></p>		
<p>To develop a compelling narrative on human rights and democracy, with a multiplying effect.</p>	<p>Enhanced effectiveness and visibility of EU action and funding for human rights and democracy.</p> <p>Enhanced space for open and constructive dialogue between civil society, partner countries' national authorities and the EU in the framework of human rights dialogues and consultations with partner countries.</p>	<p>Number of CS-led advocacy strategies and campaigns to promote human rights and democracy worldwide funded by the EU.</p> <p>Number of CS representatives (disaggregated per sex and country of origin) participating in EU-funded human rights events, in particular the EU-NGO Human Rights Forum.</p>

		Number of Civil Society Seminars in preparation of Human Rights Dialogues with partner countries.
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