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- Human Rights Without Frontiers
- International Centre for Transitional Justice
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- International Federation for Human Rights
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- International Rescue Committee Belgium
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- Search for Common Ground
- Terre des Hommes international federation
- World Coalition against Death Penalty
- World Organisation Against Torture
- World Vision

HRDN response to the adoption of the new EU human rights package by the Foreign Affairs Council on June 25

The Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) welcomes the adoption of the new EU human rights package –including the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy and the EU Human Rights Action Plan – by the Foreign Affairs Council on June 25.

This new human rights package is an important step forward for EU human rights policy. It provides a real opportunity to strengthen the EU's engagement on human rights and democracy. It is a powerful pledge by the 27 EU Member States, the European External Action Service and the European Commission to advance the protection and promotion of human rights together and to move respect for human rights to the center of EU foreign policy. The burden for fulfilling this pledge lies on the shoulders of all these actors and the work on its implementation starts today.

We expect the package to be implemented in a transparent and accountable manner:

- Time has come for the EU to stop the habit of dealing with human rights behind closed doors and the adoption of this new EU human rights package should represent a transition to a more transparent and accountable EU human rights policy and its implementation. We expect the EU to be at the forefront of the international community speaking out against human rights violations wherever and whenever they occur.
- We welcome the EU's commitment to enhance its partnership with civil society and we look forward to regular consultations in non-EU countries and in Brussels on how the package should be and is being implemented.
- The EU needs to step up its efforts to truly mainstream human rights effectively into the work of all EU institutions and mechanisms to ensure that human rights and democracy are at the core of all EU actions and policies. There should be clear instructions given to all EU staff on their own individual roles and responsibilities in implementing the EU's human rights policy.

The Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) is an informal grouping of NGOs operating at EU level in the broader areas of human rights, democracy and conflict prevention. Participation in the network is open to non-governmental organizations which engage at EU level in the promotion of human rights, democracy and conflict prevention in and outside the EU.

The vision of the HRDN is that human rights and democracy are placed at the heart of the EU's internal and external policy agenda. This vision should manifest itself in a EU that effectively protects human rights at home and is a force for positive change in the world. In pursuit of this vision, the network aims to influence EU and member state human rights policies and the programming of their funding instruments to promote democracy, human rights and sustainable peace.

- In implementing the package, the EU should make it clear that it is committed to respecting human rights both at home and abroad, and seek to diminish double standards by consistently addressing human rights violations and abuses whenever they occur. In particular, the EU still needs to strengthen its resolve to address human rights violations that occur within the EU and those caused by European companies abroad.

We also welcome the agreement to appoint the first EU Special Representative for Human Rights, whose job it will be to “strengthen the effectiveness and the visibility of the EU's human rights policy”. We look forward to working closely with this new Representative who will act as the high-level face and voice of EU human rights policy internationally and will fill the gap between member states and the EEAS by acting as a focal point for internal guidance, strategic thinking and expertise. The creation of this new position should not however limit the obligations and responsibilities of all 27 EU member states and the EU High Representative in promoting human rights worldwide as well as in shaping and implementing the EU human rights policy.

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