

# Council approves conclusions on the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024



The Council has approved conclusions on the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024. The Action Plan sets out the EU's **level of ambition and priorities** in this field in its relations with all third countries.

With this Action Plan, the Council reaffirms the EU's **strong commitment to further advancing universal values for all**.

The conclusions acknowledge that while there have been leaps forward, there has also been a **pushback** against the universality and indivisibility of human rights. The ongoing **COVID-19 pandemic** and its **socio-economic consequences** have had an increasingly negative impact on all human rights, democracy and rule of law, deepening pre-existing inequalities and increasing pressure on persons in vulnerable situations.

**No one should be left behind, no human right ignored.** To this end the EU and its member states will use the full range of their instruments, in all areas of external action, to focus on and further strengthen EU's global leadership in the field of human rights and democracy and in the implementation of the EU Action Plan.

## Background

In 2012, the EU adopted the Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy which set out the principles, objectives and priorities designed to improve the effectiveness and consistency of EU policy in these areas. To implement the EU Strategic Framework of 2012, the EU has adopted two EU Action Plans (2012-2014 and 2015-2019).

The new Action Plan for 2020-2024 builds on the previous action plans and continues to focus on long-standing priorities such as **supporting human rights defenders** and the **fight against the death penalty**.

By identifying 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) new technologies: harnessing opportunities and addressing challenges; and (5) delivering by working together, the Action Plan also reflects the changing context with attention to new technologies and to the link between global environmental challenges and human rights.