



EU Priorities for the 45th session of the Human Rights Council from an EU perspective

Geneva, 11 September 2020

From 14 September to 6 October 2020, the EU will participate actively in the 45th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC45) taking place in Geneva.

The human rights situation in **Belarus**, following the Presidential Election on 9 August 2020, has the European Union's utmost attention and will be high on the agenda of HRC45. As stressed in numerous statements by the EU High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell, the EU stands by the Belarusian people's wish for democratic change and calls on the Belarusian authorities to engage in an inclusive national dialogue. Only a peaceful and democratic process, underpinned by independent and free media and a strong civil society, can provide sustainable solutions. *"The Human Rights Council needs to act to ensure that the voices of the Belarusian people are heard and protected"*, says EU Ambassador Stevens and stresses: *"We condemn violence, call for release of the unlawfully detained protesters as well as political prisoners, and demand the prosecution of those responsible for these crimes."*

At this session, the EU will present a resolution on the human rights situation in **Burundi**, where the peaceful transfer of power offers an opportunity for re-engagement with the UN and the international community and to commit to a pathway of change based on respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democratic principles and the rule of law.

The human rights situation in **Myanmar** remains of grave concern. Ensuring accountability for all those responsible for human rights violations continues to be a priority. At the upcoming session, the EU will therefore continue to be highly engaged in the Interactive Dialogues and ensure that the situation remains high on the agenda of the Human Rights Council. The EU continues to work side by side with the United Nations to address the humanitarian needs of displaced Rohingya and other minorities, and continues to stress the need for the Myanmar authorities to redouble their efforts to create conditions allowing their safe and dignified return.

At the upcoming session, the EU will also continue to maintain the situation in **Syria** under scrutiny of the Council, as well as that of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, **Yemen** and the **Philippines**. On **Venezuela**, the EU remains concerned over the ongoing political crisis, reduced democratic and political space, as well as the human rights situation, which has been worsened by the Covid-19 emergency. The EU strongly supports the Fact Finding Mission (FFM) on Venezuela, as well as the monitoring role of the Office of the High Commissioner. *"We will engage in the discussions of the Council with a view to renewing the mandate of the FFM and ensuring that the Office of the High Commissioner continues to brief the Council on the human rights situation in Venezuela,"* Ambassador Stevens says.

“Children have always been and remain at the heart of EU policy,” states EU Ambassador Stevens. In a long-standing partnership together with the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), we will therefore present a resolution on the **Rights of the Child**, which focuses on realising the rights of children through a healthy environment. The resolution will urge States to ensure that the best interest of the child is a primary consideration in environmental decision-making. The EU stresses the importance of adopting a child rights-based approach, including gender responsive measures, and of ensuring the active participation of children and youth in environmental matters. *“Children should grow up in an environment that fosters their well-being and dignity: attending school, having nutritious food, enjoying good health and living in safety, including on the road. Through the Convention on the Rights of the Child, States are obliged to protect children, including from environmental harm. We also want to highlight that children have the right to participate in all matters that affect them, including those related to the environment,”* emphasizes Ambassador Stevens.

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the UN at the General Assembly taking place in parallel to this Human Rights Council session *“the EU will continue to be a strong supporter of the UN as an indispensable forum for multilateral solutions to global challenges,”* stresses Ambassador Stevens, *“And we will continue to endeavour in favour of a strong and efficient Human Rights Council, recognising its unique role and added value in promoting and protecting human rights around the world.”*

All virtual events that the EU organises in the context of the HRC will be published on the [EU Delegation's website](#), as well as EU statements and interventions. Updates will also be regularly posted on the EU Delegation's Twitter account [@EU_UNGeneva](#).