

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



VALUES AND MULTILATERAL RELATIONS

Human Rights Division

Brussels, 4 November 2022

Mid-term Review of the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 Request for contributions from Civil Society

Context

In November 2020, the EU adopted its Action Plan (AP) on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-24). The Action Plan reaffirmed the EU's and Member States' commitment to the human rights and democracy agenda, and set out the EU's priorities in its relations with all partners. The implementation started immediately with the adoption of the Global Human Rights Sanction Regime, which were followed by several other actions.

The EU monitors and reports yearly on the implementation of the AP by preparing a detailed EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World. The High Representative 2021 Annual Report was issued in April 2022. The Report is fully aligned with the structure of the Action Plan. Like for the previous Action Plans, a Mid-Term Review (MTR) is foreseen. For the Action Plan 2020-2024 this is due by June 2023.

The MTR will be based on the Annual Reports 2020 and 2021, but it will be a very different exercise in terms of objective, scope and process. The MTR process will review actions envisaged in the AP (completed, ongoing and yet to be launched), as well as instruments, best practices and success stories, but also challenges and unforeseen situations that arose since the adoption of the AP.

The MTR will not rewrite the AP, nor will it change its five priorities. It will help identify how we can better implement the AP until its term and assess if the AP priorities need some adaptations. In doing so, we will also identify valuable elements to consider in the process of next Action Plan.

The annotated outline and an indicative timeline of the MTR are attached for your information.

Request for contributions from Civil Society

The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 foresees also regular consultations with civil society as an important partner of the EU in its implementation. Civil Society Organizations are also consulted regularly at country level by our EU Delegations around the world. Civil Society provided valuable input for the preparation of the Action Plan 2020-2024, the Country Strategies on the implementation of the Action Plan and the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World issued annually by the EU.

An important meeting to hear the views of Civil Society on the implementation of the Action Plan 2020-2024 was organized by the EEAS on 13 June 2022 in Brussels, just a few months before the launch of the MTR. This meeting provided also an opportunity for exchanging views

on the remainder of the Action Plan implementation. On that occasion, we informed about the forthcoming MTR, for which we would ask for civil society's contributions to the review process that we are now launching.

At the same time, as highlighted above, the MTR is not a progress-report exercise. It is a unique opportunity to review the Action Plan implementation critically and reflect strategically on how we can better implement it until its term in 2024. Engaged at national, international and multilateral level, civil society's contributions at this early stage of the process will help ensure that we run a comprehensive and thorough review.

We would therefore highly value your contribution and would be grateful if you could deliver the following:

- A) Please provide a **summary (max. 2-3 pages)** of the most important actions that you consider the EU has taken to fulfil the five chapters of the Action Plan, which are as follows:
- i. Protecting and empowering individuals;
 - ii. Building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies;
 - iii. Promoting a global system for Human Rights and Democracy;
 - iv. Harnessing opportunities and addressing challenges posed by the use of new technologies;
 - v. Delivering by working together.

It is not necessary to refer equally to each of the five chapters of the AP. The response should focus on progress made up to now. However, you can also refer to actions recently or about to be launched and where you expect that significant additional progress will certainly be made before June 2023.

We are interested in receiving brief **strategic feedback** on the AP. We would like to have civil society's views on whether it was well-designed and had realistic deadlines; any reflections on the value of an Action Plan as opposed to a more generic strategy; suggestions for recalibrating the implementation in 2022-2024; any other recommendations on the usefulness of the Action Plan in the area where you operate.

The following questions are designed to guide your input. They are formulated with a view to obtaining inputs and suggestions that can help feed the strategic nature of the MTR, as opposed to a fact-based reporting of the implementation of the report:

- 1) How effectively the Action Plan has been implemented since its adoption in 2020 (areas of success and areas needing improvement)?
- 2) How the Action Plan can best be implemented until its term in 2024 (e.g. topics which should be given priority, how to take into account changes in the global state of human rights and democracy since 2020)?
- 3) How useful was the Action Plan as a policy tool (e.g. the priorities selected; whether it was well-designed, realistic and measurable)?
- 4) Mention maximum three achievements that you believe could represent a best practice and a reference for the remainder of the Action Plan implementation. These can be activities undertaken in one specific country or at global level related to one or more of the five priorities of the AP. Achievements mentioned can be of political nature (dialogues, outreach activities, campaigns, etc.) or operational character (projects, specific actions, partnerships... etc.). Please, explain how these achievements helped implementing the AP in its specific priorities.

- 5) What are the major challenges you believe will emerge during the implementation of the remainder of the Action Plan, both at political and operational level, and which solutions, if any, would you recommend to face them?
- 6) Have you identified any specific and significant gap in the Action Plan that you think should be addressed in future? Provide three recommendations for the remainder of the Action Plan implementation in the area of Human Rights and of Democracy and as concerns priorities and methodology.

B) (optional) Any **additional background information** on progress on the AP which is too extensive for the 3-page summary can be included as an annex.

We would be grateful to receive your contribution by **5 December 2022**. Please, send your input by email to Domenica.Bumma@eeas.europa.eu and to HUMAN-RIGHTS@eeas.europa.eu In the subject of the email, please indicate the following: Civil Society Contribution to the Mid-term Review of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024.

Many thanks in advance for your input.

Annex 1: Annotated Outline of the MTR;

Annex 2: Indicative timeline of the MTR