

Publications 2025 for EU internal and external action



OHCHR Commentary on the Omnibus 1 Proposal

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Response to the European Commission consultation on draft act on researcher access to data under the EU Digital Services Act

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Ocean and human rights in the European Union

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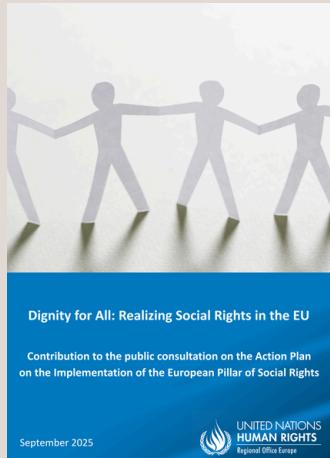
May 2025

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Panel discussion on "safeguarding human rights in simplification: the EU's proposal to amend the CSDD" (23 September 2025)



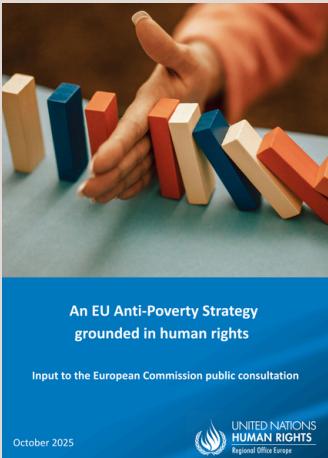
- 1 Simplification = demagogic. Sustainability and competitiveness go hand in hand. Competitiveness can be achieved alongside respect for human rights and the protection of the environment.
- 2 Maintain a risk-based approach, protect workers, and prevent them from being subjected to modern slavery.
- 3 Business resilience goes through all steps of the supply chain. Thinking long-term means maintaining a risk-based approach.
- 4 Simplification should not come at the expense of the CEDDO's objectives. Keep in mind who ultimately bears the costs of simplification.
- 5 Ensure open and inclusive stakeholder consultations in the due diligence process. Participation of those who are closest to victims and survivors is essential.
- 6 Listen to practitioners and experts to generate a wide capability of achieving the objective of effectively addressing business impacts on people and the planet.
- 7 Align with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, so that the authoritative standards in this area are applied consistently.



Dignity for All: Realizing Social Rights in the EU

Contribution to the public consultation on the Action Plan on the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights

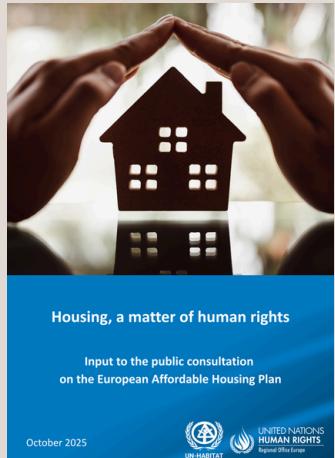
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An EU Anti-Poverty Strategy grounded in human rights

Input to the European Commission public consultation

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Housing, a matter of human rights

Input to the public consultation
on the European Affordable Housing Plan

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Review of EU Member States
by United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms
in the Area of LGBTIQ+ Rights

a summary



EU CONSULTATION ON THE NEXT GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

Input from UN Brussels Team
(Gender Working Group)

August 2025

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PARTNERSHIP WITH THE
EU COMMISSION



Recommendations for the 2026-2030 EU anti-racism strategy

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Expert Roundtable on the EU's Facilitation Directive: An opportunity to rethink EU Counter-smuggling responses

with the participation of

Sabrina Mulcahy
EU Special Rapporteur on
Trafficking in Persons, especially in
Women and Children
Cecilia Sallust
EU Special Rapporteur on
Human rights and international
solidarity

Key messages to EU policymakers

- 1 When driven by false assumptions and by dehumanizing narratives around migration, counter-smuggling responses inadvertently lead to making smuggling even more attractive, creating a vicious cycle of smuggling, trafficking, and victimization. Strengthening the collection and use of disaggregated data on smuggling, trafficking, and victimization on the ground is essential to design effective, proportionate and rights-compliant measures.
- 2 Current counter-smuggling approaches need to be revised to ensure they are effective in targeting criminal networks and addressing smuggling-related corruption, and to avoid creating a culture of impunity that can lead to the further marginalization of migrants and other victims of smuggling, trafficking, and victimization.
- 3 The ongoing revision of the EU Facilitation Directive is an opportunity to set a model for addressing smuggling and trafficking in a rights-based manner. The revised Directive must be aligned with international and human rights standards, provide legal certainty, minimize the risk of criminalization, and ensure that the measures adopted are proportionate, effective, and rights-compliant.
- 4 Current counter-smuggling efforts under EU legislation should be reoriented to target those who are disproportionately affected by smuggling, whether financially or through other means. This includes the most vulnerable migrants, such as unaccompanied minors and trafficked or exploited migrants whose lives or safety are compromised, consistently with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This is in line with the UNHCR's Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
- 5 The ongoing revision of the EU Facilitation Directive should include a binding humanization element to ensure that the measures adopted are effective, proportionate, and rights-compliant, and that protection of smuggled migrants whose lives or safety are compromised, consistently with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
- 6 The ongoing revision of the EU Facilitation Directive should include a binding humanization element to ensure that the measures adopted are effective, proportionate, and rights-compliant, and that protection of smuggled migrants whose lives or safety are compromised, consistently with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
- 7 Counter-smuggling efforts to counter smuggling must be strengthened by the expansion of information sharing, the use of intelligence-led approaches, and the use of specialized, coordinated, and human rights-compliant methodologies in migration.



TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION: MAPPING TRENDS AND IMPROVING RESPONSES EXPERT WORKSHOP

Key Takeaways

Overview
An increasing number of countries are using transnational repressive measures to combat transnational organized crime. These measures have been intensifying and expanding globally, especially with the digitization of technology. This challenge requires a coordinated and rights-based response.

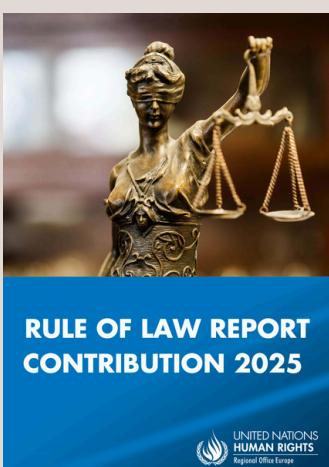
States and their partners are increasingly confronted to responding to a broad array of overt and subtle tactics to deter, dissuade or punish dissent, criticism or human rights advocacy, including in foreign territories. This is in line with the UN Human Rights Council's call for a moratorium on the use of transnational repressive measures by UN member states, report and advocacy by civil society actors and the UN Human Rights Office.

Growing international recognition of the issue is evident in joint commitments by states in multilateral contexts, like the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council, the UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council, the European Parliament and civil society and academic networks. The urgent need to stop use of transnational mechanisms is also affirmed in the European Parliament's resolution on the issue.

Notwithstanding this progress, challenges of national, EU and international level need to be strengthened, including the need to improve the effectiveness of the European Union's transnational repressive measures. The European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights (2020) and the European External Action Service, in collaboration with the UN Human Rights Office, organized a workshop on the issue in Brussels on 14-15 June 2023. The workshop brought together a high-level group of experts and an expert workshop on effective collective responses to transnational repression in the EU and beyond, including the UN Human Rights Office, the European Parliament, and the UN Human Rights Office.

Key takeaways from the workshop include the need to:

- Limit transnational repressive measures to prevent and tackle TMR when necessary. This points to a need to exchange good practices and to harmonize standards for TMR, including through the UN Human Rights Office's "Guidelines on the use of transnational repressive measures for human rights protection and promotion of TMR targets".
- Improve accountability and protection gaps
Many forms of TMR do not meet minimum standards of proportionality and are not subject to effective judicial review. There is a lack of clarity on the jurisdiction of national courts to hear challenges to the jurisdiction in which they take effect, leading to a lack of accountability and protection gaps.
- Inefficiency data and underutilization
There is a lack of data and underutilization of available data to inform the assessment and the complexity to track or collect evidence. This is often due to a lack of political will, lack of political advocacy and policy formulation. Many TMR targets tend to be vague and lack clear operational guidance. This is in line with the UN Human Rights Office's "Guidelines on the use of transnational repressive measures to afford holistic protection of human rights".
- Lack of coordinated strategies
TMR measures are often developed in a siloed manner and lack coordination between different actors. This points to a need to exchange good practices and to harmonize standards for TMR, including through the UN Human Rights Office's "Guidelines on the use of transnational repressive measures for human rights protection and promotion of TMR targets".



RULE OF LAW REPORT CONTRIBUTION 2025

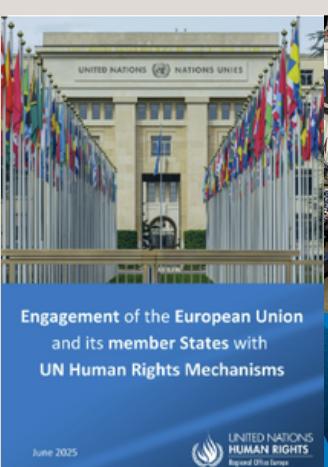
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Facilitated by
UNITED NATIONS
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Regional Office Europe
Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on
Human Rights Defenders Mobility and Protection in the EU
with the participation of
Mary Lawlor
EU Special Rapporteur on
Human Rights Defenders
Kajsa Ollongren
EU Special Representative for
Human Rights

Key messages to EU policymakers

- 1 Complex and discriminatory visa procedures greatly reduce access to the EU for HRDs at risk. Consider implementing a simplified visa procedure for HRDs in the revised EU Visa Code is essential.
- 2 Opportunities for protection and resilience to the EU for HRDs at risk remain limited, especially for those who are most at risk. The EU and its Member States must consider ways to fill gaps and strengthen the legal framework for HRDs mobility to the EU.
- 3 The EU is in a key position to promote legal and policy measures which can enhance protection of HRDs against risks of criminalisation, online threats and surveillance, and transnational repression, in the EU and beyond.
- 4 Coordinated efforts are needed to enhance legal protection and support for HRDs on the basis of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and to strengthen the role of EU protection mechanisms, which could help meet growing needs and shrinking resources.
- 5 The upcoming EU Civil Society Strategy offers a key opportunity to strengthen protection efforts, by seeking enhanced engagement of EU, national and local authorities and further support for HRDs.
- 6 Sustained political commitment to HRD protection, also through public discourse, and adequate funding for protection work, including under the new EU MFF, are vital to a safe and enabling civic space in the EU and beyond.
- 7 Alliances and synergies are key success factors for protection efforts. Spaces for multi-stakeholder dialogue, such as the OHCHR-led initiative for a Community of Practice on Protection, should be honoured and supported.



Engagement of the European Union and its member States with UN Human Rights Mechanisms

June 2025

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You can find all our publications on our website

europe.ohchr.org 



Who we are

The Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) focuses on placing human rights at the core of the European Union's internal and external action. Our work in Brussels is centered on safeguarding civic space, supporting the anti-racism agenda and addressing inequalities, advocating for human rights-based migration governance, and integrating human rights in business conduct, the digital sphere and in the environment. We raise awareness with partners about the work of the Office which has 80+ presences around the world, the independent mandate of the High Commissioner, United Nations human rights mechanisms and their recommendations, and contribute to the strengthening of the United Nations human rights pillar.

