



2024/2078(INI)

5.2.2025

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on the Commission's 2024 Rule of Law report
(2024/2078(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Isabel Wiseler-Lima

PA_NonLeg

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs submits the following to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible:

Amendment 1

Motion for a resolution

Citation 1

Motion for a resolution

– having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), in particular Articles 2, 3(1), 3(3), second subparagraph, 4(3), 5, 6, 7, 11, 19 and 49 thereof,

Amendment

– having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), in particular Articles 2, 3(1), 3(3), second subparagraph, 4(3), 5, 6, 7, 11, 19, **21** and 49 thereof,

Or. fr

Amendment 2

Motion for a resolution

Citation 10

Motion for a resolution

– having regard to the UN instruments on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the recommendations and reports of the UN Universal Periodic Review, as well as the case-law of the UN treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council,

Amendment

– having regard to the UN instruments on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms – ***in particular the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*** – and the recommendations and reports of the UN Universal Periodic Review, as well as the case-law of the UN treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council,

Or. fr

Amendment 3

Motion for a resolution

Citation 46 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

– *having regard to its resolution of 29 February 2024 on deepening EU integration in view of future enlargement,*

Or. fr

Amendment 4

**Motion for a resolution
Recital A a (new)**

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Aa. whereas the Union's action worldwide must be guided by the universality and indivisibility of human rights and by the fact that the effective protection and defence of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law is at the core of the Union's external action, as enshrined in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union;

Or. fr

Amendment 5

**Motion for a resolution
Recital A b (new)**

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Ab. whereas, in accordance with the Copenhagen criteria, candidate countries must adhere to the values of the Union in order to join the Union; whereas this also extends to alignment with the Union's policies and positions, including its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and in particular its policies and positions on human rights;

Or. fr

Amendment 6

Motion for a resolution Recital A c (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Ac. whereas the past year has been marked by a new proliferation of laws on ‘foreign agents’ in EU candidate countries, and whereas these laws target civil society organisations and the media, and seek to prevent them from receiving financial support from abroad, including from the Union and its Member States, thereby fostering a climate of fear and self-censorship;

Or. fr

Amendment 7

Motion for a resolution Recital A d (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Ad. whereas democratic backsliding is one of the biggest threats facing the European Union, both within and outside its borders;

Or. fr

Amendment 8

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 1

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

1. Underlines that fair and accessible justice is a basic rule of law (RoL) principle that requires an independent judiciary; reiterates that access to justice is essential for citizens to exercise rights, challenge discrimination and hold decision makers accountable;

1. Underlines that fair and accessible justice is a basic rule of law (RoL) principle that requires an independent judiciary; reiterates that access to justice is essential for citizens to exercise rights, challenge discrimination and hold decision makers accountable; ***calls on the Union and its Member States to continue to***

support the International Criminal Court (ICC) with all the necessary means and resources, and to use all instruments at their disposal to strengthen the fight against impunity worldwide; recalls that full compliance with ICC decisions is an integral part of the obligations of EU candidate countries; calls on the Union to support candidate countries in achieving this goal;

Or. fr

Amendment 9

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 6 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

6a. *Stresses that corruption enables and aggravates human rights violations and abuses, as well as the erosion of democratic principles; recalls that corruption is a threat which can destroy democracies and undermine citizens' trust in public institutions; calls on the Member States to support candidate countries in adhering to the highest possible standards in order to prevent corruption;*

Or. fr

Amendment 10

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 7 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

7a. *Strongly encourages the Union and its Member States to help candidate countries in their efforts to pursue their ambitious commitment to make freedom, democracy and human rights, and the protection thereof, a central element of all their national policies in a streamlined*

manner;

Or. fr

Amendment 11

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 9 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

9a. Urges the Union to support trustworthy media and news outlets in candidate countries which promote the accountability of the authorities and support democracy, while stressing the need to preserve the principles of pluralism, transparency and independence; condemns the widespread use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) to silence journalists, activists, trade unionists and human rights defenders (HRDs) globally; welcomes, in this context, the Union directive designed to shield journalists and HRDs from abusive legal actions and SLAPPs; encourages lawmakers in candidate countries to develop legislation pursuing the same goal, as part of broader efforts to promote and protect media freedom and pluralism;

Or. fr

Amendment 12

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 11 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

11a. Stresses that foreign interference has become a key element of the foreign policy of authoritarian regimes, which use it to undermine the rules-based global order and to sow discord between democracies around the world; calls on candidate countries to take action against foreign interference and information

manipulation within their jurisdiction;

Or. fr

Amendment 13

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 11 b (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

11b. Recalls the crucial role played by journalists, including political and investigative journalists, in denouncing human rights violations by gathering reliable and relevant information, monitoring the activities of public authorities and elected representatives, and revealing violations of national and international law, state repression, corruption, criminal networks and activities and human rights violations of every kind; stresses that journalists contribute to the system of checks and balances necessary for holding to account those responsible for violations, including those in power; highlights the role played by fact checkers in the media landscape, ensuring that the public can trust the information they receive; is concerned that they are therefore major targets for attacks by illiberal regimes that create and spread disinformation, propaganda and fake news;

Or. fr

Amendment 14

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 11 c (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

11c. Calls for journalists to be protected so that they can do their job without fear, reprisals or harassment; calls on Member States to help candidate countries to adopt legislation and policies drawing on

journalists' experience, in line with Union legislation and standards, with the aim of establishing a legal environment to warn and protect journalists, to prevent and vigorously prosecute cases of repression of journalists and to ensure appropriate investigations and follow-up, including the application of effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions; urges the authorities to do everything in their power to prevent such violence, ensure accountability and eradicate impunity;

Or. fr

Amendment 15

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 13 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

13a. Condemns in the strongest terms the adoption of laws on 'foreign agents' by candidate countries with the aim of censoring journalists, human rights defenders and educational and civil society organisations;

Or. fr

Amendment 16

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 19

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

19. Highlights the importance of the RoL in ensuring the functioning of the single market and reaffirms that judicial systems, effective anti-corruption frameworks and the protection of media freedom are crucial for fair competition, legal certainty and trust among economic operators⁴³;

19. Highlights the importance of the RoL in ensuring the functioning of the single market and reaffirms that judicial systems, effective anti-corruption frameworks and the protection of media freedom are crucial for fair competition, legal certainty and trust among economic operators⁴³; *notes the harmonisation resulting from the adoption of the Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence with binding Union rules on*

responsible corporate behaviour with regard to human, labour and environmental rights; further welcomes the Regulation on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market and calls for its swift implementation at Member State level;

⁴³ Commission communication of 24 July 2024 entitled ‘2024 Rule of Law Report’, (COM(2024)0800), p. 5.

⁴³ Commission communication of 24 July 2024 entitled ‘2024 Rule of Law Report’, (COM(2024)0800), p. 5.

Or. fr

Amendment 17

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 23 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

23a. Is alarmed at the increasing disputes over the credibility of elections in candidate countries; strongly condemns the numerous and serious electoral violations, which include, but are not limited to, documented cases of intimidation, manipulation of votes and interference with election observations and media;

Or. fr

Amendment 18

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 24

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

24. Calls on the Member States to strengthen the independence of national oversight bodies in order to ensure resources and freedom from political interference; stresses the importance of civil society and HRDs in promoting accountability and protecting fundamental rights; ***deplores restrictions on*** civil

24. Calls on the Member States to strengthen the independence of national oversight bodies in order to ensure resources and freedom from political interference; stresses the importance of civil society and HRDs in promoting accountability and protecting fundamental rights; ***is concerned about the continuing***

society *activity*;

shrinking of the space for civil society and the growing threats to the work of human rights defenders and civil society organisations; encourages the Union to provide support to candidate countries in order to create a favourable and enabling environment for human rights defenders and civil society organisations to operate freely in their country; calls for the full and consistent application of the Union guidelines on human rights defenders in candidate countries;

Or. fr

Amendment 19

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 35

Motion for a resolution

35. Stresses the importance of embedding RoL milestones in funding instruments such as the RRF; deplores the release of EU funds to Hungary despite deficiencies in that country's judicial independence and anti-corruption frameworks; recommends suspending disbursements until all RoL benchmarks are met;

Amendment

35. Stresses the importance of embedding RoL milestones in funding instruments, ***both internal and external***, such as the RRF; deplores the release of EU funds to Hungary despite deficiencies in that country's judicial independence and anti-corruption frameworks; recommends suspending disbursements until all RoL benchmarks are met;

Or. fr

Amendment 20

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 35 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

35a. Recalls the fundamental role of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance as a Union instrument to support the rule of law, democracy and human rights in candidate countries, including the strengthening of democratic institutions and civil society organisations, as well as progress on good

governance and the fight against corruption, the promotion and protection of non-discrimination and gender equality and the strengthening of capacities for conflict prevention and resolution; calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service to share all relevant information with Parliament in order to enable it to play its role accordingly;

Or. fr

Amendment 21

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 35 b (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

35b. Recommends that the accession process be monitored and evaluated on the basis of a clear set of benchmarks; stresses that accession to the Union remains a merit-based process that requires the adoption and implementation of relevant reforms, in particular on democracy, the rule of law and human rights;

Or. fr

Amendment 22

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 37 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

37a. Calls on the Union and its Member States to ensure that all necessary assistance is provided to candidate countries to strengthen their institutional mechanisms, in order to respond to hybrid threats from foreign actors seeking to undermine the fundamental rights of the people of the candidate countries and distort their democratic will, including by interfering

in the candidate countries' elections;

Or. fr

Amendment 23

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 38

Motion for a resolution

38. Welcomes the Commission's initiative to include Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia in its annual RoL report and encourages a close evaluation of the RoL in these accession countries;

Amendment

38. Welcomes the Commission's initiative to include Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia in its annual RoL report and encourages a close evaluation of the RoL in these accession countries; ***calls on the Commission to extend the geographical scope of its RoL reports to cover all candidate countries;***

Or. fr