## Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

In 2017 the overall human rights situation in the country remained dire, with continuing reports about grave and systematic violations. Serious concerns remained with regard to the areas of the right to life, liberty and security of the person, right to a fair trial, freedom of movement and freedom of expression, food security, health-care, etc. Clear assessment was difficult given the lack of a credible accountability mechanism and limitations on access to independent human rights monitors.

The EU's priority remains securing improvements on the ground in all areas affected. However, the restricted contacts of the EU and Member States with DPRK officials, which became even more limited as a consequence of the increasing amount of missile and nuclear tests conducted by Pyongyang, have had an impact on the areas that can be positively addressed in cooperation with the country's Government. This year the EU has also drawn attention to reports on abuses and violations committed against non DPRK citizens, inside and outside the country.

There are multiple, structural problems in all fields pertaining to human rights and democracy, as documented by the final report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK (2014). According to the report, some of the abuses may amount to crimes against humanity.

Still, there were some positive steps in 2017, notably the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities to the DPRK in May 2017. The country also submitted national reports to the UN Committees on the rights of women and children.

Due to unfavourable political circumstances the latest (14th) round of the EU-DPRK Political Dialogue where Human Rights issues were raised was held in May 2015.

A limited number of national organisations deal with issues of human rights in the country, as an integral part of the governmental structure. Some of them have obtained support from abroad for activities that benefit the most vulnerable groups within society. The EU maintained close contact with CSOs based in the Republic of Korea working on human rights in the DPRK and continued cooperation with the OHCHR Seoul Office.

Over the past decades, the European Union has been providing humanitarian assistance to DPRK in the area of food security and, to a lesser extent, health and water & sanitation. This assistance is part of the European Union's policy of critical engagement towards DPRK. Human rights are raised indirectly under this assistance (e.g. people's right to food, livelihood). Some of the EU-funded projects also support DPRK organisations addressing social inclusion of the disabled and the elderly. EU-funded projects are targeting the most vulnerable people in society (including children, elderly, vulnerable farming communities or groups).

The EU together with Japan, have tabled again in 2017 two resolutions on the situation of human rights in the DPRK at the UN Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly respectively.

There is no Delegation of the EU to the DPRK. EU MS with Embassies there take turn every 6 months to represent the EU at local level.