civil society organisations. The EU engaged with the Ministry of Justice and CSOs to prevent sexual violence against children, notably in regard to a campaign to end the prosecution of minors for prostitution and raise the age of consent from 13 years of age. On the abolition of death penalty, EU submitted to the Constitutional Court and the Ministry of Justice a letter from the EUSR for Human Rights and carried out a demarche in support of the resolution on the moratorium on the use of the death penalty. Together with the National Human Rights Commission, the EU organised a conference that expressed support to the shared goal of eliminating hate and discrimination, and encouraged the adoption of an Anti-discrimination Law. The EU continued to engage with CSOs via the project 'EU Policy and Outreach Partnership in the Republic of Korea (EUPOP)'. Series of webinars and workshops were organised bringing together CSOs and youths from Europe and Korea through the Korea-EU CSO Network (KEN). The EU continued to engage with Member States and organisations promoting the rights of LGBTI persons by setting an online booth for the virtual Seoul Queer Culture Festival.

4. EU financial engagement: Under the public diplomacy EUPOP project, the EU launched a Korea-EU civil society network to facilitate information and experience sharing between Korean and European CSOs. These platforms provided an excellent opportunity to enhance engagement with local CSOs and Korean audiences. In an effort to combat all forms of discrimination, the EU co-financed the 2020 Conference on Combating Hate and Discrimination with the National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea through the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument funding.

5. Multilateral context: The Republic of Korea for the first time voted in favour of the resolution on the moratorium on the use of the death penalty during the UNGA Third Committee. As in the previous year, the Republic of Korea did not co-sponsor resolutions on North Korean human rights situation.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: Information gathered through interviews with people who have left the country and other credible sources pointed to persisting patterns of serious human rights violations. There were no indications that the government had taken positive action to address long-standing, systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations described in the 2014 Commission of Inquiry report. Outside observers expressed concern that the COVID-19 pandemic may have aggravated further the human rights and humanitarian situation. Some outside organisations reported increased punishment for unauthorised travel. There was concern that the reduction of imports stemming from the closure of the border with China could have negatively impacted the economic and social rights of people dependent on markets for their livelihoods. This may have exacerbated existing problems stemming from an inefficient economic system and damage to food production from severe weather. The consequences for the persons and communities in the most vulnerable situations, including children, persons with disabilities and detained persons may have been even more severe. The withdrawal of many international staff from the country due to travel restrictions halted the implementation of most humanitarian relief projects.

2. EU action – key focus areas:

Protecting and empowering individuals: The European Commission supported European organisations in the DPRK working on food security projects to improve the nutritional status of the groups and communities in most vulnerable situations by restoring livelihood assets at collective farm and community level. Projects also supported the health and socio-economic conditions for certain particularly vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and older people, for example through the provision of medical care in rural clinics.

Promoting a global system for human rights and democracy: The EU took a leading role in international efforts to highlight violations of human rights in the DPRK. The EU maintained close contact with UN human rights institutions and mechanisms working on the DPRK, including the Special Rapporteur and the OHCHR field-based structure in Seoul. The human rights situation in the DPRK was discussed in dialogue with third countries. The EU continued to call for the respect of international obligations to prevent citizens of the DPRK who have left the country without permission from being subject to refoulement. Frequent interaction was maintained with civil society organisations outside the country who are engaged in the documenting of evidence of violations and advocating future avenues of accountability.

3. EU bilateral political engagement: The EU maintained a policy of critical engagement towards the DPRK. The EU encouraged all countries to implement sanctions fully as a means of persuading the DPRK that its interests would be served by engaging in credible negotiations and taking early steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. The EU stood ready to support, where appropriate, diplomatic initiatives aimed at building sustainable peace on the peninsula. Bilateral contact with the DPRK government was maintained through local representation of the EU in Pyongyang by EU Member State embassies and the accreditation to the EU of a DPRK diplomat based in Berlin.

4. EU financial engagement: Financial engagement in 2020 was limited to food security projects and support to civil society organisations assisting vulnerable communities.

5. Multilateral context: The EU initiated and then facilitated the passing by consensus of resolutions on the human rights situation in the DPRK at the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. The resolutions served to keep international attention on the issue, reiterated that perpetrators of human rights violations must be held accountable, and called upon the DPRK to engage in measures to improve the situation and fulfil its state obligations. EU Member States raised the issue of human rights in the DPRK at the UN Security Council, insisting on holding a formal debate.

India

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: India is a democratic and pluralist country where the 1950 Constitution, relevant legislation and mandated institutions serve to warrant citizens' rights. The government of India is committed to improving the situation of disadvantaged groups and India has functional judicial institutions, credible, transparent and inclusive elections as well as an active civil society and a vibrant media landscape that seeks