migrants' rights. The EU and Member States also actively engaged the Korean government on a wide range of activities on promoting the rights of LGBTI persons in the Republic of Korea.

4. EU financial engagement: The EU Policy and Outreach Partnership project specifically addressed topics under the theme of non-discrimination, raising awareness about EU and international human rights frameworks, and broadly addressing gender equality across its activities. Through the project, the EU carried out targeted outreach, dialogue and communication actions and explored concrete partnerships with local CSOs.

5. Multilateral context: There was a high degree of convergence between the EU and the Republic of Korea as regards the priorities for the promotion of human rights in international institutions. The EU and the Republic of Korea exchanged views on draft resolutions ahead of the 46th, 47th and 48th session of the UN Human Rights Council and the 76th session of the UN General Assembly Third Committee. As in the previous year, the Republic of Korea did not co-sponsor resolutions on the human rights situation in the DPRK.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: The government continued the policy of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic through the closure of international borders and further restrictions on internal travel and did not reach agreement on offers of vaccines from COVAX. The restrictions on travel may have limed the spread of the virus, but they negatively impacted human rights and are likely to have had a detrimental effect on the humanitarian situation. The measures appeared also to be part of a strategy to strengthen the authority of the State by further restricting access to information and the ability to engage in the unofficial market transactions on which much of the population depends for its livelihood.

While the DPRK acknowledged food shortages, international humanitarian agencies were not able to access the country to conduct a needs assessment. Outside observers expressed growing concern that the reduction of imports, obstacles to market transactions and suspension of projects by international humanitarian agencies, together with the long-term effects of poor economic management and previous natural disasters, were leading to increased food insecurity and a potential humanitarian emergency.

There were no indications that the DPRK engaged in constructive action to address the gross, systematic and widespread violations and abuses of human rights identified by the International Commission of Inquiry in 2014 and through subsequent information from equally reliable sources.

2. EU action - key focus areas: The EU maintained close cooperation with civil society organisations and other international stakeholders such as the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other like-minded international partners. The EU continued to play a leading role in highlighting human rights violations and abuses in the DPRK, notably through the initiation of country-specific resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly.

The EU applied sanctions against two senior DPRK officials and the Central Public Prosecutor's Office under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime.

3. EU bilateral political engagement: The EU maintained limited contact with the DPRK authorities, including on issues related to human rights.

4. EU financial engagement: The EU temporarily suspended implementation of humanitarian assistance and food security projects in the DPRK in the context of the withdrawal of international staff from the country.

5. Multilateral context: The EU initiated country-specific resolutions on the human rights situation in the DPRK at the HRC and the UNGA. Both resolutions were adopted without a vote.

HRC resolution 46/17 stressed the importance of following up on the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission of Inquiry, expressed deep concern about the systematic, widespread, and gross human rights violations in the DPRK and the humanitarian situation in the country, which may have further deteriorated in the contest of COVID-19. The resolution introduced new language on the situation of Prisoners of War. Underlining the need for accountability, the HRC decided to continue strengthening, for a further two years, the capacity of the OHCHR, including its field-based structure in Seoul. The High Commissioner was requested to provide an oral update on the progress made in this regard, and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur was extended for a period of one year.

UNGA resolution 76/177 expressed deep concern about the grave human rights situation, the pervasive culture of impunity, and the lack of accountability for human rights violations and abuses in the DPRK. It condemned in the strongest terms the long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights and expressed its very serious concern about numerous human rights violations of both political and civil and social, economic, and cultural rights. Reflecting the current COVID-19 and humanitarian situation, the text introduced new provisions on cooperation with COVAX.

India

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: India remained a democratic and pluralist country where the 1950 Constitution, relevant legislation and mandated institutions serve to warrant citizens' rights. India's judicial system was statutorily independent and elections had taken place regularly since 1952 following international standards. The country has had a vibrant civil society and a well-developed media landscape that seeks government accountability and action. Human rights institutions at national and State level are in place. However, structural issues such as a lack of institutional capacity, unequal distribution of resources and access to services, as well as engrained attitudes continued to hinder the full protection of human rights. According to various sources, 2021 was marked by rising episodes of violence and discrimination, especially towards religious minorities.

India slipped in several international human rights indexes. In the 2021 Freedom in the World report, published by the U.S.-based democracy watchdog Freedom House, India's status