The United Nations and the EU share the same fundamental values, including international peace and security, the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international cooperation in solving economic, social, and humanitarian problems.

During the 67th UN General Assembly, the EU, together with its member states, focus on the following issues:

- The follow-up and implementation of the Rio+20 outcome. At the Rio+20 conference in June 2012, heads of state reconfirmed their commitment to sustainable development and to ensuring the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for the planet and for future generations. The EU attaches great importance of the effective follow-up of the conference, leading to a worldwide transition towards a green economy and better sustainable development governance;

- The preparation of the 2013 Millennium Development Goals review and framework for global development policy after 2015, i.e. the deadline set for achieving the Millenium Development Goals;

- The promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The EU will work to increase support for a resolution on a moratorium on the death penalty and sponsor a resolution on the rights of the child. It will also pay special attention to the promotion of empowering freedoms, such as freedom of expression and of assembly and work to combat gender-based discrimination;

- Strengthening the effectiveness of the UN. The EU will support the UN Secretary General's reform efforts, concerning areas such as management, peacekeeping and field support as well as delivery of humanitarian assistance. In addition, the EU encourages sound financial management and a more balanced distribution of financial responsibilities;

The implementation of these priorities involves action both by the EU itself and, in a number of areas falling within their responsibility, its member states.
**Important role of the EU and its member states within the UN**

The EU and its member states play an important role within the UN. The 27 EU countries command more than one eighth of the votes of the UN General Assembly, in which each of the 193 UN members has an equal vote. The EU members vote unanimously on nearly all (97%) resolutions put to the UN General Assembly.

Among the 15 members of the UN Security Council, there are currently four EU states: permanent and veto-wielding members France and United Kingdom as well as Germany and Portugal, whose membership runs until 31 December 2012.

At the same time, the EU is the single largest financial contributor to the UN system. The 27 EU member states fund 38% of the UN's regular budget, more than two-fifths of UN peacekeeping operations, and about half of all UN members' contributions to UN funds and programmes.

**EU status in the bodies of the United Nations**

Since 1974, the EU has been a permanent observer at the UN General Assembly, like many other regional organisations such as the ACP group of states or the Council of Europe. The Union also has observer status in most of the UN specialised agencies. However, it is a full voting member of three UN bodies: the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, since 1991, the World Trade Organisation, since 1995 and the Codex Alimentarius Commission, since 2003. The EU is the only non-state party to more than 50 UN conventions, for instance the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

A resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in May 2011 gave the EU the ability to speak early among other major groups, when speaking on behalf of the 27 EU states, and invited the EU to intervene in the general debate at the opening of the General Assembly. Previously, Palestine and the Holy See were the only observers that could take the floor in that debate. This does not alter the EU's observer status in the UN General Assembly.

The EU external representatives – the President of the European Council, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European Commission and the EU delegation – can therefore present the positions of the EU and its member states at the UN.

In addition, the EU has obtained the right to orally present proposals and amendments, a possibility that no other observer has at its disposal, and the right to reply once to a speech regarding EU positions.

More information: