The world is a complex, rapidly changing and often dangerous place. The European Union believes that by working together through international cooperation, based on common rules and with effective global institutions such as the United Nations, enables the world to deal with complex issues such as climate change and conflict. This international approach, known as multilateralism, was re-endorsed by all 28 EU Foreign Ministers when they met at the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels on 17th June.

Multilateralism, with the UN at its core, is the cornerstone of the EU’s foreign and security policy and is the best way to ensure peace, security, human rights and prosperity. This approach delivers
benefits for people in Europe and across the world.

Video of First International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

During the Ministers' meeting, the EU set out its objectives of "uphold, extend and reform" and highlighted concrete steps that will make this possible. The Ministers' conclusions on multilateralism compliment the updated EU Global Strategy "Three years on, looking forward" which was published on 17th June.

The EU has agreed to step up efforts to promote and strengthen multilateralism. A key part of this will be to enhance public support by demonstrating how multilateralism works, with key examples such as the Paris Climate agreement in 2015. It will also improve coordination and messaging at key events, such as the UN General Assembly week and pursue a fresh positive narrative on issues such as universal human rights, as illustrated by the "Good Human Rights Stories" initiative.

The Foreign Affairs Council conclusions also recognise the need for unity and solidarity, with all 28 EU Member States working together on the international scene to give the Union greater weight. It calls for "robust and responsible" EU leadership and recognises the importance of the EU working in partnership with others, such as third countries, international and regional organisations, civil society, social partners and other stakeholders.

EU objectives to uphold, extend and reform the international system

To achieve an effective multilateral system, the EU has set out three strands of action:

**Uphold international norms and agreements:** It is vital that existing agreements are upheld and the EU pledged to continue upholding and implementing international agreements. To achieve this it will continue to promote and protect human rights, to support democracy and the rule of law and to push for gender equality. All of which contribute to ensuring global peace and security. The EU will also continue its leadership in preserving and reinforcing the rules-based multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core.

Secondly, **we need to recognise the changing world we live in and extend multilateralism to new global realities.** Where new challenges require collective action, we must take advantage of the EU's normative capacity, autonomy and influence. With increasing threats to international peace and security, the EU will work to promote and strengthen international arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament and ensure that international law is applied in cyberspace and on cyber issues.

In addition, the EU's role in bolstering international security through conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and crisis management will be reinforced. This can be achieved through strengthened partnerships with the UN - including the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the World Bank, NATO, the OSCE and other regional and sub-regional actors.

Lastly, **multilateral organisations must be fit for purpose and this requires reform.** The EU will support the ongoing reforms of Secretary António Guterres and modernisation of multilateral organisations.
See also

Conclusions on multilateralism
From Vision to Action: The EU Global Strategy in Practice - Three years on, looking forward
First International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace - statement by EU High
Representative Federica Mogherini
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