



# THE EU AND THE UN: A PARTNERSHIP THAT DELIVERS

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL PEACE,  
SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Together, the EU and the UN work to uphold the multilateral system based on universal rules and values. In multilateral fora and in the majority of countries around the world, the EU and UN respond to global crises, threats and challenges in their common pursuit of a peaceful, just, and sustainable world. Effective EU-UN cooperation is fundamental to tackle today's interconnected global challenges, which individual nations cannot address alone.



*In the spotlight this year*

## MODERNISING THE UN TO MAKE IT FIT FOR TOMORROW

The world is much more complex and interconnected than it was when the UN was founded 79 years ago. The EU supports the UN's ambitious reform package with both new ideas and financing.

- The EU strongly supports the UN's '**Our Common Agenda**' recommendations, which have the potential to reinvigorate multilateralism and boost implementation of the SDGs.
- The EU is committed to the aim to **reform the International Financial Architecture** in order to help us respond to new and emerging challenges, including the climate and environment emergencies, and support the SDGs.
- The EU supports the UN's aim to reallocate Special Drawing Rights from advanced to vulnerable countries with a **pledge of €25.8 billion (\$28 billion) from Member States**.
- The **Summit of the Future** (September 2024) should take meaningful decisions towards a reinvigorated multilateral system that is better able to positively impact people's lives. The EU and its Member States are engaging constructively in the preparatory process with a view to achieving an ambitious and action-oriented outcome, the 'Pact for the Future'.



## THE EU AND THE UN'S COMMITMENT TO THE 2030 AGENDA

In 2015, 193 countries signed up to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recent global crises have set back the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and underline the urgency of strengthening resilience in the face of future emergencies. In 2023, at the halfway point, the EU and the UN redoubled efforts to deliver the SDGs.

- The SDGs continue to inform much of the **EU's internal and external policymaking**. Some key examples include the European Green Deal, the new European Skills Agenda and Global Gateway – the EU's strategy for sustainable investments in infrastructure around the world. Each Global Gateway initiative financed by the EU budget identifies and integrates the relevant SDGs at all stages.
- The **SDG Summit** (September 2023) provided renewed impetus and accelerated action to get the SDGs back on track. The EU engaged constructively towards a successful outcome, from negotiating the Political Declaration to mobilising resources in support of SDGs.
- In 2023, the EU published the results of its first **voluntary review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. The review concluded that the EU made progress across all SDGs, but work remains to be done.



## EU FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE UN

As well as being a key political partner to the UN, the EU and its Member States are collectively the top financial contributor to the UN system year after year.

- The EU contributes about **€3 billion every year to the UN system** directly from the EU budget. This amount has increased by more than 60% since 2013.
- Combined with EU Member States' voluntary and assessed contributions, **the EU as a whole provides about 25% of all financial contributions** to the UN agencies, funds and programmes.
- The EU and its Member States are the **leading donors of development assistance** in the world, having provided €92.8 billion in 2022, which accounted for 43% of global assistance. Much of this funding is channelled through UN agencies.



## ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY

Food insecurity, triggered by conflicts, climate change, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and significantly aggravated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, continues to affect hundreds of millions of people. The EU and the UN work together towards zero hunger.

- The EU supports the central role of the UN and increased coordination through dedicated initiatives, in particular the **Global Network Against Food Crisis and the UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance**.
- The EU and its Member States have mobilised around **€18 billion** for the period 2021-2024. €7 billion in grants were disbursed in 2022, half of which went to Africa and the Middle East, the most affected regions.
- Both the **EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes and the Black Sea Grain Initiative** were set up to keep Ukrainian grain flowing to global markets and to stabilise food and cereals' prices. Between May 2022 and January 2024, the Solidarity Lanes allowed Ukraine to export around 122 million tonnes of goods, including around 64 million tonnes of grain, oilseeds, and related products.
- The **UN Food Systems Stocktaking Moment** (July 2023) served as the first global follow-up to the 2021 Food Systems Summit. The EU's active involvement in the event sent a clear signal of a strong commitment to sustainable food systems transformation.



## PEACE AND SECURITY

The UN is the EU's most important partner in peace and mediation. Together, they work to prevent conflicts, support peacekeeping missions, and facilitate post conflict reconstruction around the world.

- The EU supports the UN's **New Agenda for Peace**. In its contribution, the EU highlighted the importance of reinforcing the UN's long-standing commitment to conflict prevention, including through support to peace mediation and dialogue.
- EU Member States are the **biggest contributors to the UN Peacebuilding Fund**, having contributed more than 60% since the Fund's inception in 2006.
- The EU currently deploys 24 **civilian and military missions** around the world, most of which are established in parallel to UN missions. Two EU missions directly implement UN Security Council mandates: ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina and IRINI in Libya.
- The EU and the UN also cooperate to prevent and **counter terrorism and violent extremism**, including through the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.



## CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The EU and the UN collaborate on addressing climate change and biodiversity loss by implementing the **Paris Agreement**, advancing sustainable land and ocean management, and implementing the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)**.

- The EU promotes full implementation of the Paris Agreement, including its goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, and the GBF, highlighting synergies with the 2030 Agenda and the **European Green Deal**.
- Under **European Climate Law**, EU countries must cut net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% compared to 1990 levels by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by 2050.
- Under the GBF, States worldwide committed to protect at least 30% of land and seas by 2030. The adoption of the **Treaty of the High Seas (BBNJ)** in June 2023, long promoted by the EU, contributes to this objective and is an important milestone in the protection of the world's oceans.
- The EU and its Member States are the **world's largest contributor of public climate finance** at €23 billion per year.



## ACTING TOGETHER FOR THOSE IN NEED

The EU works closely with the UN in providing emergency relief, rebuilding infrastructure, and assisting vulnerable populations affected by conflicts or natural disasters.

- The EU and its Member States are among the **world's leading humanitarian aid donors**, having pledged €8.4 billion for 2023, of which the EU already mobilised €2.1 billion by September, for emergency relief to victims of man-made and natural disasters. Many of the humanitarian operations funded by the EU are implemented by its partners, notably UN agencies.
- The EU and the UN work together to **support vulnerable populations** affected by conflict and/or climate change. In 2023, the EU allocated €331 million to programmes in East and Southern Africa and €382 million to the Middle East and North Africa.
- The EU and the UN also cooperate closely on refugee protection. The **second Global Refugee Forum** (December 2023) galvanized responsibility-sharing efforts with hosting States, and refugee empowerment. The EU contributed with a number of important pledges on financial support, policy changes and technical cooperation.



## UPHOLDING HUMAN RIGHTS

The EU and the UN collaborate to promote and protect human rights globally, supporting the work of human rights defenders, combatting discrimination, and strengthening democratic institutions.

- As a staunch defender of human rights, the EU promotes the UN Secretary General's **Call for Action** to advance the human rights of all human beings.
- Based on the **EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024**, the EU upholds the universality and indivisibility of human rights, defends the integrity and independence of the UN human rights system, and seeks to strengthen accountability for violations of human rights and humanitarian law.
- The EU is scaling up efforts to achieve **gender equality** and continues to place prevention and elimination of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence at the centre of its efforts, including through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative set up in 2017.
- 2023 marked the **75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**. The EU and the UN organised events throughout the year aimed at showcasing progress in the field of human rights since the signing of UDHR such as the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the advancement of the rights of women and children.



## CONTINUED SUPPORT TO GLOBAL HEALTH AND GOVERNANCE

The EU and the UN collaborate on a wide range of health-related issues, aiming to address global health challenges, promote public health and improve global health security, which are part of the work under the **EU's Global Health Strategy**.

- The EU and its Member States are the **largest donors to the WHO**, representing more than 20% of its funding.
- The EU promotes **global health as a public good**, not least advocating for universal health coverage and the implementation of the "One Health" approach.
- The EU and its Member States support a **robust post-pandemic recovery** by investing in health systems, local manufacturing and access to vaccines, medicines and health technologies, and future pandemic preparedness. The EU and its Member States mobilised €1.1 billion to ramp up vaccine production for Africa, in Africa.
- The EU is working hard towards an ambitious and legally binding **instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response** as well as for strengthened International Health Regulations, both to be adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2024.



## HOW DOES THE EU WORK AT THE UNITED NATIONS?

The **UN General Assembly** is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. All 193 UN Member States are members of the General Assembly and have an equal vote. The EU has enhanced observer status. This allows the EU to intervene in debates, submit proposals and take part in negotiations, and participate in the general debate each September. The EU's special status does not include the right to vote, but the EU coordinates among its 27 Member States to present unified positions. The EU also coordinates its voting within the UN General Assembly's six Main Committees, as well as other bodies such as the Economic and Social Council.

The **UN Security Council** is the main global body responsible for ensuring international peace and security. It is composed of five permanent members and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly. France is a permanent member. Malta and Slovenia are currently non-permanent members until 31 December 2024 and 31 December 2025 respectively. EU law obliges EU members of the Security Council to act in unison, promoting and defending the positions and the interests of the Union.