



# The European Union at the United Nations

**“The European way is also the United Nations’ way. This explains why all our actions, all our initiatives are always taken in full coordination and partnership with the UN. We believe in the UN, because we believe in the same principles, in the same values, and our communities are built upon the same fundamental ideals”.**

High Representative / Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the UN Security Council 9 May 2017

The EU's commitment to effective multilateralism, with the UN at its core, is a central element of its external action. The Lisbon Treaty provides that *“The Union ... shall promote multilateral solutions to common problems, in particular in the framework of the United Nations.”* (Article 21-1 TEU) and that *“The Union ...shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations, in order to (...) preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.”* (Art. 21-2)

Multilateralism is also one of the core principles and priorities in the new [EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy](#). To respond successfully to global crises, threats and challenges, the international community needs an efficient multilateral system, founded on universal rules and values. The United Nations is both: a key EU partner and an indispensable global forum for tackling global challenges,

within the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The EU thus works closely both with the UN and in the UN.

*“Without global norms and the means to enforce them, peace and security, prosperity and democracy – our vital interests – are at risk. Guided by the values on which it is founded, the EU is committed to a global order based on international law, including the principles of the UN Charter. The EU will strive for a strong UN as the bedrock of the multilateral rules-based order, and develop globally coordinated responses with international and regional organisations, states and non-state actors.”*

- EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy -

Working closely with the **UN Secretariat** and the various UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, the EU has established a strong relationship with the UN. Cooperation takes place across a broad range of areas: development, human rights, climate change, peace building, crisis management, disarmament and non-proliferation, humanitarian assistance, fighting corruption and crime, addressing global health concerns, managing migratory flows and labour issues.

The UN **General Assembly** is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. The added value of the EU is to coordinate among its 28 Member States to present a unified position.

In 2011, the UN **General Assembly** adopted [Resolution A/65/276](#) upgrading the **observer status** allow the EU to present common positions, make interventions, present proposals and participate in the general debate each September. As an observer

with enhanced status, enabling EU representatives to speak on behalf of the EU and its member states in the UN. Since then it is also the President of the European Council who delivers the EU statement in the General debate, and no longer the rotating Presidency, bringing EU representation in New York in line with Lisbon Treaty provisions. The EU has obtained a special “full participant” status in a number of important UN conferences.

[The Council of the European Union adopted the EU priorities at the United Nations at the 72<sup>nd</sup> United Nations General Assembly on 17 July 2017.](#) In the coming year the EU will engage to reinvigorate multilateralism, supporting a strong United Nations as the bedrock of the rules-based global order. It will focus on three interlinked and mutually reinforcing priority areas: stronger global governance; peace and conflict prevention; an enduring agenda for transformation.

The EU coordinates its voting within the General Assembly’s six main committees and other bodies and agencies such as the Economic and Social Council. To this end, more than 1300 internal EU coordination meetings are held at the UN in New York alone to develop a common EU stance and speak with one voice. Article 34 of the EU Treaty also stipulates that EU members on the Security Council must act in concert and foster the interests of the EU. In 2016, the EU delivered 32 statements in the UN Security Council and 208 Yorkin other UN fora, including those at high-level events and meetings.

### **Global Security Provider**

The EU has a wide range of tools available to prevent and solve crises in close cooperation with international and regional partners. For this reason, the High Representative provides regular updates to the Security Council



and the EU is often invited to address issues of common concern, such as the fight against terrorism. Regular UN Security Council meetings on UN-EU cooperation in maintaining international peace and security are testimony to the importance both place on it.

*“In one year, we have taken more steps towards a European Union of security and defence than in the previous sixty years. More cooperation in European defence means a more efficient spending, better capabilities, more security for our citizens and more security for the world. But it also means we are becoming an even more reliable partner for our neighbours and friends, starting with the United Nations.”*

HRVP briefing to the UN Security Council 9 May 2017

The Security Council endorsed the relationship with the EU in 2014 when it adopted a presidential statement on cooperation between the EU and the UN.

### **Major contributor**

Collectively, the EU and its Member States are the single largest financial contributor to the UN system. The level of the contributions of the 28 EU Member States amounts to 30.38% of the UN regular budget and 33.17% of the UN peacekeeping budgets. In addition, the EU and its Member States also provide about half of all

the voluntary contributions to UN funds and programmes. The European Commission alone contributed more than €1.9 billion to support UN external assistance programmes and projects in 2015. The European Union and its Member States retained their place as the world’s largest aid donor in 2015, according to OECD figures. In 2015, EuropeAid’s financial contributions to the UN exceeded €777 million, with the most funding going to UNDP (27.5%), UNICEF (21%) and, FAO (15%). In 2015, ECHO (European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection) provided €551 million (an increase from €452 in 2014) to UN agencies, funds and programmes, including €207 million to WFP, €127 million to UNHCR and €106 million to UNICEF.

### **UN Reform**

The best way to preserve and reinforce its credibility is by making the UN system more effective. Therefore in the coming year the key EU priority will be to uphold, strengthen and reform the UN, empowering the UNSG to deliver on his reform proposals. The three reform tracks (peace and security, development, management) should be addressed together since they are mutually reinforcing. The EU will strive for clarity, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability as the key principles guiding UN action. The EU will use its political and diplomatic outreach to build a coalition in support of UN reform.