



Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations in New York

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3 October 2025, New York – European Union Statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Ambassador and Head of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations, at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly Third Committee: General Debate

Mr Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The Candidate Countries North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Albania*, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

Thanks to you and the Bureau for your work in bringing us together.

We all understand that we are living through **a time of heightened tensions**, affecting all 'Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues'. We see disregard for international law and attempts to undermine hard won progress. Yet the United Nations was born of the premise that laws and norms should prevail over brute force. History shows that we can only secure our freedom if we protect that of others.

So we must guard against hollowing out institutions that have underpinned international

order for decades, but we should also be ready to learn from each other.

The **UN80 initiative** offers the opportunity to reform and revitalise all three pillars of our United Nations – peace and security, development, and human rights – with a view to keeping the UN system relevant, fit for purpose and able to deliver effective outcomes. This requires sustainable, predictable funding, in particular for the **human rights pillar**, which accounts for **less than 1% of UN funding**.

Human rights are universal. Across all countries, cultures, or political systems, people are entitled to live free from the fear of intimidation, repression, discrimination, crime, and poverty. In other words, to **enjoy their human dignity and rights** in full. Human rights are indivisible, interdependent and inter-related. Peace and prosperity, as well progress towards the SDGs, go hand in hand with respect for the rule of law, democracy and all human rights.

A true measure of our societies is how they honour *all* their members. Over 80 years, progress has been made in **eliminating discrimination** including on grounds of sex, race, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity. Those in disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised situations must be protected and empowered.

We call on all States to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all persons belonging to **national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities**. The EU will promote their right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.

During this session, the EU will also continue to engage actively in efforts to enhance the full, effective and meaningful participation of **Indigenous Peoples'** representatives and institutions on all issues affecting them.

30 years after the landmark adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, we have still not delivered on our promise to achieve **gender equality, and the rights and empowerment of women and girls**. Despite progress, gender equality remains a distant prospect for far too many women and girls, so we must scale up our action. We therefore welcome the recent agreement on revitalising the Commission on the Status of Women, bringing mandatory progress reporting.

The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the **Beijing Platform for Action**, and the Programme of Action, of the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to **sexual and reproductive health and rights**, in this context.

We must also continue to work for full and effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on **Women, Peace and Security**, Resolution 1820 on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, and their follow-up resolutions.

The European Union is committed to **social development**. At the Second World Summit for Social Development, in Doha, we will address gaps, review progress, and recommit to the Copenhagen Declaration and its Programme of Action. This will be an opportunity to impart momentum towards full and timely implementation of Agenda 2030.

Slow progress on commitments – eradicating poverty, ending hunger, eliminating child labour, reducing inequalities, and ensuring decent work for all – is a major concern. We are committed to **strengthening international cooperation**, through a human-rights based approach to achieve social development, social justice, decent work, global solidarity, and just transitions.

In the field of **Crime Prevention**, the EU attaches great importance to adopting a strong political declaration at the High-Level Meeting to be held in November 2025, on appraisal of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This commitment is reflected in the appointment of an EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator to strengthen EU and global efforts.

The dire situation of **Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons** is more pressing than ever. Faced with a projection of up to 134 million forcibly displaced and stateless persons, the European Union reaffirms its support for UNHCR's core mandate. We recognise the contributions of host and affected countries and communities, who provide support despite increasingly challenging circumstances.

The EU sees three priorities for **Humanitarian action**. First, full compliance with International Humanitarian Law by all parties. Second, ensuring that the humanitarian system is fit for purpose, with full support for the Humanitarian Reset initiative led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. Third, addressing the funding gap, to ensure that life-saving assistance reaches people in need.

The EU reaffirms its support for the international criminal justice system, particularly the International Criminal Court. Along with the UN Human Rights system, they are cornerstones of the fight to end **impunity and ensure accountability** for all international crimes and violations of international law.

The EU condemns all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the whole **Occupied Palestinian Territory**. We remain gravely concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, and the unacceptable number of civilian casualties. Approaching the anniversary of October 7, we reiterate our

condemnation of the terrorist attacks committed by Hamas and continue to call for an immediate ceasefire, unconditional release of all hostages and unimpeded and safe access of humanitarian assistance. We strongly condemn the further escalation in the West Bank, following increased settler violence, intimidation and the expansion of illegal settlements, as well as terrorist attacks against Israel. The EU remains firmly committed to a lasting and sustainable peace. We recall the adoption by the General Assembly of the recent 'New York Declaration' on Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and Implementation of the Two-State Solution, and welcome the United States' commitment to ending the war in Gaza.

We reiterate our condemnation of **Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine**, which grossly violates international law, including the UN Charter. Russia must cease its war of aggression, withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of **Ukraine** and fully respect Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

It is now for Russia to show its willingness to achieve peace. There must be accountability for all **international crimes**, human rights violations and abuses stemming from the Russian war of aggression. The EU condemns the arbitrary detentions, torture, sexual violence, unlawful deportations, forcible transfers, discrimination and other violations directed against Ukrainian citizens by Russia in the temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine including Crimea, and calls on Russia to end the unlawful practice of child deportation and forcible transfer, and to ensure their immediate and safe return to Ukraine.

The EU expresses deep concern at the continuing systematic crackdown on **Russian civil society**. The EU voices concern at the findings outlined in reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Russian Federation, that torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are used as state-sanctioned tools for oppression, part of a government strategy to control all spheres of life, and suppress dissent. Russia's recent withdrawal from the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is a cause for alarm.

In **Belarus** too, we urge the immediate and unconditional release and effective rehabilitation of all political prisoners, and the ending of repression against independent media. We urge the Belarusian authorities to stop their involvement in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as the instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes.

The EU reiterates its serious concerns about the human rights situation in **China**, especially in Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Hong Kong.

Partnership remains central to our approach at the Third Committee, as exemplified by the resolution on 'the situation of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in **Myanmar**', presented jointly with the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation**. The deepening crisis there requires urgent international attention and action, as highlighted in this week's High-Level Conference.

The resolution on **DPRK** will call on the authorities to take concrete measures to end human rights violations and to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, and the rule of law.

Once again, the EU and **GRULAC** will jointly table the biennial resolution on '**Rights of the Child**'. This year, the theme will be early childhood development.

Finally, the EU will again present a resolution on '**Freedom of Religion or Belief**', in coordination with that of the OIC on 'Combating intolerance'.

The EU recognises the role of **civil society** in advancing human rights and accountability. We remain committed to ensuring their full and meaningful participation, including by Human Rights Defenders and Youth Delegates, and responding firmly to reprisals.

Underpinning this work is our commitment to the **freedoms of expression, opinion, association, and assembly**. These carry special duties and responsibilities, but are the bedrock of democratic systems that respect human freedom and dignity under the rule of law.

Mr Chair,

We look forward to working with all of you.

Thank you.

** North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*



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