

Report on the state of EU-Tunisia relations: towards a strengthening of our Privileged Partnership

Six years on from the 2011 revolution, and particularly over the past two years, there has been tangible progress, in particular as regards democratic consolidation and promotion of good governance, enhanced security, and exchange and integration between the people of Tunisia and Europe. The EU's constant support, which began immediately after the revolution, was further displayed when Tunisia was associated in the Horizon 2020 research programme and the Erasmus+ programme, and when EU-Tunisia partnerships for both youth and mobility were adopted.

'Since the 2011 revolution, Tunisia has been a ray of hope for our common region. It has been a beacon for change and for the aspirations of the Mediterranean people. Today, Tunisia needs to consolidate what it has achieved over the past few years. The change initiated in Tunisia must continue, and we, as Europeans, stand alongside the Tunisians and the young people of Tunisia, who are the country's great wealth, every step of the way. Through these actions, the European Union is demonstrating its continuing support for Tunisia. We will continue to work to deepen our collaboration in all possible areas – political, cultural, economic, social and security-related – and to intensify exchanges between our societies and between our young people, based on the conviction that this will lead to a positive outcome.' declared the High Representative/Vice-President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, **Federica Mogherini**.

The Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn** said: *'Tunisia is facing a major challenge: to translate the incredible democratic achievements of the past years into tangible successes, and to create growth and employment, thereby giving the people of Tunisia, in particular its young people, prospects for the future. With the joint Communication presented in Autumn 2016, the EU tabled a series of proposals to support Tunisia in its reform efforts, mobilising a whole range of instruments, including substantial financial assistance. The recent adoption by the Tunisian Parliament of the Five-Year Development Plan 2016-2020 will make it possible to anchor the EU's financial support in a coherent and targeted strategy. It is now urgent to move into high gear and translate these reforms into day-to-day life'.*

Details

The report assesses the state of progress of the implementation, by Tunisia and the EU, of the Privileged Partnership Action Plan (2013-2017) since March 2015. It focuses on the progress of key reforms, in accordance with the strategic priorities agreed between the two parties, such as:

- democratic consolidation and promotion of good governance in accordance with the Constitution and Tunisia's international commitments;
- socio-economic recovery and implementation of structural reforms in line with the priorities identified in Tunisia's 2016-2020 Development Plan;
- strengthening of trade ties between the EU and Tunisia, in particular with a view to concluding a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement (DCFTA),
- the security challenge and terrorism, while highlighting the significant operational results achieved by the Tunisian security services in 2016.

By means of this report, the EU reiterates its intent to support Tunisia in:

- creating a modern, environmentally-friendly and innovative economy. In this context, involving Tunisia in the Horizon 2020 research programme, along with its gradual implementation, represents an important step;
- promoting youth and student mobility, in particular through the Erasmus+ programme, and further increasing ties and exchanges between both societies. As part of the 'EU-Tunisia Partnership for Youth', adopted in 2016, the EU has pledged in parallel to boost this support by allocating an additional €10 million to Tunisia, intended to mobilise 1 500 students, teachers and young people every year until 2020;
- strengthening cooperation between the EU and its Member States and Tunisia in the field of security, in order to find joint solutions,
- intensifying their partnership in terms of migration management, thereby reaffirming the importance of the Partnership for Mobility and welcoming the launch in October 2016 of negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission.

For further information:

[Full report](#)

[EU-Tunisia Association Council – 11 May 2017](#)

[Plan d'action du Partenariat privilégié UE-Tunisie \(2013-2017\) \(only in French\)](#)

[Fact Sheet – EU-Tunisia Relations](#)

[Joint Communication 'Strengthening EU Support for Tunisia'](#)

[Website of the EU Delegation in Tunis:](#)

Rapport sur l'état des relations UE-Tunisie dans le cadre de la Politique européenne de voisinage révisée, 2017

10/05/2017 – 11:31

Rapport sur l'état des relations UE-Tunisie dans le cadre de la Politique européenne de voisinage révisée, 2017

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High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the EU-UN cooperation

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High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini in New York

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EU Local statement on freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression (Jakarta, 9 May 2017)

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Statement by the Troika and EU on the security situation in South Sudan

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the EU-UN cooperation

New York City, Europe Day, 9 May 2017

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Muchas gracias señor Presidente,

Es un gran honor para mi para hablar otra vez más en este Consejo de Seguridad. It is an honour to address the Security Council once again and to

do this on a very symbolic day. Today – 9 May – is Europe day. The day when the European Union celebrates its being one, united. Sixty-seven years ago on this exact day, a French statesman – Robert Schuman – put forward a revolutionary idea for those times: that European States could share part of their sovereignty to prevent any future war in Europe.

Two world wars, the most devastating conflicts in human history, started in Europe and spread to the whole planet after thousands of years of European conflicts. Our founding fathers and mothers imagined a renewed European continent – a continent that instead of exporting war would promote peace, democracy and human development within its borders and in the world.

Seven years later, the Union took its first steps. And this year, we celebrate sixty years of our European Union. When Europeans simply realised that it was by far more convenient for all of us to cooperate instead of fighting each other. Choosing cooperation over confrontation, Europeans built in these sixty years the most successful peace project in history. So it's really not only an honour but also a pleasure to celebrate this historic day with you in the UN, in the Security Council.

Let me say that some believed in these recent months that our sixtieth anniversary, our sixtieth birthday would also mark the beginning of the end of the EU, the beginning of the European Union's decline. Indeed, our British friends have decided to leave us – which is sad for all of us – but life goes on and so does the European Union. Since the UK Referendum last year, we Europeans have recommitted to being the strong and united power that our citizens and our partners need and deserve.

The European Union is and will continue to be the reliable, cooperative and indispensable partner the world needs. First and foremost, an indispensable power for our neighbours, for our region. Let me start with the Balkans, with our support, and in cooperation with the United Nations, our friends there have taken impressive steps forward, in the most difficult and turbulent circumstances sometimes – steps forward towards peace and regional cooperation, towards economic growth, and towards the European Union. Because one thing is clear, the future of our Union will not be at twenty-seven. We will have new members joining the Union in the future, starting from the Balkans.

Au delà de notre continent, nous sommes le partenaire indispensable d'un monde plus coopératif, plus multilatéral et plus pacifique. Un partenaire indispensable des Nations Unies et de tous ceux qui considère le multilatéralisme la clé d'un ordre mondial qui fonctionne.

En célébrant notre soixantième anniversaire, le Secrétaire Général a dit "en ces temps de division mondiale, la vision portée par l'Union européenne de coopération et d'intégration est plus importante que jamais".

I would like to begin from here, from our vision. It is what we like to call the European way – the European way to peace and security, the European way to growth and sustainable development, the European way to international relations. This European way is also the United Nations' way. And this

explains why all our actions, all our initiatives are always taken in full coordination and partnership with the United Nations. 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.

1. SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

First of all, we believe that security is not only about military might. It is about finding common ground, cooperation over confrontation, diplomacy. It is about human development and economic growth. It is about democracy, rule of law, and human rights.

When Antonio Guterres highlights the importance of conflict prevention and mediation, his words resonate with the European way to security, and in particular with the European Union's Global Strategy and our integrated approach to conflict and crises. When you read the Security Council's Resolutions on "Women, Peace and Security", or "Youth, Peace and Security", the rationale is the same as in our own work to strengthen resilience inside and around Europe.

We are turning these concepts into practice each and every day as Europeans. When a peace deal between the Colombian government and the FARC was announced, the European Union was there, immediately building a path from peace to full reconciliation. We have some European experience in this direction. When President Juan Manuel Santos came to Europe to receive the Nobel Peace Prize – he came to us to the European Union in Brussels straight from Oslo and Stockholm – we announced together, we signed a European Trust Fund that is helping today Colombia reap the economic dividends of peace. I understand that coming back from a field trip to Colombia, you have been able to witness our work yourselves.

Another example. Just over a month ago, in Brussels, we convened together with Antonio Guterres, the international Conference on the future of Syria and the region.

- Our primary goal was and still is to address the urgency – the dramatic humanitarian situation faced by Syrians both inside and outside of the country, and to support their hosting communities.
- But in the difficult hours after the chemical attack in Idlib's province, we also worked together with the UN and with most of you to strengthen the world's support to the UN-led negotiations in Geneva, and to a political solution. Let me say that I talked yesterday to Staffan de Mistura, as I often do to coordinate the UN and EU work on Syria, and we are extremely supportive of his decision to resume the intra-Syrian talks as of next week. The European Union is and will continue to be actively, strongly, engaged and committed in accompanying the UN-led political process with all our means and determination.
- As we did in the Brussels Conference, there we prepared also the ground for the international community to start looking into the post-war reconstruction of Syria. It is clear for us that the reconstruction will work only when a

political transition is under way and the political agreement is achieved in Geneva. But we have lost the peace too many times not to have learned the lesson and we believe that when the war is over, we will need collectively to invest in reconciliation, stabilisation and reconstruction of the country. This will be a powerful leverage and a dividend of peace for all the Syrians and for the region at large.

On each of these strands of work, the international community will have to preserve on Syria a fragile unity. You know this better than anyone else. And to this end the European Union is determined to continue mobilising all its resources in support of the UN work to put an end to this war.

This is the European way – addressing the urgency and the long term, the humanitarian, the security and the diplomatic needs at the same time.

The same approach, moving from one continent to another, shaped the Brussels Conference for the Central African Republic – which we organised together with the United Nations, and I chaired with President Faustin-Archange Touadera. We managed to mobilise more than 2 billion euros in support of the government's priorities. Now it is time to implement these pledges. By the way, the European Union is always an international player that implements all its pledges. The European Union is not only the largest donor: we are also present there on the ground with a military training mission, working in close cooperation with the UN forces, as we do everywhere we have presence.

The European Union is increasingly active also as a security provider worldwide. Our Member States contribute to almost 40 per cent of the UN budget for peacekeeping operations: collectively, we are the largest contributor.

In addition to that, the European Union's fifteen military and civilian operations worldwide work in constant cooperation with the United Nations. Let me just mention Operation Sophia off the coast of Libya, which has been endorsed twice by this Security Council with a certain degree of unity for which I would like to thank you. The tasks of our EU military operation, today, include not only to dismantle the networks of smugglers off the coast of Libya, but we also completed the training of the first group of Libyan coastguards – I was honoured to hand over the diplomas myself in quite a moving ceremony on the flagship of the Operation Sophia in Malta – and we also delivered to them the first motorboats so that the security of the territorial waters can be in their hands. And, as mandated by the Security Council, Operation Sophia is also enforcing the arms embargo, and only last week, we seized a shipping of weapons and ammunitions. Your endorsement of our Operation is a great sign of the trust that this institution puts in the men and women serving under the European flag. Doing it the European way in the UN context.

We take this responsibility very seriously. Last year, just days after my briefing to the Security Council, I presented a Global Strategy for our foreign and security policy. The Strategy foresees greater European cooperation on security and defence. And in one year, actually less than one year, nine, ten months, 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 that we are becoming an even more reliable partner for our neighbours and friends, starting with the United Nations, NATO, and many regional organisations with which we partner on security issues.

Yet, as I said from the outset, we consider our military capabilities as only one element in our security strategy. To prevent a conflict, you also need good development policies and strong State institutions. Peace is never sustainable without decent infrastructure, good health care or education, without participation, without democracy. This is what we call resilience, and the United Nations remain for us a fundamental partner in this kind of work.

For this reason, the European Union's voluntary contributions to the UN funds and agencies amount to half of their total budget. This means we proudly and smartly invest in them as much as the rest of the world combined because we believe that it's our interest to do so: In the World Food Program to prevent a humanitarian crisis; in UNICEF to help children in a war-torn country go to school and prevent radicalisation; in the UNHCR and UNRWA for millions of displaced people – these are all contributions to our common security.

So let me be very clear, and speak directly to our American friends. It is essential for us that we all keep investing in these UN Agencies. They are as important to global peace and security as defence spending – and sometimes even more. And we, Europeans, consider this support to the UN system as a crucial investment in our own security.

Take the terrible famine that has hit the Horn of Africa. It has the potential to make a fragile situation even worse and turn into a security situation.

This also serves as a powerful reminder that climate change is real, and is already impacting on our security environment. Everything is linked. So we continue to expect that the United States will find a way to remain committed to the Paris Agreement. I know that there is a debate ongoing and we respect it very much. But 195 countries have signed the deal on climate change, and there will be 195 different paths to meeting the Paris goals and honouring the agreement. I am sure there is room for the US Administration to find its own path, being part of what the world has agreed together and finding its own way to do so.

2. WIN-WIN SOLUTIONS

The Paris Agreement shows the right approach to the challenges of our era. The international community managed to get together and seek common solutions beyond the traditional divides.

Over the last few years, we already managed to overcome these divides with the Sustainable Development Goals. That was a key achievement for us. This month, actually next week, the European Council will adopt the new Consensus

on development, which brings Agenda 2030 at the core of our development policies, both at European and national level. It will be a pleasure for me to welcome Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed that day in Brussels.

I believe the greatest divide in today's world is between those who believe that international politics are a zero-sum game, and those who work to build win-win solutions and common ground.

The European way is a constant search for win-win solutions. And the essence of the United Nations is to represent a space where compromise can always prevail over confrontation. This is why I say that the European way is the UN way.

This search for win-win solutions is another field where the European way and the UN way converge totally. We saw it last year at the UN Summit for refugees and migrants. Instead of focusing on what divides us – the North and the South, the developing and the developed – we looked for cooperative solutions, for partnerships, what we call the compacts.

Since then, the European Union has worked on partnerships with five African countries – including Ethiopia and Senegal, who sit in the Security Council today and can bear witness. This win-win solutions search cannot be imposed by one side on the other: our approach is that we can only be agreed together on what is good for both, which is why we are defining different priorities for our cooperation with each of our partners. This cooperative approach is already producing some concrete results, and we believe this work can feed into the discussion towards a Global Compact for refugees and migrants in the UN framework.

Let me add that our cooperation with UN Agencies on migration is constant and extremely positive. I would like to mention in particular the situation in Libya, which as you know is very close to the European heart. In Libya, we see the conditions of migrants stranded in the country are dramatic. For this reason, we are funding a 90-million-euro support package for Libya, in support of the work of the IOM, the UNHCR and UNDP inside the country. We think this is the way.

Confrontational approaches lead nowhere. Between win-win and lose-lose, the European Union has picked sides. We stand always on the side of dialogue and partnership. Where others might see conflict, we look for co-operation.

In times of global disorder, when instability spreads from one side of the world to the other, building win-win solutions is difficult but for us it is a must. There is no sustainable alternative to that.

This is certainly true on counter-terrorism: the attacks in Europe over the last year tell us that cross border cooperation is of the utmost importance. So we support Antonio Guterres' proposal to establish a UN Office on Counter-Terrorism, to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General: his proposal can enhance coordination and effectiveness in our work, to the benefit of all.

Security today is truly a global issue. Let us look at an obvious example

that this Council was dealing with recently several times in a very important manner: the situation in the Korean Peninsula. A military escalation with North Korea would lead to devastating consequences. We believe we all have an interest to avoid confrontation, and to push for DPRK to re-engage with the international community. I'm following very closely in these hours the results of elections in the Republic of Korea to see if that will open new avenues of engagement.

3. RULES-BASED GLOBAL ORDER

This leads me to a third point before I conclude, another essential feature of the European way. We believe in a global order based on rules. Rules that are agreed together, and respected by all – as it should be the case for non-proliferation.

In our chaotic era, rules are too often perceived, globally but also in our own countries, as a constraint for some, more than a guarantee for all. But more power-politics is the perfect recipe for further destabilisation. International rules for us are not a threat, but a protection to every nation's autonomy.

These rules include territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders. And for this reason, we do not and will not recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. And we will continue to work to bring the conflict in eastern Ukraine to an end, with the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

When any such violations occur, we are all less secure. When accountability is not guaranteed, the credibility of the entire international system comes under question. So we have repeated time and again, after the chemical attack in Syria for instance, that accountability for those crimes must be guaranteed – and we fully support the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its important and delicate work. And we believe that this is the correct place, the correct forum, where accountability should be guaranteed.

4. A CALL FOR MULTILATERALISM

Quand nous parlons de multilatéralisme, il ne s'agit pas d'une profession de foi rhétorique. Il s'agit de prendre ces règles au sérieux, d'investir dans les institutions multilatérales et de voir dans les Nations Unies le cadre global dans lequel s'inscrivent nos actions.

Ce n'est pas une posture idéologique, mais un choix calculé et pragmatique tout à la fois. Aucune puissance mondiale n'est assez forte pour mettre seule un terme aux crises de notre temps. Chaque crise concerne trop d'acteurs et implique trop d'enjeux. Toute contribution est bienvenue et personne ne peut contribuer dans le vide.

If you take the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Last year we revived the Middle East Quartet, and reached an unprecedented consensus on the risks for the two-state solution and on practical recommendations. We must preserve

and enlarge that unity, for instance through cooperation between the European Union and the Arab League, and between the Quartet and Arab States. And I see Egypt sitting here as being one of the key players in this respect. I was honoured to discuss these perspectives at the Summit of the League of Arab States in Jordan last month. And of course we need the Israelis and the Palestinians first of all to directly negotiate, with the accompanying efforts of the international community, starting with the United States, the European Union, Russia, the UN, and all those who believe that peace needs the direct involvement of the two parties but also our contribution to help them reach a solution.

Different initiatives can bring important contributions to a peace process. In some situations, we need to be imaginative and look for new channels, when the traditional formats seem to fail. This seems to be the case for Venezuela, where it is vital to stop the escalation and establish a new form of mediation that can be agreed by all sides. We stand ready to help in any useful way with respect and in support of any useful initiative that can be put into place.

The European Union never looks for just a photo-opportunity. That is not the interest we have. Between a theatrical but empty statement, and a silent but effective mediation, we will always choose the latter. The real impact matters more than the headlines to us.

In all cases, coordination and complementarity are the key. And the best way to guarantee coordination is by working together with the United Nations.

Peace for Syria can only come from negotiations among the Syrian parties, in Geneva – and I would like to thank once again Staffan de Mistura for his incredible work and leadership.

Peace in Yemen: the European Union is sponsoring track-two and peacebuilding initiatives – but this needs to feed into a UN process.

And in Libya, a window of opportunity has just opened. We support enormously and we believe that the Libyans must seize this moment, and we are fully behind the UN efforts to bring a political solution to the crisis.

Whatever the format, whatever the initiative, we believe that the United Nations must be the centre of gravity of all peacebuilding efforts in an effective manner. Only the UN can guarantee the coherence of the process and the strength of the outcome and of the implementation.

The nuclear deal with Iran shows the way forward to us, the Europeans. It set a milestone for non-proliferation, making everyone more secure – in the region, in Europe, and in the world. World powers negotiated the deal, but the agreement was immediately ratified by the Security Council and the deal now belongs to the entire international community – not only to us who were in that room in Vienna. And the IAEA has certified five times its implementation.

This is the European way. Enforcing and strengthening the rules of non-

proliferation we brought to an end twelve years of confrontation through peaceful dialogue. It is the European way, and it is the United Nations' way.

A successful deal makes the whole system more credible, because it shows we can collectively deliver on our citizens' needs.

The best way to preserve and reinforce this credibility, is by making the UN system more effective. So we stand fully behind the Secretary-General's reform agenda, on the Peace and Security pillar, the SDG's implementation, and the UN management reform. This agenda has the potential to make the whole UN family less fragmented, more united and coherent.

The European Union cares about the United Nations. It's a precious tool. In sixty years of history, we have become a superpower for peace in the European Union, a superpower for peace but also for security and democracy. We are accompanying reconciliation processes at all corners of the world, from Afghanistan to Myanmar. We are supporting our Eastern partners strengthen their economies and their institutions, their resilience – and in just a few days we will announce a visa liberalisation agreement with our Ukrainian friends. We are finding new ways to support Africa's growth, together with African governments and with the African Union, and also with the private sector and the civil society of the continent.

The European Union has become in these years, in these decades, in these sixty years of our history, not only the most successful peace project in the world, but also an indispensable partner to move beyond the current disorder, and to try to build together a more cooperative world order.

So we will always return to this centre of gravity, this pivot of a rules-based international system. Because the European way is the UN way. The European vision is the United Nations' vision. And whoever wants to invest in this system, will find in the European Union a partner and a friend, a reliable, constructive, cooperative partner.

Thank you very much.

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini in New York

New York City, 8 May 2017

Good evening. I have a special feeling, like being home tonight. I would like to start not with thanks (I will leave that for later), but I would like to start from why we are here together tonight.

I could not think of a better year to celebrate Europe Day here in New York

with António (Guterres), showing the strong, I would say the strongest possible partnership between the European Union and the United Nations.

First of all, because Europe, the European Union, turns 60 this year. It's an interesting age. The age of self-confidence; the age of maturity; the age also when you can afford looking back – where you've been, what you've achieved; but also looking at the future. And it is this exercise that the EU is trying to do, struggling to do, with many forms of challenges of the European Union today. I also believe we have opportunities today, this year and the coming years. And I think the partnership with the United Nations highlights the enormous responsibility we as the European Union have to bring forward this agenda for peace that the EU embodies.

We have built 60 years of peace after having experienced thousands of years of war. And the power of our experience still feels very strong in all the countries of our region, from the Balkans, to our Eastern partners and the southern Mediterranean. Seen from the outside, the European Union is the most successful peace project ever built, and still is the most powerful actor for the UN agenda. We were discussing this today with the Secretary-General.

The EU is still the first humanitarian donor worldwide; the first investor in development assistance; the first provider on peace and security, especially through the UN system; and the first sponsor of the big multilateral agreements the UN reached last year, the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate. And we focus on implementation, because we believe multilateralism is the way.

We built 60 years of peace, human rights, rule of law and economic opportunities thanks to the fact that our founding fathers (and mothers) believed one very simple truth: rather than killing each other as we had done for centuries, it was much more convenient for us all to cooperate. And it started with something very simple if you look at it in geopolitical terms. It started out of a very simple economic cooperation.

But out of that, we've managed to build a powerful economic and social integration project. I know it is challenged from many sides, but you see recently that all those who predicted that it was the beginning of the end were proven wrong, and that we are realizing today that the European Union is what we Europeans need.

Maybe for my generation it's been the luxury of traveling without passports, having the single currency, studying in another EU country with Erasmus. Today I believe it is the need for Europe – the only way we have to manage a globalized world, together. I often say – and I apologize to those who have heard me say it already – there is no European country that is big or small: we are all small compared to the size of the world powers. So, only together can we support our common agenda.

I even have a difficulty saying EU-UN partnership, because the UN is our common house. It's not something separate from us. In the UN, after the wars of the previous century...the international community chose cooperation and the constant search for common grounds and solutions. And for us, it's the common

home; it's the core of the global system.

Celebrating Europe Day this year in New York with the new Secretary-General is not only a great honor that he gives us, but also a promise of our commitment.

It's not only the EU and its Member States that have challenges; the UN system has its challenges, too. You can always count on the European Union. Not because of charity, but because we see in the UN the best way to achieve our common goals. And I'm sure they are the common goals of many friends in this room, many who are from different parts of the world, here to honor the EU and the UN together, based on the value of the human being, and the value of peace.

I would like to say two last things, about the future. 60 years ago we were a small group of European countries. Today we are 28. Some say that in the future we will be 27. I can tell you we will be more than 27, because if we are serious about our accession negotiations with new countries, the future of the EU will be with new Member States. And I know this is an unpopular thing to say, but I'm really serious when I say that we have to continue unifying our continent. I don't like talking about "enlargement"...which I consider condescending.

For the second thing, I would like to end with a "thank you", not only to António, who honors us with his presence here today – I believe not just as a European Secretary-General, but as the UN Secretary-General who celebrates the unity of Europe. And the contribution we are determined to continue giving to the multilateral system, in all fields, from security to development.

But also, I would like to thank the many friends from all over the world who join us here today, not only to work towards the next 60 years of this strong EU-UN, but also for the EU itself. Because it is questioned many times in these times. And I believe that in Rome, on 25 March this year, when we were celebrating with our EU leaders, the Heads of State and Government, the achievements of the past 60 years, we saw a new commitment. I think that sometimes in life, you realize what you have in the moment only in the moment you could lose it. And I think that we in the EU realize what we have, and what we risk to lose. And the responsibility of countries to invest in what our fathers and mothers have managed to build after the Second World War and for the future of our Union, which I believe unites us even more than the celebration of our past.

We have had 60 great years of achievement, but the best is yet to come. And I am counting on strong leadership in New York, in difficult times, but with lots of positive energy and wisdom that will be supported by us every single step of the way.

Thank you very much for joining us.

Article – Brexit: protecting the rights of millions of EU citizens living in the UK

Although few of them were allowed to vote during the referendum, the millions of EU citizens living in the UK will be among those affected the most by Brexit. The EU wants to reach a deal to protect their rights as soon as possible during the upcoming negotiations with the UK. This week Parliament is holding a hearing on the situation and rights of EU citizens in the UK. Watch the meeting live online and check out our infographic for the facts.

The hearing on 11 May is organised by the civil liberties, employment and petition committees. Members will discuss with experts the issues facing EU citizens in the EU and the best ways to protect their rights.

Safeguarding people's rights in the wake of Brexit is a priority for the Parliament, including those of Brits living in other EU countries. In the Parliament position adopted on 6 April, MEPs stressed the importance of securing equal and fair treatment for EU citizens living in the UK and British citizens living in the EU. Parliament President Antonio Tajani also brought up the issue with UK Prime Minister Theresa May during a visit to London on 20 April: "The students, workers and families are valuable members of society and deserve some certainty regarding their future."