



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8792nd meeting

Thursday, 10 June 2021, 10 a.m.

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Provisional

President: Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia)

Members:

China	Mr. Geng Shuang
France	Mr. De Rivi�re
India	Mr. Tirumurti
Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya	Mr. Kimani
Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
Niger	Mr. A Barry
Norway	Ms. Heimerback
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy/Ms. Evstigneeva
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. Prince
Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Roscoe
United States of America	Mr. Hunter
Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

European Union

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

European Union

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Borrell Fontelles.

Mr. Borrell Fontelles: I am very pleased to speak before the Security Council today about the role of the European Union (EU) in the maintenance of international peace and security. As Council members know very well, we live in a world where the demand for multilateral solutions is much greater than the supply. There is a large imbalance, and we see more divisions, more free-riding and more distrust than the world can afford. Rules-based multilateralism is a term that we understood well at the United Nations and in Brussels. However, it is not a simple phrase, and our job is to bring it alive for ordinary people.

We need global cooperation based on agreed rules because the alternative is the law of the jungle, where our problems do not get solved. Every day, we see the cost of the absence of multilateral action on reduced access to vaccines, insufficient climate action and the peace and security crisis, which fester. The root cause is the increasing power politics and ideological contest, leading to the erosion of trust. We must address that deficit in multilateralism and push back against selective and self-serving approaches to multilateralism.

The European Union remains committed to the United Nations and to rules-based multilateralism. The core of our strategy is to protect, reform and build a multilateralism that is fit for purpose. The world's greatest changes flow from new technologies, which can be both disruptive and empowering. We

should just think of artificial intelligence, big data and cloud computing or genetic engineering, autonomous weapons and surveillance. One of the biggest questions that we face is how to ensure that the rules that we so need for those emerging technologies reflect the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Otherwise, technology will be used against individuals and communities in a nightmarish scenario.

We all know that conflict prevention and peacebuilding are key. We must work with countries at risk before conflict erupts and to build sustainable peace after the signing ceremony. Peace has to be sustainable, and sustainable peace compels us to be inclusive, with a particular focus on women and youth.

We are in the second year of the pandemic, which has served to underscore the fragility of our hyper-globalized and interdependent world. We need to learn broader lessons about how human health and security and planetary health and security are linked. Where politics gave us stalemates and divisions, science and cooperation gave us the exit strategy: vaccines. We in the European Union are staunch promoters of vaccine multilateralism, with the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility at the centre. Team Europe — the European Union and its member States — has contributed more than €2.8 billion to COVAX and exported more than 240 million doses of vaccines to 90 countries, more than any other region. The European Council decided to donate at least 100 million doses to low- and middle-income countries before the end of the year. But even that will not be enough. We therefore call on all players to lift export restrictions on vaccines and their components. We must recall that Africa imports 99 per cent of its vaccines. That has to change. The European Union is partnering with Africa and industry, backed by an initial €1 billion in funding, to boost manufacturing capacity for vaccines, medicines and health technologies.

Beyond the pandemic, we know that climate change and biodiversity losses have reached existential levels. Two major United Nations summits later this year, in Kunming and in Glasgow, must deliver decisive action. That will be a real test for the multilateral system. We need those summits to produce real outcomes in line the scale and urgency of the problem. The Security Council has an important role to play on climate, health and their links to peace and security. To give impetus to the success of the two summits, I hope that the Security Council will adopt a resolution on the link between

climate change and security, which is increasingly evident, especially in some regions of the world.

Last year, I said: “At a time of global crisis, we need a Council that can make critical decisions, not one that is paralysed by vetoes and political infighting.” (see S/2020/489, annex I). Unhappily, one year later, the situation has not improved. In the past year we have seen new conflicts erupting in Tigray, older ones restarting in Myanmar and Nagorno-Karabakh and Israel and Palestine, and also chronic violence continuing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen, just to mention a few of them. In all those cases, we need the Security Council to provide the necessary decisions. This is about real people’s lives. The price of inaction is going to be paid in conflicts not solved, humanitarian aid not delivered and in lives lost.

Sitting on the Security Council is a serious responsibility, politically and even morally. The Charter of the United Nations gave the Council the supreme say on matters of peace and security. For the European Union, there is no acceptable alternative. There exists today no other organization that we can turn to. The Security Council must therefore provide the support and protection that people in conflict zones depend upon. We look to the Security Council to match its belated, but unanimous, support for the Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire with a full commitment to its implementation, because implementation is the important part.

The European Union has been and remains a staunch supporter of the United Nations in all three pillars. We have said it many times before, and we mean it: our support is not just in what we say, although that matters, but in financial terms, human terms and political terms. We work with United Nations missions in many theatres. We have 17 operations and missions contributing to United Nations goals with United Nations mandates; 13 of those missions are operating alongside United Nations missions. In addition, we are currently defining our next set of joint EU-United Nations priorities on peace operations and crisis management to strengthen our cooperation and maximize our impact.

We are fully committed to the Sustainable Development Goals; it goes without saying. And we base ourselves on the conviction that real security depends on people enjoying their rights and freedoms. We will always be on the side of those calling for their

universal rights to be respected, sometimes at grave personal risk, in Hong Kong, Venezuela, Myanmar and elsewhere. In many cases, given the refusal by those in power to respect people’s fundamental rights, we have had to impose sanctions. Sanctions are never an end in themselves; they are a tool to push for respect for universal rights. Our sanctions are targeted and do not hinder the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Allow me to highlight a few concrete areas where the European Union is deeply engaged and where we need urgent results.

First of all, the most dramatic example is the recent situation in Israel and Palestine. Last month, we saw a dramatic escalation with enormous human costs. Now we need to build on the ceasefire to resume negotiations towards the two-State solution, which has been mentioned so many times. Let us remember that security is not the same as peace. Security can be attained at a high price, but security alone will not bring about peace. An untenable status quo may turn again into another cycle of violence. Therefore, a negotiated settlement is urgent, and indeed the only way to give rights and security to both Israelis and Palestinians. They both deserve it. And to support the parties, we must revive the Quartet, as we have been trying to do.

With regard to Syria, this year we mark the tenth anniversary of the war in that country. During these 10 years, the Syrian regime and its backers have left the country in ruins. Given the dramatic humanitarian situation, it is essential that the cross-border mechanism remain open. I appeal to the Security Council members to renew it in July, without decreasing the degree of cross-border transit allowed.

With regard to Libya, there has been important progress — a miracle maybe — with the Government of National Unity. But the ceasefire is still fragile and needs to be supported by a robust monitoring mechanism, so that elections are able to take place in optimal conditions in December as scheduled. We have been offering support. We welcome the unanimous renewal of the arms embargo, decided yesterday, and the authorization of inspections and the seizure of illegal cargo on the high seas. We are also contributing to the arms embargo with the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, which will continue its work on the implementation of the embargo. But we need greater focus on the issue of the withdrawal of

foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya, to avoid the destabilization of the whole region.

In talking about the destabilization of the region coming from Libya, the Sahel immediately comes to mind. The Sahel and the Horn of Africa hold the key to African security. Our revised strategy is built around the need for more results and greater governmental accountability. We must continue our engagement, but also take firm actions against those who stand in the way of a peaceful and inclusive transition process.

Another issue of capital importance today is Iran. We are working non-stop to revise the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which we kept alive during the past years in all of its aspects. Nuclear activities and the lifting of sanctions go hand in hand. I am actively engaged with all the main players, and my team is leading the negotiations in Vienna. We are making progress, but the negotiations are intense and slow. There is still a lot of work to be done on a number of issues, including the precise sequencing of steps.

Let me end with some cases closer to us, the European Union. First, I want to talk about Belarus. For months, we have seen massive repression of peaceful protesters who took to the streets demanding to elect their President freely and fairly. Recently, the regime resorted to the scandalous forced landing of a civilian plane travelling between two European Union capitals in order to arrest a leading journalist and his companion. This is a major attack on safety, and the European response has been firm and principled. We immediately closed our airspace to planes from Belarus and are in the process of adopting a new package of sanctions. This time, it will also be economic, sectoral sanctions. We have also devised a €3 billion package of economic support that we will make available to a democratic Belarus.

Moving on to a country in that neighbourhood — Ukraine. We regret that the situation in the country tends to be instrumentalized for political purposes here in the Security Council. To be clear, six years after all members of the Security Council unanimously supported the Minsk agreements, very little has been done to implement them. Russia is a party to the conflict, and we count on it to take a constructive stance. In that connection, I welcome President Zelenskyy's initiative to convene the Crimean Platform summit, to take place in the summer. Charles Michel, President of the European Council, will take part in

the meeting, which will enjoy the broad participation of United Nations States Members and, of course, European Union members.

In our neighbourhood, there is also the Western Balkans. The European Union will not rest until all countries of the region are part of the European Union. To that end, we are fully mobilizing to support reconciliation and reforms as the best antidote to nationalist rhetoric. We will host the next iteration of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue in the coming days. More broadly, in Europe we do not want geostrategic competition. We want a peaceful, prosperous and stable neighbourhood, free from so-called protracted conflicts and zones of influence.

There are many other challenges that I could mention, but then I would just talk endlessly. It is better that I stop here in the interest of time and thank one and all for their patience. I look forward to comments and to our debate.

The President: I thank Mr. Borrell Fontelles for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): Kenya thanks Estonia for convening this important discussion. I welcome and thank His Excellency Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles for his briefing.

Europe is a bastion of values that Kenya holds dear. We share in the view that Europe should find its place in the conduct of relations among States and between States and their citizens. Key among those values are respect for human dignity, equality, the rule of law and human rights, with a focus on the rights of minorities. Kenya and Africa embrace those rights as their own — not because they are being actively promoted here today, but because they are at the root of African civilizations. All these rights are compromised and trampled upon by war. Maintaining international peace and security is therefore key to the protection of these most precious values. The increasing centrality of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security is what makes this discussion here today so important.

Chapter VIII of Charter of the United Nations is exceedingly relevant today, and we must do more to ensure that it is effective and applied. Between the United Nations and the European Union (EU) and

between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), we must work harder to ensure that we build, strengthen and protect a rules-based multilateralism, as Mr. Borrell Fontelles spoke about. It bears repeating that such a rules-based multilateralism must be rooted in respect for the sovereignty of all States that are members of the EU and the United Nations.

Kenya appreciates the EU's strong investment in multilateral partnerships for addressing the contemporary threats to international peace and security. We further appreciate that such investment is supported by a framework for political communication and collaboration, which is reflected here today. We also appreciate the political dialogues between the EU and Africa. I can confidently argue that the three form an important triangle of collaboration that is key to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is in that spirit that I call for the EU to continue deepening its cooperation and partnership with Africa and its subregional mechanisms. We must build on what the AU-EU-United Nations trilateral cooperation is delivering today. I will mention just a few initiatives in that regard.

First, the EU has deployed more than a dozen missions in Africa under the Security Council's authorization, with several other EU missions and operations being deployed in parallel.

Secondly, through the African Peace Facility, EU funding spanning over a decade has enabled the functioning and operations of the African Union Mission in Somalia. We repeat the call by the African Union for the United Nations to augment EU support by providing adequate, predictable and sustainable funding, including through assessed contributions. I want to recognize how crucial EU support has been in tackling Al-Shabaab, and can therefore say that EU support has directly saved lives.

Thirdly, the EU has extended significant diplomatic, technical and resource support to the peace process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), including the implementation mechanisms of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. We urge the EU to remain steadfast in those efforts, which are crucial to the stability of the Horn of Africa region.

Fourthly, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa continues to offer benefits in capacity-building in the

promotion of peace and stability in the Horn of Africa within the IGAD framework.

Finally, in the African Union, the EU contributes to multiple support programmes for the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative and the pursuit of the long-term goals of Agenda 2063.

More personally, as Director of Kenya's National Counter Terrorism Centre, I worked with colleagues in the EU to design an ambitious programme to develop our capabilities to counter violent extremism. Doing so showed me just how much we can achieve together in terms of innovating and being bold in pursuing transformative initiatives.

As I conclude, I wish to underscore a few points that should underpin EU-AU cooperation, which we believe is a building block for wider EU-AU-United Nations cooperation.

First, there is need to reinvigorate the dialogue between the AU Peace and Security Council and the EU Political and Security Committee, as envisaged by the AU-EU partnership.

Secondly, Africa will take on the primary role of designing solutions to African challenges that can be supported by international partners.

Thirdly, there should be a renewed focus on prevention and peacebuilding through support for measures to address the root causes of conflict, including development and economic empowerment. We believe that the EU can support the Peacebuilding Commission even further.

Fourthly, cooperation and collaboration on climate change-related conflict should be scaled up from studies and the development of response strategies to the implementation of such strategies at the grass-roots level.

Fifthly, to add to the very laudable points made by Mr. Borrell Fontelles, the EU should continue to support Africa in its COVID-19 response by mitigating the challenges of vaccine access, including by supporting efforts for local vaccine production and distribution.

Allow me to return briefly to the values with which I began my remarks. To those values must be added pragmatism and respect for the choices of peoples as expressed in their sovereign States. In order for those values to survive and thrive, it is critical that they lead to no catastrophic harm, whether by virtue of their

exploitation to advance narrow interests or in the zeal that leads them to imperil the stability or even peace of some regions. I urge that the EU, Africa and all members of the Council take care to do no great harm, even as we push to ensure that our values are alive in the world.

Finally, Kenya is grateful for the contribution of the EU to regional peace and security and development. We will continue to work with the EU and its member States, both at the bilateral level and within regional and subregional frameworks, in that regard.

I thank Mr. Borrell Fontelles for his briefing, and I thank the Estonian presidency for convening this debate.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): We very much welcome High Representative Borrell Fontelles' attendance at the Security Council today and thank him for his briefing. We agree entirely with his emphasis on the importance of multilateralism.

The United Nations-centred, international rules-based system provides a foundation for coordinated and collective action, including through regional organizations, in order to address our biggest challenges, as exemplified so eloquently just now by Ambassador Kimani. We welcome the role that the European Union (EU) has played in upholding international norms across a range of forums, from the Group of Seven (G-7) to the United Nations, including through the special session of the Human Rights Council on Myanmar that we co-chaired earlier this year.

As High Representative Borrell Fontelles set out, there is no greater global challenge than that posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). As Foreign Secretary Raab emphasized in the Council in February (see S/2021/157) and, as we subsequently agreed in resolution 2565 (2021), combating and sustainably recovering from COVID-19 requires greater national, regional and international cooperation and solidarity. We therefore welcome the EU's staunch support, as Mr. Borrell Fontelles said, for the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative and EU financial contributions to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility.

The United Kingdom was proud to host the Global Vaccine Summit just over a year ago, which surpassed its target and raised \$8.8 billion. We have made some progress but there is more to do. We look forward to

continuing cooperation with the EU as we work to recover from COVID-19 and better prepare ourselves for future pandemics, including through our shared support for a global pandemic treaty.

We look forward to welcoming the Secretary-General and the Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission to the United Kingdom later this week for the G-7 leaders' meeting. We are using our G-7 presidency to promote global health objectives and support the world's poorest.

Our shared work will need to continue at pace after the G-7 as we head towards the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow, where we hope that the world can finally turn the tide on the climate crisis. We are grateful for the steps already taken by the European Union, including the submission of an ambitious 2030 nationally determined contribution. We count on the European Union's support for an ambitious outcome and a cleaner, greener future for us all, but especially for those countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change — the same countries that Prime Minister Johnson and other world leaders called on us to support in the Council back in February (see S/2021/198). I want to thank Mr. Borrell Fontelles for the important point he made about the link between climate change and climate security and the need for us to address that issue in the Council.

Multilateralism continues to be central to addressing issues within the European sphere. Along with the European Union and other international partners, we have repeatedly called on Russia in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to cease its destabilizing actions in Ukraine. The United Kingdom will continue to work with the European Union and other partners in support of international law and the wider rules-based international system to defend Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its international recognized borders.

On Belarus, we share High Representative Borrell Fontelles' concern regarding the actions of the Belarusian authorities, including the forced landing of Ryanair Flight FR-4978 and the arrest of journalist Roman Protasevich. We continue to urge the Belarusian authorities to respect the will of the Belarusian people, as well as their fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rule of law.

On the Western Balkans, we strongly support the EU-facilitated dialogue under Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák on the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. We continue to encourage closer cooperation between the EU and NATO to promote democratic values, prevent destabilization and facilitate progress towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The United Kingdom continues to play a significant role in the NATO presence in the Western Balkans, working with partners, including the European Union-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to support defence reform and peace.

High Representative Borrell Fontelles underlined the primary responsibility of the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, and we recognize the contribution of the EU towards resolving issues on the Council's agenda. That includes the role of the EU in support of a diplomatic solution to the revitalization and restoration of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We continue to work together to bring Iran back into compliance with its commitments and restore the benefits of that deal for all parties.

The EU and the United Kingdom continue to work closely on Libya, including through engagement with the Berlin process towards a sustainable, Libyan-owned political settlement. We support continued efforts to enforce the United Nations arms embargo through the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI.

We welcome the EU's continued focus on Africa, as set out moments ago by Ambassador Kimani. In Somalia, we have been united with the EU and other international partners in calling for a consensus-based way forward on elections. We welcome the recent agreement between Somali leaders to that end. Of course, we strongly support the work of the African Union Mission in Somalia and hope that the EU will be able to continue its essential financial support in building Somali security.

As we have shown in our work in the G-7 and here in New York at the United Nations across a range of shared global challenges, the EU and the United Kingdom share a resolve to tackle the common challenges we all face. That includes supporting human rights, including, as Mr. Borrell Fontelles said, for those in Hong Kong; tackling conflict; coordinating on human rights

sanctions and promoting the rights and prosperity of women, including through girls' education. I think you will agree, Mr. President, that when we work together, we are a force for good in the world.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, and we listened very carefully to his assessments.

We are in favour of developing cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations on the basis of the United Nations Charter, first and foremost its chapter VIII. Cooperation with the European Union (EU) is no exception, which should also be organized on this basis and within the framework of General Assembly resolution 65/276 of 2011. We also believe that regional structures should complement United Nations efforts in their areas of responsibility and within their mandates. Therefore, among the priorities for cooperation between the United Nations and the EU, we see collective cooperation in countering cross-border threats and challenges, as well as fostering dialogue on counter-terrorism, to be of prime importance. This kind of cooperation has significant potential, and we fully support these approaches.

At the same time, however, it is vitally important that cooperation between the United Nations and the EU lead to strengthening multilateral approaches to global affairs and not to erode or revise them. True multilateralism entails consistent support of the central role of the United Nations. Promoting such dubious concepts as the "rules-based" order or imposing block approaches and attempts to present one's own experience and achievements as a gold standard that other countries should implement at home bears no resemblance to multilateralism, and often leads to blatant interference in the affairs of other States. We would caution against the use of these approaches, for example, in relation to Belarus.

Russia-EU relations at present are unfortunately at their lowest ebb in history. This is a separate issue and not the topic of today's meeting. But I must say that, rather than adopting a careful and patient collective approach to seeking compromise and constructive solutions with partners within the General Assembly and Security Council, our European partners increasingly often choose a destructive unilateral approach. This gives rise to nothing but the gravest of concerns.

The most obvious example of the line that has been taken by the EU is the active development and then arbitrary application of illegal, unilateral coercive measures that have been approved in circumvention of the Security Council and of international legal norms. Contrary to the official statements on the targeted nature of these mechanisms, their unlawful nature substantially hinders the socioeconomic situation in affected countries and leads to falling standards of living for ordinary people. This has been confirmed by relevant studies by United Nations officials.

Again, we would draw the attention of Brussels to the fact that this practice does not lead to a change in State policy. On the contrary, it leans towards neocolonialism and causes affected States and all right-minded countries to unite to defend the interests of their own peoples and the basic principles of inter-State cooperation as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Even in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the EU did not heed the call of United Nations Secretary-General Guterres to suspend unilateral coercive measures for humanitarian purposes. This indifference to human suffering does nothing for the EU's reputation on the international stage.

The EU is an important regional player, and its assistance to the United Nations is necessary. However, the efforts of the EU should not go beyond the frameworks set forth in Security Council mandates. In this context, we still have questions about the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, as one of its objectives is to assist in the fulfilment of the United Nations arms embargo on Libya. We called on the EU to tread very carefully in this region, which is still unable to recover from the forcible destruction of the Libyan State 10 years ago. A series of EU members were directly involved in that effort.

We have great expectations from the EU as a mediator in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, even more so given the fact that the General Assembly gave the EU a special mandate to this end. We must state that, so far, we have seen no significant results. In that regard, we would recommend to our European colleagues that, rather than playing up to Pristina, they should ensure that Pristina fulfils already agreed parameters, including finally creating a community of Serbian municipalities in Kosovo.

Once again, we called on the EU not to deviate from the principle of impartiality during their mediation

at these negotiations. The same wish also applies to EU policy in the Balkans as a whole. We call on our colleagues to be careful in their approach to decisions of universal application reached within the United Nations and to refrain from ignoring or selectively reading them, which could run the risk of undermining the legitimacy of a whole host of structures in the region.

Finally, we would note the ever more frequent attempts of our colleagues from the EU to promote — through various means, including through United Nations instruments — their own approaches on gender, human rights, climate and other topics, presenting them as allegedly universal and benefiting from consensus. There are an increasing number of examples of this practice, and I would like to immediately warn the Council that we intend to fight against it more adamantly and uncompromisingly, as it reflects efforts by the EU to replace international law with the so-called rules-based order.

I would not want my statement to give the impression that Russia has a negative attitude towards the EU. That is not the case. We are neighbours on a continent, and we are interested in cooperating on ideology and on dialogue. However, dialogue should be built on both parties having equal footing and mutual respect for one another.

We have many questions that have accrued over recent years, which we would like to put to the EU, but we ask them while putting particular focus on specific facts. I would also like the EU to take that approach and refrain from promoting fake news or arbitrary accusations along the lines of “highly likely”. The EU can and should play a constructive role in Europe and around the world. We see here significant potential. We have highly valued, inter alia, the role that the EU has played as a coordinator of the commission to monitor the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

There are also other areas where there has been successful cooperation. The main point is that the EU understands that in the modern world there is no place for hegemony and dominance.

In the EU, there are many people who recognize the counterproductive nature of the confrontational approach adopted towards our country as well as the erroneous line that has been held in regions in our neighbourhood over recent years. The culmination of that was seen in the anti-constitutional bloody coup in

Ukraine and the nationalism, neo-Nazism, Russophobia and antisemitism in that country.

We trust that at the end of the day common sense will prevail and that we will be able to select a new balanced model for our relationship, with a focus on the principles of international law. This equal and honest cooperation is something in which Russia has already always been ready to engage. We trust that our European colleagues will be able to make the right choice and overcome the many unfortunate trends that I have mentioned.

The EU stands to gain from this new approach as would its international partners, including of course Russia and the other States Members of the United Nations that are interested in developing a constructive and effective type of cooperation with the Union, alongside other regional and subregional organizations.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): Let me begin by thanking High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell Fontelles, for his briefing. Mr. Borrell Fontelles is a strong advocate of the India-European Union Strategic Partnership. I join others in extending a warm welcome to the Security Council to him. The United Nations and the project of the European Union (EU) have a common origin, both having been founded after the Second World War. The driving principles and values of both organizations are similar. Today the EU is a natural partner of the United Nations in addressing global peace and security challenges, as well as advancing development efforts. We therefore welcome today's briefing.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the EU has addressed issues not only limited to Europe, but also in many theatres of conflict across continents. In the Balkans, the EU is at the forefront of efforts aimed at promoting peace, reconciliation, stability, freedom and economic prosperity. On several occasions, the EU has brought together important stakeholders in situations of conflict by strongly supporting donor conferences and charting peace plans. The key role of the EU, as a member of the Quartet, in the Middle East peace process is acknowledged, as is its role in preserving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran.

The role of the EU has been growing in Africa as well. Its complementary efforts towards conflict resolution and in addressing security challenges, including terrorism, have contributed positively to the efforts of the United Nations in Africa. The EU is also

extending support to bilateral and regional initiatives, including to the Group of Five for the Sahel and the EU Military Training Missions in Central African Republic and Mali. The EU should continue to augment national efforts to address security-related challenges and maintain a balance in priorities in the context of recovery and peacebuilding in Africa. The EU-African Union partnership should focus on finding African solutions to African problems.

As the world continues to be confronted with peace and security challenges, exacerbated by the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic situation, there is merit in strengthening partnerships and enhancing linkages between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the EU. In that context, I have the following five observations to make.

First, the EU has broken new ground in developing effective tools for conflict prevention, peacebuilding, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. We believe that the EU has an important role to play in tackling global challenges, with the United Nations at the core of multilateral efforts.

Secondly, the EU continues to have an important role to play in a reformed United Nations-centred multilateral system, and we expect the EU to firmly support ongoing reform efforts.

Thirdly, in the current difficult circumstances caused globally by the pandemic, the multilateral mechanisms need to work with regional organizations to ensure resilient medical supply chains, vaccines and active pharmaceutical ingredients. The EU can be an important player in that direction and help global recovery.

Fourthly, the EU has an important role to play in our continued fight against terrorism and other new and emerging threats. In that regard, I would like the EU to give due consideration to the eight-point action plan on counter-terrorism proposed by India's External Affairs Minister on 11 January while addressing the Security Council (S/2021/48, annex 5).

Fifthly, we note the significant financial contribution of the EU member States to the United Nations peacekeeping budget and voluntary contributions to United Nations programmes. The contribution of the EU to the progress of the global discourse on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals has

been noteworthy, and we will continue to work closely to find a balanced approach to implement such ends.

The India-EU strategic partnership is guided by our shared interests, principles and values of democracy, pluralism, freedom and respect for the rule of law and human rights. India and the EU have a common interest in ensuring security, prosperity and sustainable development in a multipolar world. We believe that India's relations with Europe and the EU are a force for good globally.

India and the EU share a common perspective on many regional and global issues, including a shared commitment to promoting an international rules-based order based on reformed and effective multilateralism. India's desire to work constructively with the EU is reflected in the newly-instituted dialogues on maritime security as well as climate change. India welcomes the EU's recently-announced strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and looks forward to greater cooperation to ensure a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific, premised upon respect for international law and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States.

India and the EU recently concluded a successful leaders' meeting in May. We launched a connectivity partnership to enhance connectivity in conformity with international norms and rules of law and respect for international commitments. We also agreed to intensify our economic engagements, including by resuming negotiations on trade and investment agreements and working together on World Trade Organization reforms. India's partnership with the EU manifests itself in cooperation towards tackling current global issues, such as COVID-19, climate change and terrorism and strengthening multilateral institutions. India remains committed to working with the EU in that endeavour.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I would like to warmly welcome High Representative Borrell Fontelles today and to thank him for his thought-provoking intervention. We are very delighted to have him with us.

The steadfast belief of the European Union (EU) in multilateralism and its strong commitment to the United Nations are borne of its lived experience of conflict and peacebuilding on the continent of Europe. That is why respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations is actually written into the Treaty of the European Union.

Today the United Nations and the EU work in lockstep as natural partners all around the world to eradicate poverty, protect human rights and overcome the global health crisis that we have all seen in the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

As a proud member of the EU, Ireland understands the power of cooperation among nations in meeting our common challenges. We believe in it. The harrowing experience of the pandemic has surely taught us one thing — that the power of coordinated action at the international and regional levels greatly eclipses that of any unilateral response.

The EU is the world's leading development donor and a key partner of the United Nations in crisis management. In those roles, the EU demonstrates just how complementary it is to the United Nations in the way that it works and, I would say more importantly, how it acts. That makes the EU and the United Nations strong and influential natural partners.

The EU has enhanced its capacity to prevent conflict, preserve peace and strengthen international stability and security in support of the United Nations. Two new instruments will deliver on that: the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument and the European Peace Facility. The strategic partnership with the United Nations is a key element for the future orientation of the EU's action in security and defence.

From Kosovo to the Middle East and throughout Africa, EU missions are deployed alongside United Nations peacekeeping operations or special political missions. Some of those EU missions, such as the European Union Naval Force Operation Atalanta, combating piracy off the coast of Somalia, play a central role in responding to threats to peace. Others, such as the training mission in Mali, which complements the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, support security sector reform. Irish experts are seconded to EU missions in Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Africa, while members of the Irish Defence Forces participate in missions and operations in Mali, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Mediterranean.

We are proud to have supported, together with our EU partners, mediation and peace processes in Colombia, Afghanistan, Georgia, the Philippines and Mozambique. As EU Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Colombia, our former Deputy Prime

Minister, Eamon Gilmore, has represented the EU, while bringing the lessons learned from Ireland's own peace process to the table.

The EU works closely with many partners around this table in the Security Council in support of international peace and security. We work as a member of the Middle East Quartet, as a facilitator of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and as a coordinator of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Ireland, as facilitator for resolution 2231 (2015), will assist the Security Council in upholding that important key agreement.

I believe that the Security Council should encourage and welcome such cooperation and utilize the EU's support for the United Nations where it can.

We welcome the trilateral cooperation between the United Nations, the EU and the African Union, as well as United Nations cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Those partnerships play important roles in addressing issues that concern all of us, encouraging dialogue, respect for human rights and humanitarian assistance. The partnerships also play a role in seeking peaceful solutions to the crises in Myanmar and Ethiopia. They play roles in support of peaceful, inclusive, democratic and time-bound transitions in Mali and Chad.

Despite that good work, many challenges remain. We need to continue to make real progress on delivering on the women and peace and security agenda. We strongly support the really valuable United Nations-EU Spotlight Initiative on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. We urge that women and peace and security remain at the core and one of the EU-United Nations priorities on peace operations and crisis management as we move forward. We see that as fundamental.

We are committed to ensuring that we address climate-related security risks, where relevant, in our prevention and peacebuilding work across the EU and the United Nations.

Another area in which we see scope for greater cooperation is in improving mission transitions. Peacekeeping must be linked to peacebuilding in order to disrupt cycles of violence, prevent conflict and sustain the peace we are trying to instil. Cooperating closely, we can ensure that mission transitions take

place in a responsible, coordinated and graduated manner, responsive to the specific needs on the ground. We certainly believe that there is scope for enhanced EU-United Nations coordination on peacebuilding and the valuable Peacebuilding Fund.

Finally, the multilateral system must deliver in response to COVID-19 by building back better. That almost sounds like a cliché. What it means is debt relief. It means equitable access to vaccines. It means access to sustainable financing. It must include green recovery to meet the existential challenge of climate change. On that we are very clear.

The EU has a pivotal role to play on all those issues and more. I know that it will continue to show its trademark dedication, generosity and focus in delivering on such critical goals.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I would like to welcome the participation of His Excellency Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to this meeting today, and to thank him very much for his detailed briefing.

We live in a complex world faced with intersecting and unprecedented challenges, from long-standing issues, such as displacement, climate change, natural disasters, poverty, hunger, inequality, violence and conflicts to the recent coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It is abundantly clear that those issues cannot be tackled by any country alone. Multilateralism and partnership are the undisputed means to address them.

While the United Nations plays the central role in mobilizing and coordinating global efforts in that regard, the importance of the contributions of regional organizations are becoming more and more tangible to both global goals and regional priorities. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is essential to the promotion of international and regional peace, security, stability and development. Their complementarities enable greater opportunities for dialogue, understanding, reconciliation and confidence-building measures to prevent and resolve conflicts.

We reiterate our support for the role of regional organizations with regard to the work of the United Nations, including the Security Council, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental principles of international law.

The high-level open debate on “Enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in enhancing confidence-building and dialogue in conflict prevention and resolution” (S/2021/394) and the following presidential statement in April (S/PRST/2021/9) further strengthened our commitment in that regard.

The strategic cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union (EU) has advanced across various areas of peace and security, as well as sustainable development and economic growth. We commend the EU’s continued commitment to multilateralism, as reaffirmed by Mr. Borrell Fontelles today. We also recognize the work done by the EU in connection to various issues on the agenda of the Security Council.

With regard to peacekeeping, the EU’s significant financial and personnel contributions remain vital to the promotion of international peace and security. We appreciate the ongoing collaboration between the United Nations and EU peacekeeping missions to enhance security and advance political solutions in conflict areas, including through the implementation of the United Nations-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management for the period 2019-2021 and the signing of the Framework Agreement Between the United Nations and the European Union for the Provision of Mutual Support in the context of their respective missions and operations in the field last September. We encourage even closer cooperation among the two organizations in the future, for instance in the areas of mediation, confidence-building and the promotion of multilateralism.

In South-East Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been playing a constructive role in strengthening solidarity and building a region of peace, stability and development. To that end, ASEAN attaches great importance to nurturing close cooperation with external partners, including the EU. In December last year, the relations between ASEAN and the EU were elevated to strategic partnership. That is an important milestone that builds on existing achievements and enhances efforts to effectively implement the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action 2018-2022. We are also pleased that the long-standing comprehensive partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations has continued to develop positively.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations can also benefit from strengthened partnership and experience sharing among regional organizations themselves or within innovative plurilateral modalities. There are countless opportunities and areas for cooperation, such as confidence-building measures, mediation, the women and peace and security agenda, climate change and peacekeeping training, to name just a few.

Before concluding, I would like to reaffirm Viet Nam’s readiness and commitment to enhancing the role and contributions of regional organizations to the work of the United Nations and foster relations between ASEAN and the United Nations, as well as other partners.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I welcome Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles and thank him for his valuable briefing.

The European Union (EU) is an important partner to the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. According to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the cooperation between the two organizations provides important support and makes an effective contribution to addressing joint challenges, whether they are conventional or emerging, similar to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its various implications.

My country’s delegation welcomes the active contribution of the EU to the comprehensive COVID-19 response plan and its important support to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility to ensure fair access to vaccines.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the EU is particularly visible in Africa, where the EU is actively contributing at the political, technical and financial levels to supporting many conflict-resolution and peacebuilding initiatives and tracks. In that context, we recall the EU’s contribution to training security forces and providing technical assistance with a view to reforming the security sector in the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia. We also recall its active contribution, alongside the League of Arab States and the African Union, to supporting the political process in Libya and its important role, through the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, to addressing violations of the arms embargo imposed on Libya.

My country also commends the constructive role of the EU in the Middle East in supporting international efforts to resume the peace process towards achieving a two-State solution based on the agreed international parameters, particularly Security Council resolutions. My country also commends the continuous support of the EU to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme and its efforts to guarantee the continuity of that important framework for non-proliferation and disarmament.

We believe in the close links between peace, security and human rights, on the one hand, and sustainable development, on the other hand. My country's delegation commends the role of the EU in supporting efforts to enhance development cooperation and strengthening and protecting human rights and basic freedoms.

We reiterate our support for the efforts of the EU to protect civilians in armed conflicts, especially its initiatives to protect women, girls and children affected by such conflicts. We also support the EU commitment to preventing sexual and gender-based violence and providing victims with protection against it, as well as its efforts to strengthen the role of women in all peace and security initiatives, particularly those aimed at preventing, resolving and reducing the impact of conflicts.

Furthermore, with respect to security, peace and sustainable development, we reaffirm the need to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and to work on putting in place a comprehensive plan to reduce the impact of climate change as an emerging threat that exacerbates vulnerability and conflicts.

We believe that common investment in youth for comprehensive growth and sustainable development, as set out in the outcomes of the Abidjan summit, will surely broaden the prospects for building a more stable future in Africa.

In conclusion, Tunisia reaffirms the importance of multilateral work and the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and other regional organizations, similar to the cooperation between the United Nations and the EU, in order to tackle new challenges to international peace and security.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): The United States would like to thank Estonia for organizing this important and timely briefing and High Representative Borrell Fontelles for his remarks today.

The partnership between the United States and the European Union (EU) is built on a foundation of shared values. It is built on a common vision that includes a commitment to democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, the promotion of economic opportunity and the pursuit of transatlantic prosperity and security.

The European Union remains an indispensable partner to the United States and our efforts to promote global security and prosperity, and Europe's security and success are inextricably linked to our own. President Biden will meet Presidents Michel and Von der Leyen on 15 June to discuss a common agenda to ensure global health security, build a sustainable economic recovery, fight climate change, enhance digital trade and cooperation, push back against malign behaviour and address global challenges.

Together, the United States and the EU have pledged funding towards coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine distribution efforts and the health and humanitarian response. We are working to defeat COVID-19, rebuild our communities, rebuild our economies, strengthen our trade networks and come back even stronger.

The United States deeply appreciates the European Union's contributions across the globe, including its cooperation with the United Nations. In Africa, the EU has played a key role in counter-terrorism, conflict prevention, security assistance and peacebuilding. We are grateful for the significant support the EU provides for peace and security initiatives in Africa, including for the African Union Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. The European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI and its assistance in implementing the arms embargo are contributing to peace and security in Libya.

We share the EU's deep concern about the human rights violations, abuses and atrocities in Tigray, including the lack of access of humanitarian actors to the most vulnerable populations who are on the cusp of famine. We will continue to work closely with our EU partners to address crises — not only in Tigray,

but around the world, including in Burma, Syria and Venezuela. The Security Council can and must also do better in responding.

We greatly appreciate the EU's critical role in holding Russia accountable for its violations of international law. Moscow's actions in Ukraine remain a threat to European security seven years after Russia's intervention in eastern Ukraine and its occupation of Crimea. Our support and that of the EU for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and Georgia is unwavering — whether via the United Nations system, other multilateral forums or bilaterally. We will continue to stand with our allies and partners in calling on Russia to immediately cease its evolving military, economic, diplomatic and disinformation efforts to destabilize Ukraine and Georgia.

We also thank the European Union for its decisive, quick and clear action on the forced diversion of a flight between two EU member States and the subsequent removal and arrest of journalist Roman Protasevich in Minsk. We will enhance our efforts, including through the coordination of our sanctions policies, to ensure that the authorities of Belarus are held accountable for their actions.

With regard to the dire human rights situation in Belarus, we are committed to close coordination with the EU to promote transparency and accountability. We support international efforts to independently look into the human rights situation, including as it impacts Polish minority communities. In that regard, we welcome efforts by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, an international accountability platform for Belarus.

The United States unequivocally affirms the EU's role as a crucial partner to the United Nations and, in particular, to the Security Council in the maintenance of peace and security around the world.

Ms. Prince (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, for his comprehensive briefing.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union (EU) strengthens both organizations and allows for a more coordinated approach to address key issues affecting Europe, its neighbours and the global community. Regional and subregional groups

have a critical role to play as contemporary peace and security issues become more globalized. It is only through a multi-stakeholder approach that we can hope to address long-standing challenges such as climate and security, the proliferation of terrorism and the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Our delegation supports collaboration between the United Nations and the European Union, which has been an essential partner in addressing the global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, we applaud the European Union's contributions to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility as we push to ensure equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. We must continue to support such efforts as we build back better.

Europe, like most locales around the world, has experienced the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many European countries were hard hit by the coronavirus, experiencing high infection rates and fatalities. A coordinated approach to the post-pandemic recovery will be critical. The European Union's Next Generation EU fund creates an opportunity to usher EU member States into a more sustainable future by rethinking financing, enhancing food security, addressing inequality and pushing for a more circular economy.

Coordination between the United Nations and EU continues to be invaluable in promoting global peace and security, especially on issues like the fight against terrorism and the pursuit of peaceful conflict resolutions. The United Nations and the EU continue to work closely together on several issues on the Security Council's agenda, including through the Framework Agreement Between the United Nations and the European Union for the Provision of Mutual Support in the context of their respective missions and operations in the field, signed in September. The framework underscores the value of enhancing complementarity between the two organizations.

AS a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes the vital role of regional and subregional organizations in promoting economic integration and social development. Organizations such as the European Union, CARICOM, the African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations utilize key partnerships with national Governments and other local actors to better address peace and security challenges.

The EU, through its member States, has a significant presence on the Security Council and is a feature in the peace and security landscape across all regions. We particularly value the EU's cooperation on matters affecting conflict in Africa, where we pursue African solutions for African problems. It follows that, when Africa speaks, we should all listen.

Looking ahead, we hope for concrete progress with our EU partners on issues such as unilateral coercive measures that oftentimes do more harm than good, as well as the reversal of unfair financial blacklisting practices that hurt developing economies.

We conclude by reiterating our full support to further enhance the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter. Such cooperation remains essential for delivering the Council's mandate for maintaining international peace and security.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, for his outstanding briefing and welcome him to the Council.

The international community is at a complex juncture which, despite the many challenges, opens up great possibilities for generating collective cooperation schemes. Today's meeting allows us to take stock of the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union. Both the Charter of the United Nations and the Lisbon Treaty recognize the importance of cooperation between international organizations.

In conflict prevention, crisis management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, regional and subregional organizations play a key role, given that they are well positioned to understand the origins and root causes of conflicts, as well as to promote confidence-building measures and tailor-made political dialogue schemes. Although we refer to regional and subregional organizations in general terms, it is important to point out that they have diverse mandates and capacities.

In that connection, with regard to the European Union, my country recognizes the importance of road maps for the establishment of strategic priority areas that guide the strategic partnership between the EU and the United Nations, as well as the signing of the agreement

to enhance cooperation and strengthen coordinated responses in peace operations in September 2020.

I wish to underscore three crucial points regarding EU-United Nations cooperation.

First, the close, efficient and coordinated work of the EU with the United Nations through its 18 civilian missions and military operations in Europe, Africa and Asia is fundamental. In many cases, those missions share a headquarters with their United Nations counterpart. The coordination of efforts in peacekeeping, development, human rights and humanitarian assistance is therefore vital to the performance of such missions. We highlight the excellent cooperation in the cases of the European Union-led peacekeeping force Althea, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, the European Union Naval Force Operation Atalanta and the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, as examples.

With regard to Operation IRINI, we hope that concrete steps can soon be taken in coordination with the Libyan authorities to protect the human rights and dignity of migrants in the Mediterranean.

Secondly, as we witness conflicts becoming more entrenched, we note the crucial role played by the European Union in the management and handling of those crises. The EU plays an important role in stabilizing the Sahel through the deployment of its technical training mission in Mali. In particular, we highlight the assistance the EU provides to the Malian armed forces in terms of respect for human rights and protection of civilians, as well as its participation in the Sahel Alliance, which addresses development and governance — issues that lie at the heart of the conflicts in the region.

In the case of the Middle East, we recognize the work of the EU in the framework of the Middle East Quartet, the early reactivation of which we look forward to in order to achieve a two-State solution for Israel and Palestine.

We are closely following the efforts of the EU in conflict management in Europe, in particular in Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabakh regions, among others. We also recognize the importance of the process to gradually integrate the Western Balkans into the European Union, as Mr. Borrell Fontelles mentioned earlier.

Finally, Mexico underlines the importance of continuing to make progress on cross-cutting issues such as gender. Women play a fundamental role in the peace and security agenda, hence why we must take advantage of their contributions and guarantee their participation in all processes and at all levels of decision-making.

Mexico calls for increased efforts to foster cooperation between the European Union and other regional and subregional mechanisms, in particular the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, among others. It is only through an interconnected and efficient network that we will see results in favour of sustainable peace and effective multilateralism.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome the presence of Mr. Borrell Fontelles, the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, at today's meeting and thank him for his briefing.

Strengthened cooperation between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations helps to consolidate and strengthen international collective security mechanisms and maintain international peace and security while contributing to the response to global challenges and promoting the common development of all countries.

China supports cooperation between the United Nations and the EU in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We must work together to uphold and practice true multilateralism.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has once again demonstrated how the interests of all countries of the world are intertwined and that we share a common future. No country can stay out of harm's way by looking after only its own interests and no country can fight the challenges of our time alone, making multilateralism imperative.

The EU itself is the product of a multilateral response to common challenges. As an important force on the world stage and an active advocate of multilateralism, the EU should take the lead in complying with international law and the universally accepted and recognized basic norms governing international relations. It should hold fast to the principles of mutual respect, treating one another as equals and working

together towards mutually beneficial outcomes. It should abandon double standards, avoid bloc politics and oppose division and confrontation.

Earlier, Mr. Borrell Fontelles and the representative of the United Kingdom mentioned Hong Kong in their statements. I would like to remind them that Hong Kong is a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China. Purely and simply, any matter related to Hong Kong is part of China's internal affairs, in which there is no place for external interference. Moreover, it has nothing whatsoever to do with the theme of today's meeting.

China hopes that, in its foreign exchanges, the EU will pursue the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. China would like to see an EU that champions genuine multilateralism and plays a greater, more positive and constructive role in international affairs.

Over the years, the EU has done a great deal of useful work in neutralizing tensions and differences between various parties, promoting the resolution of conflicts and relevant regional hotspot issues and implementing Security Council resolutions.

China acknowledges the EU's efforts towards the resumption of compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We hope that the EU will continue to play a coordinating role and work with all parties concerned to help bring about an expeditious political solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.

China looks forward to the EU's continued contribution to the maintenance of peace and stability on the African continent, especially in terms of lending greater support to African-owned peace operations.

China commends the EU for its long-standing assistance in improving the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestine territory. We hope the EU will continue to play a constructive role in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue. Further, China encourages the EU, as a player in the resolution of hotspot issues, to be mindful in fully respecting the sovereignty of the countries concerned, taking into serious consideration the realities of the countries in question, safeguarding the authority of the United Nations in earnest and effectively strengthening coordination and cooperation with other regional organizations.

Secretary-General António Guterres has repeatedly underscored that achieving sustainable and inclusive development is the most effective way to tackle the root causes of conflict once and for all. As the largest provider of official development assistance, the EU should do more to help developing countries in general and war-torn countries in particular so as to recover and rebuild and eliminate the root causes of conflict. We hope that the EU will further increase its international aid efforts, place a greater focus on eradicating hunger and poverty, developing health and education, promoting post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) reconstruction, and channel resources into areas where the most urgent needs exist with a view to making a greater contribution to the efforts of developing countries to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, achieve sustainable development and promote and consolidate peace through development.

China attaches great importance to its relations with the EU and has always seen the Union as an important force in the process of forging a multipolar world. Both sides have extensive common interests and broad prospects for cooperation in maintaining world peace and promoting common development. China is ready to strengthen dialogue and exchanges with the EU, deepen our coordination and cooperation, join hands in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-change-related challenges, jointly safeguard genuine or true multilateralism, strengthen and improve global governance and work hand in hand to safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order on the basis of international law.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I join others in warmly welcoming High Representative Borrell Fontelles to the Security Council today and thank him for his briefing.

In many ways, Norwegian foreign policy starts in Europe. The European Union (EU) and its member States are our close neighbours and friends, with shared values and interests, and this is reflected in our frequent alignment with EU positions and measures, including on key issues on the agenda of the Security Council.

The EU is clearly shouldering its responsibilities as a steadfast promoter of multilateralism and as an implementer of Council-mandated tasks. We recognize the important role the EU has played in transforming Europe from a continent of war into a continent of peace. The EU contributes to advancing the causes

of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.

In Africa, the EU plays a key role in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, security assistance and development. With Norway's long-standing engagement and commitments in Africa, we welcome the High Representative's remarks on this matter. We also look forward to seeing the further development of the strategic partnership between the EU and African Union.

The report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (S/2000/809), known as the Brahimi report, and resolution 1327 (2000) on peace operations called for a clear division of labour between the United Nations and regional organizations. These documents also encourage efforts aimed at promoting synergies, and we welcome the EU's endeavours in this regard.

In Libya, the EU contributes to the enforcement of resolution 1973 (2011) through the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, and the European Union Naval Force Operation Atalanta continues to contribute to enforcing the weapons embargo on Somalia in accordance with resolution 2182 (2014) as well as to protect vessels of the World Food Programme.

The EU has also provided significant financial and technical support for African-led security initiatives and has borne much of the financial support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, where new structures are needed to facilitate stable and more diverse financing.

Norway and the EU share a common vision for a free and democratic Europe. We share the EU's deep concern for the shrinking democratic space and deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus. The forced landing of the passenger plane in May was a blatant violation of international norms and a threat to European security. Norway fully supports the strong and appropriate reactions from the EU.

European security and international law are also undermined by the conflict in Ukraine. Norway welcomes the engagement of the EU in addressing this conflict and its support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Alongside our international partners, we will not accept Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol.

It is of great importance that the EU and the United Nations continue to join forces to respond to global challenges. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a case in point. Throughout the pandemic, the EU has demonstrated solidarity with the rest of the world and its readiness to coordinate actions under the leadership of the United Nations. We welcome the EU's leadership in COVAX and the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, including its distribution and export of vaccines globally and efforts aimed at increasing global vaccine-production capacities.

We would also like to pay tribute to the EU's leading role in the fight against climate change. Norway cooperates closely with EU member States at the United Nations and elsewhere to highlight and address the security risks that arise from climate change.

Finally, we welcome the EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024 and the strong focus on gender equality, human rights and peace and security within and beyond its borders. Council members can rest assured that Norway will continue to advocate these priorities in cooperation with the EU, both inside and outside the Security Council.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, for his briefing.

The European Union (EU) is providing concrete solutions to threats to international peace and security. With regard to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the EU has demonstrated its commitment by initiating the launch of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator in April 2020, together with the World Health Organization (WHO). It has initiated two resolutions that are paving the way for strengthening the WHO and the multilateral health architecture.

The COVAX facility, funded to the tune of more than €2.4 billion by the European Union and its member States, has already made it possible to distribute nearly 20 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to 43 African states. The EU's humanitarian airlift has supported United Nations efforts aimed at ensuring humanitarian access in the context of the pandemic.

In the face of crises, the European Union and its member States are on the move. We collectively deploy more than 5,000 personnel in peace operations. Let me highlight some concrete examples.

In the Sahel, the European Union is providing valuable support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, particularly in terms of equipment and by financing the support mechanism via the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. This support remains insufficient. At the N'Djamena summit, France, like the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel countries, the European Union and the African Union, again called for increased support for the Joint Force from the United Nations and all international partners.

In Syria, the European Union and its member States are the main contributors to the humanitarian response with more than €24 million committed since 2011. Europe will be able to contribute to the financing of reconstruction only after a credible political solution based on resolution 2254 (2015) is firmly in place.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, the European coordinator and the other participants in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action have been engaged in discussions in Vienna for more than two months to enable the United States and Iran to return to full compliance with the 2015 agreement and resolution 2231 (2015). We hope for a swift conclusion.

In the Middle East, the European Union mobilized to bring about a cessation of hostilities during the latest escalation of violence in Gaza. But, for the ceasefire to be sustainable, the underlying causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be addressed by creating the conditions for a resumption of the political process and by implementing the two-State solution. That is the position of France and the European Union, which will continue to work towards that goal.

In Libya, the European Union is fully committed to ending the crisis. It is deploying the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, whose priority is the implementation of the United Nations arms embargo on Libya. The EU can contribute to the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, under the aegis of the United Nations, in full agreement with the Libyan parties. The United Nations should deploy the ceasefire-monitoring mechanism as soon as possible.

Finally, in Afghanistan, the European Union is the leading donor in supporting stability and preserving the gains that benefit the Afghan people. As such, the European Union is fully entitled to contribute to the intra-Afghan political negotiations, which are the only way to peace in Afghanistan.

On the European continent, the hijacking of a flight by the Belarusian authorities was a blatant reminder that repeated human rights violations also have direct consequences for security in Europe. The European Union responded firmly.

In Ukraine, the European Union mobilized to respond to the renewed tension on the eastern border and in Crimea between March and April. Within the Normandy format, France and Germany are making every effort to relaunch the political process.

We also hope that the European Union can continue to be involved in the intra-Cypriot talks conducted under the aegis of the United Nations.

Lastly, the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are joint priorities, as is the protection of civilians. The European Union and its member States are committed to implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular on the women and peace and security, the youth and peace and security and the children and armed conflict agendas.

The Security Council can count on the strong commitment of the European Union and its member States to working with the United Nations, within the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, in all crisis areas and to contributing to building a strong and vibrant multilateralism.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, for his excellent briefing.

Sharing the vision of a rules-based multilateral global governance system, the United Nations and the European Union respond to global crises, threats and challenges that require cooperation and coordination based on universal rules and values. Their partnership covers a variety of issues that are relevant to the challenges facing the world today.

For example, in the area of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and crisis resolution, the United Nations and the European Union work together to help build effective long-term security and governance institutions and to conduct preventive diplomacy initiatives to address emerging crises.

They cooperate closely in providing political, financial and operational assistance to peace processes and peacekeeping operations.

In Africa, for example, the partnership between the United Nations and the European Union manifests itself in the areas of conflict resolution and political, technical and financial support to countries in fragile situations. In that regard, we can cite the strategic advisory support missions and the training and equipping of defence and security forces through the European Union Common Security and Defence Policy missions in Niger and in Mali.

In the area of peacekeeping, my delegation welcomes and appreciates the EU's role in the quest for stability in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa through its support for the African Union Mission in Somalia.

In Libya, the European Union works closely with the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the African Union to help Libyan actors to make genuine progress towards reconciliation through a national dialogue and elections. We hope that the new European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI will further contribute to the fight against breaches of the arms embargo on Libya and to combating the smuggling of migrants in the Mediterranean.

The fight against climate change is an area where the United Nations and the European Union, through pilot projects, are developing tools to combat the risks related to climate fragility. In addition, the EU cooperates with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration in providing advice on how to manage climate-induced displacement.

In addition, with regard to the global response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the European Union and its member States have mobilized €38.5 billion to address the humanitarian, health, social and economic consequences of the health crisis. In 2020, the EU-sponsored pledging conference raised \$16 billion from donors around the world, providing a major boost to the prevention and treatment of and vaccine research for COVID-19.

The United Nations and the European Union pool their efforts to strengthen cooperation on advancing, protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The European Union supports the implementation of the Secretary-General's call to

action to advance the human rights of all human beings. The human rights compliance framework signed with the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel in that regard is an illustrative case.

The adoption of the 2020-2024 Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy is also to be welcomed. The Action Plan includes protecting and empowering individuals; building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies; promoting a global system for human rights and democracy; harnessing the opportunities and challenges of new technologies; and acting by working together. By promoting the rule of law and justice, that partnership is clearly helping to create conditions for the maintenance of peace and security in many regions of the world.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the work of the United Nations should continue to benefit from the partnership support that the Organization has with the European Union, the African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. By drawing on the comparative advantages afforded by those regional organizations, the United Nations will achieve its primary objective of maintaining international peace and security.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Estonia.

I warmly thank the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union (EU), Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, for joining us here today and for highlighting the issues of close cooperation between the Security Council and the European Union in New York, in Brussels and on the ground.

The European Union and the United Nations share the same values and interests. The EU is committed to multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. Estonia is glad that the cooperation between the two organizations has steadily and firmly expanded, as today's world is becoming increasingly interconnected with regard to both its opportunities and its multifaceted challenges. Sitting here as the President to the Security Council and as a representative of an EU member State, I can proudly profess that a strong EU equals a stronger United Nations, and vice versa.

Mr. Borrell Fontelles highlighted respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Those are the values we share and stand up for. We need not be silent when freedoms and human rights are suppressed. We strongly

condemn the Belarusian authorities' blatant attempts to silence all opposition voices, including the episode of plane hijacking, and we demand the immediate release of all political prisoners, whose number is growing rapidly and already extends to over 400.

The situation remains deeply concerning also in Myanmar. We strongly support the five-point consensus of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the work of Special Envoy Burgener in Myanmar.

The EU and its member States have always been strong advocates for a rules-based international order and for international law. Estonia condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine in Donbas, the illegal annexation of Crimea and the occupation of the territories in Georgia. Russia's recent military build-up near Ukraine borders and continuous fuelling of the conflict in Donbas are truly worrisome and have aggravated the security situation in the region. It is also regrettable that Russia, a party to the conflict, has chosen to use the Arria Formula meetings to extensively spread false and divisive narratives about Ukraine.

Let me highlight the fact that the efforts of the United Nations play an important role in advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. As a priority, the EU and its member States are committed to promoting a global, free, open, stable and secure cyberspace, grounded in existing international law, including the Charter of the United Nations in its entirety, international humanitarian law and human rights law.

The EU has actively contributed to peace and security beyond the region and across all continents. In crisis management, the partnership between the EU and the United Nations is crucial. That also includes the work on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, where the EU continues to show leadership also at the regional level.

Estonia welcomes the efforts of the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI in supporting the implementation of the Security Council arms embargo on Libya. We call for the implementation of all necessary measures to allow for the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned ceasefire monitoring mechanism and its international support component to be deployed as soon as possible, as mandated by resolution 2570 (2021).

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the EU and the United Nations have a central role to play in creating conditions for resuming direct negotiations between the parties, especially through the Middle East Quartet. Continued humanitarian aid efforts in the occupied Palestinian territory are also vital.

Regarding Yemen, there is a need for continued, concerted efforts of the EU and the United Nations towards a ceasefire and political talks, as well as to support the development, crisis response and humanitarian assistance in the country.

In the Sahel region, the EU, including Estonia, offers important support to the counter-terrorist efforts of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

The EU, together with its member States, is also the largest donor of humanitarian aid in Syria and the region. Estonia has contributed financially to the humanitarian relief for Syria and the region since the start of the crisis. The fifth Brussels Conference, held earlier this year, once again contributed billions to alleviating the human suffering of Syrian people.

While cooperation between the United Nations and the EU has strengthened in field operations, we are glad that it has also strengthened on political and strategic levels. For example, in Afghanistan, efforts to unitedly promote the rule of law have evolved. Both organizations have affirmed that a sustainable peace can be achieved only through a negotiated and inclusive political settlement. Estonia is extremely worried about the growing level of violence, which has taken a heavy toll on the civilian population. We urge the Taliban to immediately put an end to violence and commit itself to the peace negotiations. The historic momentum for peace and stability that all Afghans have longed for after decades of immense human suffering should not be left unused.

Mr. Borrell mentioned that sanctions are never an end in themselves, but a tool to push for the respect of universal rights. We could not agree more. The EU and the United Nations sanctions are targeted and do not obstruct in any way the fight against the pandemic or the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Finally, there is no doubt that climate change is making the world a more challenging place. The Security Council must do more to fully understand climate-related security risks and integrate that knowledge into all aspects of its work.

I thank Mr. Borrell Fontelles once again for your excellent briefing, which reminded us how deep, important and multifaceted the EU-United Nations cooperation is.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to respond, first and foremost, to the statement delivered by the representative of the United States of America, the tone of which was more bellicose and aggressive towards Russia than the remarks of the majority of our European colleagues. Perhaps because the United States of America is on the other side of the ocean, it does not really care what is happening in Europe, but we are certain that it clearly understands how dangerous such fiery rhetoric and action can be.

I would like once again to call on our sensible European partners to be guided by the interests of their common European home and stop looking for partners across the ocean, as they sometimes do so openly, and choose instead constructive cooperation on an equal footing, without condescension and with respect for the sovereignty and internal affairs of neighbouring countries, and to strive to impartially address the most delicate and dangerous situations on their borders. They must also understand that, without respect for people's choices, including those living in Luhansk and Donetsk, and without direct dialogue with them, it will not be possible to achieve a resolution of the situation in Donbas.

We still trust that we can count on that common-sense approach but, unfortunately, we must come to the conclusion that the European partners have not quite got the hang of it yet, despite the laudable goals that were mentioned.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Borrell Fontelles to respond to comments and possibly questions.

Mr. Borrell Fontelles: I thank you, Sir, once again for allowing me to present today the views of the European Union on international security to the Security Council, which has maximum international responsibility in that regard.

It would be impossible to try to answer all the questions or comment on all the considerations I have heard here. But allow me to say that I am emerging from this exchange even more encouraged than when we started. I am truly grateful to one and all for the comments and expressions of appreciation. I can assure the Council that the European Union is willing to work diligently with each and every one of the countries represented here in order to contribute to global security and prosperity.

That is the purpose of the European Union, and I am also very grateful that many here today have acknowledged the efforts of the European Union to contribute to a safer and more just world. I am particularly thankful for the recognition that the European Union has been the tool for the transformation of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace, which is the most important deliverable and success of what the European Union has represented since its creation.

Allow me to give some general and some specific answers. As many here have noted, multilateral frameworks — and not only those provided by the United Nations — must remain the centre of our efforts. This applies to peace and security, but also to health, especially in these times of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis has shown the importance of reinforcing the World Trade Organization and promoting development in many formats by combating climate change and a long series of items that have been mentioned.

In this regard, it seems difficult to argue seriously that a rules-based world order structured around the principles of international organizations and the key international treaties and declarations is not the heart of the multilateral system, because it is. We must recognize it because we are living through a dangerous juncture in world history. We must understand that we are all part of the same whole, and that we can only survive and prosper by recognizing common interests and goals. We have repeated so many times that no one is safe until everyone is safe. That is true, but at the same time, we have to recognize that it is easier said than done. And we have to increase our efforts to ease international tensions and to return to some kind of stronger cooperation.

In that context, a rules-based multilateral order is at the heart of the return to a more cooperative and peaceful approach. The European Union seeks to work

hand in hand with the United Nations and key regional organizations to that end. I want to pay special tribute to the African Union in that regard, and we look forward to working with many United Nations Member States on a bilateral basis.

I would now like to touch upon some specific issues that I must comment on.

First, with regard to sanctions and criticism about sanctions, I want to say that the restrictive measures that the European Union imposes comply with international law, including the obligations deriving from international human rights law and international humanitarian law. There are key instruments at our disposal to counter breaches of international law, the proliferation of weapons and the flow of arms into war zones, to combat human rights abusers and to target those individuals who seek to undermine the peace process. In that connection, I want to thank the Council members that spoke positively of the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI.

I also note that the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs is not a licence to disregard human rights, and we must invest in conflict prevention. However, European Union sanctions are not punitive, retaliatory or coercive in nature. Rather, they are designed to bring about a change in policy or activity. They are always targeted at policies or activities in order to ensure accountability. Our sanctions are reversible and proportionate to the objective they seek to achieve. As best we can, we reduce adverse humanitarian effects or unintended consequences for non-targeted persons, in particular the civilian populations.

Our sanctions are not intended to impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance and humanitarian activities. We have a system of humanitarian exceptions, which is a standard feature of our sanctions regime and is consistent with the system of exceptions used for United Nations sanctions. However, sanctions applied in the territory of the European Union by its persons and entities do not have extraterritorial applications because we consider the extraterritorial application of sanctions by third States to be contrary to international law. I think that must be clearly stated in response to certain criticisms.

I would like to thank the representative of India for the positive words about the European Union's role, in general, and particularly in the Balkans, Africa and Iran, as well as in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of

Action (JCPOA). The JCPOA was also mentioned by others, especially Russia and China, as they are part of the JCPOA Joint Commission, which I have the honour to chair as Coordinator.

We recently held a summit between the European Union and India in an excellent atmosphere. It led to positive outcomes and we are forging a strategic partnership that can be a force multiplier for the global good in this century, as Prime Minister Modi said. I think that this meeting was a turning point in our strategic partnership, with a particular emphasis on connectivity, trade and investment. I think that the Indo-Pacific will be at the centre of our cooperation on foreign and security policy. To keep this region stable, open and rules-based, working on security, especially maritime security and counter-terrorism is a very important part of our common endeavour.

The same goes for the comments from the representative of Viet Nam.

I would now like to turn to Libya, which has been mentioned. We need to do our utmost to promote stability in Libya. We are engaging with the United Nations in its efforts in that regard, as well as with the Government of National Unity. We thank the Special Representative for his efforts and hope that the forthcoming Berlin Conference on Libya will give new impetus to the promotion of security and stability in Libya, which is an important part of our security. We remain very active and ready to support a political solution towards the maintenance of a peaceful environment in Libya. We have deployed several instruments in that regard — including the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI, which was commended by many here today — in support of the implementation of the Security Council arms embargo. We are probably one of the few international actors that are regularly reporting on their efforts to help implement the arms embargo, which remains crucial for Libya's stability. I wish that those still harbouring doubts on the role played by European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI would display equal zeal in helping to ensure that the arms embargo is effectively implemented. That would be a great contribution to those efforts.

I would like to talk about China, because the Chinese representative made a very important comment. I want to stress the extent to which the European Union values its relationship with China. China's impressive

economic development, which has lifted so many millions of people out of poverty in the past 40 years, constitutes a historic record in the history of humankind. We acknowledge that extraordinary success.

We also agree with the Ambassador's statement on multilateralism. We agree that no country can be fight today's challenges or be multilateral alone, so I think that we must look for ways to establish the same understanding of what multilateralism means in theory and in practice.

On Hong Kong, we agree on the principle of "one country, two systems" which, by the way, comes from an international agreement. However, we are very much concerned by the erosion of democratic principles in Hong Kong due to recent changes in the electoral system that, in our understanding and according to the question of fundamental freedoms, democratic principles and political pluralism, are central to Hong Kong's identity and prosperity and are recognized under the international agreement on "one country, two systems".

I would like to thank the representative of China for his words of appreciation regarding the European Union's support in Palestine, as well as our role in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and our efforts to keep it alive. I think that there is still a lot of work we must do together in order to solve the underlying conflict in Israel and Palestine and to ensure a return to the Iran nuclear agreement, which contributes greatly to global security and to the security of our member States, Europe and the broader Middle East region in particular.

We will continue working together on the root causes of conflicts, on sustainable development and especially on climate change, which cannot be resolved without China's strong involvement.

Finally, I wish to make some comments regarding Africa. Africa is our first partner in the field of peace and security. We are active in all crises and 10 of our 16 missions are deployed across the African continent. We have police officers, soldiers and civilian advisers from Europe training more than 30,000 African military, police and judicial personnel. We are so extensively engaged with promoting peace and stability in Africa that it would take too long to list everything we are doing. Nevertheless, we strongly believe that African States must be the main actors for their own stability and security. We need African solutions to African

problems, but it is important to keep in mind that solid governance and development are integral in restoring security and overcoming crises.

My final remarks are addressed to the representative of the United States. This is a special time in our relationship with the United States. Just today, President Biden arrived on the European continent. Although he has landed on an island that has just left the European Union, it is still part of Europe. Next week, we will be holding important meetings at the highest level between President Biden and the Presidents of the European Union institutions, as well as several member States that have the honour to participate. I think it will be a good way to relaunch transatlantic relations from both sides of the Atlantic. It is important to mark the fact that we are starting a new relationship and a new

era in terms of transatlantic relations that will benefit the rest of the world.

The European Union strongly believes that the future of humankind will depend strongly on our capacity to cooperate and to work together to overcome conflicts and build a shared future for all of us. This institution, namely the Security Council, plays such an important role in that endeavour that I must once again reiterate our will to strongly cooperate with it in order to achieve prosperity for us all.

The President: I thank Mr. Borrell Fontelles for the clarifications he has provided.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.