

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini in New York

New York City, 8 May 2017

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

I could not think of a better year to celebrate Europe Day here in New York with António (Guterres), showing the strong, I would say the strongest possible partnership between the European Union and the United Nations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

for the future of our Union, which I believe unites us even more than the celebration of our past.

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

Thank you very much for joining us.