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## **The role of the EU within the UN**

### **European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2015 on the role of the EU within the UN — how to better achieve EU foreign policy goals (2015/2104(INI))**

(2017/C 366/05)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on the EU and the UN, in particular its recommendation to the Council of 2 April 2014 on the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly <sup>(1)</sup> and its resolution of 11 May 2011 on the EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations <sup>(2)</sup>,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 22 June 2015 on the EU priorities for the 70th UN General Assembly,
- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
- having regard to the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on the participation of the European Union in the work of the United Nations <sup>(3)</sup>, which grants the EU the right to intervene in the UN General Assembly, to present proposals and amendments orally which will be put to a vote at the request of a Member State, and to exercise the right to reply,
- having regard to the first-ever statement, made on 14 February 2014, by the President of the Security Council on the role the EU has played in maintaining international peace and security <sup>(4)</sup>,
- having regard to the declaration of the Durban World Conference of 2001 against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,
- having regard to the study published in March 2015 by the European Parliament's Directorate-General for External Policies, 'Reforming the United Nations: State of Play, Ways Forward',
- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Development, the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on Budgetary Control, the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (A8-0308/2015),

### ***The goals and global strengths of the EU***

- A. whereas the future of the European Union is linked with global peace, security, development and human rights; whereas the challenges the EU faces need global solutions, and global issues need European action;
- B. whereas the principles and goals of the EU's external policy are enshrined in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union, and are closely interlinked with those of the UN; whereas Article 21 TEU expressly calls for respect for the principles of the UN Charter and international law;

<sup>(1)</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2014)0259.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 377 E, 7.12.2012, p. 66.

<sup>(3)</sup> A/RES/65/276 of 3 May 2011 on participation of the European Union in the work of the United Nations.

<sup>(4)</sup> S/PRST/2014/4 of 14 February 2014 — statement by the President of the Security Council on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organisations in maintaining international peace and security.

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- C. whereas the EU has a unique potential to mobilise resources across the full range of diplomatic, security, defence, economic, development and humanitarian instruments, in full compliance with the provisions of the UN charter; whereas using these instruments on the basis of a comprehensive approach allows the EU a unique flexibility in terms of effectively addressing the most challenging security goals;
- D. whereas the EU actively participates, under UN auspices, in the promotion of peace, security and progress, through its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP);
- E. whereas the EU safeguards its values, fundamental interests, security, independence and integrity and acts in order to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, and with the aims of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe adopted in 1990; whereas the EU is part of the collective UN security system, also as one of the regional arrangements foreseen under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter;
- F. whereas the EU fosters the sustainable economic, social and environmental progress of developing countries, with the primary aims of eradicating poverty, promoting long-term peace and stability and combating social inequalities, and provides humanitarian assistance to populations, countries and regions that are confronted with all types of crises, whether natural or human-made;
- G. whereas the EU is a leading actor in different interrelated policy areas: trade, development, humanitarian relief, the environment and human rights;
- H. whereas the EU works for environmental sustainability by promoting international measures and actions to preserve and improve the quality of the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources;
- I. whereas the EU also plays a leading role in environmental policies, notably in the fight against climate change, not only by being in the vanguard and setting itself ambitious targets, but also by unfailingly exercising advocacy in global negotiations for binding agreements and concrete and measurable actions;
- J. whereas the EU strengthens the foundation of social sustainability and good governance by consolidating, supporting and promoting democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law;
- K. whereas, in accordance with its treaties, the EU promotes an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance, and is committed to an effective multilateralism having the UN at its core; whereas this commitment is rooted in the conviction that, if it is to respond successfully to global crises, challenges and threats, the international community needs an efficient multilateral system founded on universal rights and values;
- L. whereas the main emphasis of the EU's external policy has been on bilateral relations and on cooperation and partnerships with countries, groups of countries and other regional and international organisations all over the world; whereas special attention has been paid over the last decades to the geopolitical goals and concerns in the EU's Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods; whereas the EU also maintains special relationships with, and, in its actions, devotes particular attention to, the challenges in African countries;
- M. whereas in a context of growing global interdependence the EU must strengthen its role both in bilateral relationships and in multilateral forums;

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- N. whereas the EU has been involved in, and plays an important role in, international negotiations and mediation, in particular in the cases of the E3/EU3+3 and Iran negotiations and the Middle East Peace Process;
- O. whereas, as the largest trading bloc in the world, the EU plays a strong role in bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements, and has developed active trade policy measures for promoting economic growth, poverty reduction and protection of the environment and of natural resources;
- P. whereas the EU and its Member States are the largest financial contributor to the UN general budget, as well as to its humanitarian assistance, Official Development Assistance (ODA) and peacekeeping operations; whereas EU development policies are of great importance owing to their active promotion of poverty reduction and of economic, social and environmental sustainability, thus strengthening peace and security; whereas the EU is party to more than 50 UN multilateral agreements and conventions, as the only non-state participant;
- Q. whereas the EU is one of the most dedicated defenders and promoters of human rights, fundamental freedoms, cultural values and diversity, democracy and the rule of law; whereas provisions relating to those principles are included in all its bilateral partnerships and have a central position in its multilateral policy; whereas the EU has always been a very strong supporter of international justice;
- R. whereas the EU plays an important role in supporting UN operations in areas of mutual concern, in particular in the protection of civilians and especially of women and children affected by armed conflict;
- S. whereas equality between women and men is a basic value of the EU that is recognised in its Treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights; whereas the EU has assumed the responsibility of integrating gender equality in all its activities and policy areas, including in external and development cooperation policies;
- T. whereas humankind has common values and interests; whereas there should be fair sharing of the burden and the benefits when solving common problems and promoting common goals and values;

### ***The United Nations system***

- U. whereas the UN system is the main global forum for improving global governance, and as such represents the best forum in which to promote the EU's values and interests;
- V. whereas the main goal after World War II was maintaining peace and security; whereas the promotion of economic and social development and human rights had a central place in the Charter; whereas environmental concerns have emerged on the agenda of the UN since the early 1970's; whereas in 1987 the Brundtland report 'Our Common Future' defined the concept of sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; whereas at the Rio Conference (UNCED) in 1992 development and environmental policies were merged into a combination of effective poverty reduction and promotion of sustainable development all over the world;
- W. whereas the UN system covers all areas of cooperation, with the Security Council at its core being primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security, assisted by subsidiary and advisory bodies;

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- X. whereas the UN system is made up of 19 specialised agencies, among them the FAO, the IFAD, the ILO, the IMF, UNESCO, UNIDO, the WHO and the World Bank Group, together with 11 funds and programmes, among them UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women and the WFP <sup>(1)</sup>, as well as 9 functional commissions, 5 regional commissions and a number of other similar bodies; whereas organisations like the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are also linked to the UN system;
- Y. whereas most of the above agencies, funds, programmes, commissions and committees work under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly, to which some of them report;
- Z. whereas the EU and its Member States have a crucial role in promoting the principles and goals of the UN and solving the common problems of humanity; whereas, on the other hand, Europe needs global partners for solving its own problems in areas such as security, the protection of the environment, human rights, migration, safeguard of the right to asylum, and financial instability;
- AA. whereas the EU has a special responsibility for peacekeeping, development and human rights where its neighbourhood is concerned;
- AB. whereas it is crucial that actions undertaken in the framework of the UN respect international law; whereas crimes perpetrated under a UN mandate are extremely harmful to the organisation's credibility and should not enjoy impunity;
- AC. whereas countries are divided into geographical areas, which often leads to countries voting as a bloc; whereas states which are members of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) are often systematic violators of human rights themselves, thereby undermining the effectiveness and credibility of the UNHRC as a whole;
- AD. whereas the profits from looting and smuggling activities related to cultural and religious sites and objects in Iraq and Syria on the part of ISIS/Da'esh are being used to help fund ISIS/Da'esh terrorist activities; whereas UNESCO and its Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property have a central role to play in ensuring emergency protection of the Syrian and Iraqi cultural heritage;
- AE. whereas the EU and the UN engage in close cooperation in the most delicate crisis scenarios, in particular in the Middle East and North Africa; whereas their effort must be further enhanced with a view to finding peaceful political solutions to such crises;
- AF. whereas the discussion and decision on the renewal of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) are scheduled for 2015 at the UN General Assembly; whereas Parliament has called on the Assembly to renew the IGF's mandate and to strengthen both its resources and the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance;

### ***The EU within the UN system***

1. Recalls that the EU and its Member States share the values and principles of the UN Charter as stated in Article 21(1) TEU and have a crucial role in promoting those principles as well as the goals of the UN, through the external action of the Union; considers that the EU needs global partners if it is to succeed in achieving its foreign policy goals, notably in the fields of peace and security, terrorism, organised crime, regional conflicts, state failures and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;

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<sup>(1)</sup> FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation; IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural development; ILO: International Labour Organisation; IMF: International Monetary Fund; UNESCO: UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; UNIDO: UN Industrial Development Organisation; WHO: World Health Organisation; UNCTAD: UN Conference on Trade and Development; UNDP: UN Development Programme; UNEP: UN Environment Programme; UNFPA: UN Population Fund; UNHCR: Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICEF: UN Children's Fund; WFP: World Food Programme.

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2. Considers the security environment of the EU to be increasingly unstable and volatile owing to the large number of longstanding or newly emerging security challenges; regards the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the conflicts in Syria and Iraq and the rise of the ISIS terrorist organisation, the Libyan crisis and the terrorist threat in Africa (in particular in the Sahel, Libya and the Horn of Africa) as serious global threats requiring global responses; considers that the EU cannot deal with those threats on its own but needs the support of international partners;
3. Welcomes the fact that the EU and its Member States play an active part and contribute to the work of the UN system in different ways and formats, which should be more visible;
4. Welcomes as well the EU's major contribution to development and humanitarian relief around the world; recalls that the EU and its Member States are, taken together, the world's biggest contributor to development and humanitarian aid;
5. Recalls that the EU has become a real international actor and accordingly has 'enhanced observer' status at the UN, with the right to speak at UN General Assembly meetings in debates among representatives of major groups and before individual states, the right to submit proposals and amendments, the right of reply, and the right to raise points of order and circulate documents;
6. Recalls, in addition, that within the UN the EU is represented by a multiplicity of actors: the President of the European Council, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European Commission and the EU delegations, as well as by its 28 Member States, two of which (France and the United Kingdom) are permanent veto-holding members of the UN Security Council (UNSC); insists on the fact that according to the Treaty the EU Member States are obliged to coordinate their action in all international forums;

#### ***How to better achieve EU foreign policy goals within the UN***

7. Is of the conviction that, in order to better achieve its foreign policy goals as enshrined in the Treaty, the EU should strive to strengthen global governance inside the UN system and to increase its own and its Member States' influence within that system; recalls the EU's commitment to actively support a comprehensive reform of the UN system in order to strengthen its legitimacy, its regional representation, and its transparency, accountability and effectiveness in responding to the complex, multi-faceted challenges of today; stresses in particular the importance of revitalising the work of the General Assembly;
8. Emphasises that, within the General Assembly, the EU should play an enhanced role that implies sufficient visibility and policy leverage, enabling it to better execute its international obligations, in line with the above mentioned General Assembly resolution of 3 May 2011;
9. Reiterates its support for the role of parliaments and regional assemblies in the UN system;
10. Calls on the Security Council members to review and revise, in close cooperation with the General Assembly, the opaque process of selection of the UN Secretary-General, and to ensure equitable opportunities as between men and women candidates for this post; calls on all UN bodies, and notably the Security Council, to dedicate sufficient attention to gender mainstreaming within the UN, and on EU Member States to be in the forefront of this effort by encouraging and promoting women candidates; expresses its wish that a woman be elected as the next UN Secretary-General; calls on the EU to support UN Women in taking into account discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression;
11. Stresses the EU's current priorities, set for the 70th UN General Assembly session, which reiterate the Union's long-standing demand that the UN should streamline its structures, budget and working methods, without shying away from difficult topics such as the reform of the Security Council;
12. Stresses that the General Assembly, which represents the governments of all member countries, must have ways and means to give direction to the UN system and coordinate all its activities;

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13. Is convinced that the Security Council must be reformed in order to better reflect the new world reality and to more effectively meet present and future security challenges; encourages countries having the right of veto on the UN Security Council to refrain from exercising their veto in situations of genocide and crimes against humanity;

14. Recalls, considering the contribution of the EU to peace and security architecture in the world and the Lisbon Treaty's objective of enhancing the European foreign policy, the long-term goal of the EU having a seat on an enlarged Security Council, and reiterates its call for a Europe-wide debate on its reform; reiterates its call on the Vice-President/High Representative (VP/HR) to seek common EU positions on issues within the remit of the Security Council, and to improve the existing cooperation mechanisms aimed at ensuring that EU Member States sitting on the Security Council defend common EU positions in that forum; recalls that, according to Article 34 TEU, EU members of the UNSC shall keep other Member States and the High Representative informed, and defend the positions and interests of the EU; further recalls that where the EU has a defined position on a UNSC agenda item, those states shall request that the High Representative be invited to present the Union's position;

15. Recalls that Chapter VIII of the UN Charter furthers an enhanced role for regional and sub-regional organisations within the UN, and calls on the EU and the OSCE to aim for their and other regional organisations' greater involvement in global governance;

16. Considers that, through further cooperation with the UN, the EU should take greater advantage of partnerships with the UN's specialised agencies, funds, programmes, commissions and committees; calls for a strengthening of EU coordination on the boards of these bodies to ensure that the EU speaks with a single voice;

17. Stresses that, besides these necessary reforms to be carried out within the UN, a better achievement of the EU's foreign policy goals, including the promotion of fundamental values, presupposes a more effective coordination of the various dimensions of all of its external policy, both bilateral and multilateral; reiterates its call for stronger visibility of EU action and assistance in all multilateral forums and on the ground;

18. Calls on the EU to more effectively coordinate its work in the field of humanitarian aid, e.g. through ECHO, with the respective UN agencies, in order to create optimal efficiency with limited resources and avoid unnecessary overlap;

19. Calls on the relevant EU and UN institutions to fully respect and implement the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA); asks the Commission to report to Parliament on the implementation of FAFA and the related guidelines, and to identify areas needing improvement and make relevant proposals in this regard;

20. Stresses the importance of EU-UNDP cooperation on aid effectiveness; underlines the commitment of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and encourages all states, as well as private sector actors, to commit to it;

21. Believes that the European Court of Human Rights has contributed very successfully to the progress Europe has made in terms of respect for human rights and can serve as an example for other regions;

22. Calls for the improvement of preventive and early warning tools and enhanced UN mediation capabilities, with coherent and achievable mandates for peace-building and peace-keeping operations that include a human rights component and clear exit strategies; encourages EU Member States to provide more substantial support to peace-building and peace-keeping operations, and calls on the EU to strengthen its mediation efforts in conflict resolution; bearing in mind the recent atrocities and human rights violations perpetrated by some extremist and terrorist groups, as well as ongoing sexual violence in conflict, including rape as a weapon of war; urges the Security Council, in line with the 'Responsibility to

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Protect' doctrine, to define an ambitious set of tools and means in order to ensure effective prevention of these atrocities and uphold the rule of law and of international humanitarian law, and to prompt UN Member States to combat human trafficking and clamp down on recruitment to and funding for terrorist groups by preventing and suppressing the recruiting, organising, transporting, and equipping of terrorist fighters and the financing of their travel and activities;

23. Calls for the EU to support a strengthening of the coherence, synergies and complementarities between the reviews of peace operations, the UN peacebuilding architecture and UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; stresses the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction; welcomes, in this context, the fact that the Commission has reviewed its humanitarian aid policy, which now states that international humanitarian law and/or human rights law may justify providing safe abortions to female war rape victims;

24. Encourages the EU to promote a broad definition of the human security concept, linking it more closely to human rights, gender equality and human development;

25. Is of the conviction that the EU must demonstrate strong and committed support to the International Criminal Court, notably by strengthening and expanding its relationship with the UN, especially the Security Council, and by ensuring speedy ratification by the EU Member States of the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute which define the crime of aggression; recalls that primary responsibility for bringing offenders to justice lies with states themselves, and supports ICC jurisdiction where national authorities are unable or unwilling to genuinely prosecute the most serious crimes of concern to the international community;

26. Supports the reinforcement of EU-UN operational cooperation in crisis management, also by the EU working together with the UN on both the sharing of analyses (in order to come to a joint analysis) and the planning of peace and security operations (in order to facilitate the operational aspects);

27. Considers that more should be done to ensure that UN member states honour their promises to provide humanitarian aid by publishing regular overviews of compliance with obligations;

28. Welcomes the EU's commitment to greater responsibility and transparency in the arms trade, and supports the promotion of the universalisation and full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty as well as the implementation of the outcome of the First Conference of States; requests the EU to continue to promote the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and thus the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament, in accordance with that treaty's own Article VI; further requests the EU to actively take steps towards global disarmament;

29. Underlines the importance of the EU continuing to actively promote equality and non-discrimination; welcomes the first-ever UN Security Council meeting on LGBTI rights, held on 24 August 2015, which condemned the attacks on and killings of LGBTI people in the Middle East by ISIS; encourages the Security Council to take further account of violations of LGBTI rights;

30. Recalls the EU's position on zero tolerance for the death penalty; underlines the importance of the EU continuing to advance the moratorium on the death penalty;

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31. Is of the conviction that the economic, social, environmental and development dimensions of the UN system must be substantially strengthened by ensuring that the UN bodies take a more political approach and improving cooperation between them, and by securing a more effective and transparent use of available resources; believes that this must be achieved in the first instance by means of a structural and functional reform of the principal organ responsible for this task under the UN Charter, namely the Economic and Social Council; calls on the EU institutions and Member States to consider the possibility of strengthening their role in the Economic and Social Council by developing it into a Sustainable Development Council;

32. Welcomes the creation of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development, which has the role of providing political leadership, guidance and recommendations on development policy related to the three pillars (social, economic and environmental) of sustainable development; is convinced that the HLPF must become the main decision-making body for all development policy, thus ensuring coordinated and efficient assessment of needs and adoption of necessary roadmaps, decisions and binding measures related to the post-2015 sustainable development framework; insists on the need to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN summit in September 2015;

33. Is of the conviction, in light of the recurring humanitarian crises linked to refugees and migrants which are causing much human suffering, and considering that the sustainable development of the countries of origin could ultimately provide a solution to the humanitarian crisis, that the work of all agencies related to this concern should be coordinated;

34. Takes the view that the challenges presented by the humanitarian crisis linked to refugees are issues which need to be managed in a comprehensive fashion, in a spirit of solidarity within the EU and in close cooperation with the UN and its agencies;

35. Calls on the EU and the UN to step up their joint efforts with a view to reaching an ambitious and legally binding agreement at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris 2015, and to ensuring that the swift implementation of COP21 will follow;

36. Takes the view that the work of the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation could also be coordinated as parts of the UN system, while maintaining their present decision-making structures, in order to ensure that their respective decisions are taken and actions carried out in an accountable, efficient, coherent and non-redundant fashion;

37. Supports the goal of establishing, at multilateral level, an investment protection regime, with a new system whereby the jurisdiction of national courts is respected, and calls on the Commission to incorporate this objective into its negotiating agenda for the drafting of agreements on investment; is of the opinion that, should a permanent international court for the settlement of investment disputes be created, it could be located within the UN system, and should be based on the rights and obligations of those subject to the court, with an emphasis on the OECD principles for multinational enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; considers that the UN system provides useful templates for such a system, in particular for questions of financing;

38. Considers it necessary to bring about the conclusion of the WTO Doha Development round, and believes that the UN can use its unique position to ensure that those talks are a success for developing countries; believes that in this regard the UN could work alongside the WTO, as well as providing advice and guidance for developing countries in terms of promoting a strategy for trade and investment, with the EU as a key player;

39. Is aware of the need to strengthen and implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; urges the EU to contribute to a successful outcome of the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on transnational corporations and human rights;

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40. Believes that the UN should enhance all human wellbeing-related matters; is of the view that these include cultural sustainability and the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, through the integration of education, tourism, cultural diplomacy, protection of heritage, the creative sector and scientific research in the policy-making approach;

41. Recommends ensuring cooperation between the EU and the UN for education in emergency programmes in the event of humanitarian crises, armed conflicts and natural disasters, by continuing to support programmes such as UNICEF's Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition, the UNHCR's quality education programme in refugees camps, and the educational work of UNRWA;

42. Welcomes the organising into clusters of the work of the Commission appointed in 2014, giving the VP/HR the strengthened responsibility of coordinating the external policy of the EU, in close cooperation with other EU institutions; stresses that policies with a global dimension must be at the heart of the work of this specific cluster;

43. Calls on the VP/HR to include in her/his annual report on the CFSP a comprehensive section on the promotion of the EU's global foreign policy goals;

44. Is of the opinion that Parliament must be in a position to address the global challenges in the same deep and comprehensive way as the Commission, and to organise its work accordingly; encourages all committees of Parliament whose remit covers policies having an external and global dimension to forward their opinions on the relevant section of the report of the VP/HR to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, which has responsibility for this report;

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45. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the United Nations General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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