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United in Diversity: The EU in the UN System

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The European Union is striving to increase its influence in the United Nations. Its activity is limited by, among others, not having the right to vote and submit its own draft initiatives. A further strengthening of its role would be beneficial for the Union as a whole and its Member States, which alone now play a minor role in the United Nations. It would also translate into a reduction of the time and resources devoted to coordinate activities. Obstacles to this change include the rules of the functioning of UN organs and specialised agencies and the ambitions of EU member countries or others that are wary of a stronger Union at the expense of their own position.

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The European Union consistently puts an emphasis on its commitment to multilateralism.¹ Because of this, the United Nations is its key partner. The EU and the UN share common goals (including developing peaceful cooperation between states, fighting for respect for human rights), spheres of involvement (e.g., counteracting climate change, offering development aid), and the membership of all 27 EU Member States in the United Nations. Cooperation between the organisations is visible in many areas, including peacekeeping (e.g., in Mali, cooperation within the Madrid Quartet) and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Despite an overlap of competences, EU and UN actions tend to complement each other rather than compete (e.g., UNMIK and EULEX missions in Kosovo; EU encouraging third countries to adopt International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards).

The UN is the only international actor whose primary role is recognised by the Union. In the case of other organisations, the EU rather affirms its support for specific actions, such as the role of the OSCE in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process.² This is indicated by statements by EU representatives on such topics as defining the UN as the central element of the international order,³ and in the provisions of EU treaties. The latter define the UN as the main forum for the multilateral resolution of problems common to the EU, other organisations, and third countries,⁴ and underline the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and its members for the maintenance of international peace and security.⁵

The activity of the EU to date in the UN demonstrates the increasing involvement of the Union in this forum.

The activity of the EU to date in the UN demonstrates the increasing involvement of the Union in this forum. Its representation at the UN, provided by EU institutions and the Member States, is extremely complex, but largely effective. The EU uses all possible ways to increase its visibility in the UN (including financing, concluding working agreements), but the

limit to its initiatives are the roles played only by the Member States, especially in the Security Council.

The EU's Status at the UN

The Union itself is not a member of the United Nations, and its role and powers in the various UN organs and specialised agencies are shaped differently. They depend on the specificity of a given element of the UN system and political arrangements (with the EU Member States and third countries). Nevertheless, the status of the Union at the United Nations stands out from other regional organisations such as the African Union or Arab League.⁶

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¹ *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on Strengthening the EU's Contribution to Rules-Based Multilateralism*, Brussels, 17 February 2021, p. 4; "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy," Brussels, 2016, pp. 8, 15.

² Council of the European Union, "Nagorno-Karabakh: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union," 19 November 2020.

³ Council of the European Union, "EU priorities at the United Nations during the 76th United Nations General Assembly, September 2021 - September 2022- Council conclusions," Brussels, 12 July 2021; "Shared Vision ...," *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 15.

⁴ Article 21(1) para. 2 TEU.

⁵ *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Section 13. Declaration concerning the common foreign and security policy.*

⁶ "Intergovernmental and Other Organizations," <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/intergovernmental-and-other-organizations>.

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In 1974, the EU was the first non-state entity to obtain permanent observer status at the United Nations General Assembly (GA).⁷ Under Resolution 65/276⁸ of 3 May 2011, it is the only organisation with enhanced observer status in the GA and the meetings and conferences organised by it. This status entitles the EU to be directly involved in the circulation of documents and communication related to the work of the General Assembly. Another feature that distinguishes the EU from other organisations is that it allows its representative (the President of the European Council) to speak in the general debate at the beginning of the GA session and to have one reply, as well as to orally submit proposals or amendments to resolutions (only the state may submit them to a vote). Thus, the Union, despite its limitations, has the means to set the tone of the discussions, which is not available to other regional organisations.

The EU's status in the Security Council contrasts with the Union's powers in the GA. In the UNSC, the EU is forced to act through its Member States because as an international organisation, it cannot become a member of the Security Council and there is no status of permanent observer. However, the Treaty on European Union (TEU) obliges EU states seated on the Security Council to defend EU positions and interests there.⁹ After Brexit, up to five EU Members may potentially sit on the UNSC: France, as a permanent member, and up to four non-permanent members elected for a two-year term—two from the Western European and Others Group, one from the Eastern European Group, and Cyprus as a representative of the Asia and Pacific Group.¹⁰ If the Union has defined a position on an issue on the UNSC agenda, the participating Member States request that the High Representative (HR) for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) be invited to present its position.¹¹ The TEU also imposes an obligation directly on the Member States of the Security Council to act in concert and provide comprehensive information to other EU members and the HR (in practice, this translates into weekly meetings).¹² This commitment is particularly important from the point of view of the Member States that play a lesser role in the international arena (such as Latvia or Cyprus, which are the only EU countries that have not yet been members of the Security Council).

The EU has a permanent observer in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), enabling Union participation in meetings, though without the right to vote or propose draft resolutions or candidates. The lack of a special role for the EU in other UN bodies, such as the Secretariat, the Trusteeship Council, and the International Court of Justice, results from the specificity of their functioning and tasks.

At the level of specialised agencies of the United Nations, the status of the Union varies. It is the most advanced in the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), where the EU exercises membership competences (e.g., in making statements, voting) jointly with its Member States. More often, the EU plays an observer role, such as in the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO),¹³ or its status remains non-formalised, for example, at the World Bank (see chart at the end). In cases where it is not granted formal status, the Union is often a partner or observer that is invited *ad hoc* to meetings. It is also

At the level of specialised agencies of the United Nations, the status of the Union varies.

⁷ At that time it was the European Economic Community. UN General Assembly Resolution 3208(XXIX), *Status of the European Economic Community in the General Assembly*, 11 October 1974 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/189830>.

⁸ UN General Assembly Resolution 65/276, *Participation of the European Union in the work of the United Nations*, 11 October 1974.

⁹ Article 34(2) para. TEU.

¹⁰ S. Borchmeyer, W. Mir, "Increasing the Impact of the European Union at the United Nations in New York," Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2020, p. 21.

¹¹ Article 34(2) para. 3 TEU.

¹² Article 34(2) para. 2 TEU; European Parliamentary Research Service, "European Union involvement in the United Nations system. Broad partnership based on shared commitment to multilateralism," Brussels, 2020, p. 16.

¹³ European Parliamentary Research Service, "European Union involvement ...," *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 25.

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common practice to cooperate on technical matters through working agreements between the European Commission and UN specialised agencies.

The EU is also distinguished from other regional organisations by the more than 50 UN conventions it has acceded to¹⁴ (namely, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992, the UN Convention against Corruption of 2005, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006—in the latter, the EU is the only party-organisation). This is a considerable achievement because, as with its status in various UN bodies and specialised agencies, the Union has limited room for manoeuvre here. First of all, the possibility of accession to individual treaties depends on the inclusion of a RIO (REIO) clause allowing regional integration organisations to participate (such a provision appears in newer agreements). An additional factor is the scope of the agreement: When it goes beyond the competences of the EU, parallel ratification by the EU Member States is necessary, which may prevent accession to the agreement despite the political will expressed by the EU institutions.

Representation of the EU at the UN

The Union does not have a single representative at the United Nations. This is related to the division of competences between the EU and its Member States. Before the entry into force of the Lisbon

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Treaty in 2009, it was usually represented by the Commission in matters for which it had exclusive competence, and in other cases by the rotating presidency.¹⁵ The treaty strengthened the EU's external representation, including by introducing the HR and delegations in third countries and with international organisations. When assessing the reforms introduced by the Lisbon Treaty through the prism of the EU's representation in the UN, the effect seems doubtful. Outside the GA, Member States usually take the floor before the Union, thus the EU acting alone has limited ability to set the tone of the discussion. Therefore, entrusting speaking on its behalf to the states remains more beneficial for the EU. The Lisbon Treaty has instead maintained the fragmentation of representation. The main difference is that it is now shared less between the EU and its Member States and more between the various Community institutions and bodies.¹⁶ This further complicates the establishment of the EU's status in the UN system. Currently—simplified greatly—the Union is represented by:

- the President of the European Council—at the level of heads of state in matters relating to CFSP, including at the UNGA¹⁷;
- the High Representative—at the ministerial level in the field of CFSP, in international organisations and at international conferences, including, for example, meetings of the Security Council¹⁸;
- the delegations—as permanent EU representations to international organisations that are responsible for, among others, contacts with the UN Secretariat, as well as with the Security Council¹⁹;

¹⁴ "EU at the UN General Assembly," <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/unga/>.

¹⁵ A. Medinilla, P. Veron, V. Mazzara, "EU-UN Cooperation: Confronting Change in the Multilateral System," *ECDPM Discussion Paper*, No 260, 2019, p. 7.

¹⁶ The preamble to UNGA Resolution 65/276 on EU participation in the work of the United Nations of 3 May 2011, indicates that the tasks of the rotating presidency have been taken over by the president of the European Council, the HR, the Commission, and delegations.

¹⁷ "EU at the UN General Assembly," *op. cit.*

¹⁸ European Parliamentary Research Service, "European Union involvement ...," *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

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- the Commission—in matters not falling within the scope of CFSP, for example, at IMO.²⁰

Those general rules are clarified through *ad hoc* political arrangements between the main EU officials (e.g., between Herman Van Rompuy, the European Council president at the time, and José Manuel

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Barroso, the Commission president in 2010) and practice (e.g., on essential issues, the delegation gives way to the European Council president or the HR).²¹ In addition, in formats in which the Union does not directly participate, its states speak on behalf of the Community or request that representatives of the Union be invited to deliberations (e.g., UNSC). A significant limitation is the large number of SB meetings held behind closed doors, which limits participation to the countries sitting on the Council.

Attempts to include representatives of other EU countries in their delegations have been blocked by third countries.²²

The most important improvement introduced by the Lisbon Treaty remains the reduction of the role of the rotating presidency in favour of the EU delegation. The HR and the Commission are responsible for establishing cooperation with the UN and its specialised agencies²³, and the practical manifestation of their activities is the functioning of EU delegations in New York, Vienna, Geneva, Paris, and Rome. This guarantees adequate continuity, coherence, and organisational facilities for the Community's activities. This is especially important from the perspective of smaller Member States, which were not able to ensure adequate representation on their own in all forums and often requested the help of other countries in this regard.²⁴ Delegations ensure regular contacts with the UN and third countries. This cooperation ensures that the UN and third countries avoid difficulties in determining which of the EU representatives (the Commission, HR, European Council president) they should turn to and allows for the creation of interpersonal relations, facilitating joint actions.

Prospects for Raising the Status of the EU at the UN

Due to the increasing role played by the EU on the international stage, it seems natural to further increase its involvement in the work of the various formats in the United Nations. However, the granting of enhanced status to the EU in the GA has not come with powers to act independently of the Member States. In itself, the change did not translate into an increased EU role in the other UN bodies and specialised agencies. For example, the EU as one of the largest donors of development aid in the world continues to cooperate with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) through informal arrangements. The Union cannot be a member of its executive board (Member States speak on its behalf), but only of the boards of individual development projects or funds, which it implements in cooperation with the UNDP, which is disproportionate to the aid granted.²⁵

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At the moment, raising the status of the EU at the UN to equal status as the states is unlikely due to the lack of political will of UN member countries (both third and EU Member States) and the need to

²⁰ Articles 15(6) TEU, 27(2) TEU, 221(1) TFEU, 17(1) TEU.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 1.

²² S. Borchmeyer, W. Mir, "Increasing the Impact ...," *op. cit.*, p. 29.

²³ Article 220 TFEU.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

²⁵ European Parliamentary Research Service, "European Union involvement ...," *op. cit.*, p. 27.

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adapt the way the UN operates to the participation in its work of a regional organisation. The formal strengthening of the EU's position in the GA forum requires the Assembly to adopt a resolution by a two-thirds majority that defines the scope of the new powers. However, persuading such a large number of countries to support this decision is not easy. The strengthening of the EU position in 2011 was preceded by an unsuccessful attempt a year earlier. Voting against granting special rights to the EU, including making statements, were 76 countries (from Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific, Iran, and Venezuela) compared to 71 for.²⁶ In 2011, no country voted against the resolution, and only Syria and Zimbabwe abstained; however, in the debate on the EU status in the GA, the doubts expressed a year earlier returned. They included fears of changes in the nature of the GA, of creating a precedent for the admission of a new category of observers in the UN (CARICOM and the Arab League tried to take advantage of this opportunity), and the over-representation of European countries.²⁷

In the case of the UNSC, France rejected Germany's proposal to transform its place into an EU mandate.²⁸ This would require an amendment to the United Nations Charter, which is unlikely. It seems more likely that the UN countries will support Germany's aspirations to obtain the status of a permanent member of the Security Council. France and the UK are in favour of this. China and Russia seek to maintain the status quo in the composition of the UNSC, which implies that they would also be sceptical about granting permanent EU membership. The lack of a broader discussion on this topic within the Union suggests, however, that raising its status in individual UN bodies is not a priority issue at present, and that it is trying to increase its influence in the UN in a different way.

Ways to Increase the EU's Influence in the UN

Increasing the EU's influence on the activities of the United Nations takes place through coordination activities that have proven themselves over the years. In the 1970s, the Member States of the Community undertook to participate in international negotiations with a view to their mutual interest and, as far as possible, to adopt common positions at the forum of the United Nations and its specialised agencies. Soon after, the presiding state of the Council started the practice of making statements on behalf of all Member States in the GA forum.²⁹ The coherence of the actions of the EU and its Member States has increased since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and stands out

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from other regional organisations, such as the African Union, the Arab League, ASEAN, or the G77, where coordination is more implied than based on established mechanisms.³⁰ Moreover, the longer a country is in the EU, the less likely it is to vote differently from the rest of the Union.³¹ However, divergences remain on sensitive international issues (e.g., the status of Palestine in the United Nations³²) or national interests (e.g., migration issues).

In terms of coordination, a key role is played by EU delegations, which ensure the exchange of information between EU countries, the UN, and sometimes also third countries, as well as develop

²⁶ Pedro Antonio Serrano de Haro, "Participation of the EU in the work of the UN: General Assembly Resolution 65/276," *Cleer Working Papers*, No 4, 2012, p. 18.

²⁷ V. Miller, "The European Union at the United Nations," House of Commons Library, 2011, pp. 5-6; J. Wouters, J. Odermatt, T. Ramopoulos, "The Status of the European Union at the United Nations after the General Assembly Resolution of 3 May 2011," *Global Governance Opinions*, Leuven, 2011, p. 6.

²⁸ European Parliamentary Research Service, "European Union involvement ...," *op. cit.*, p. 16.

²⁹ S. Borchmeyer, W. Mir, "Increasing the Impact ...," *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³⁰ European Parliamentary Research Service, "European Union involvement ...," *op. cit.*, p. 14; S. Borchmeyer, W. Mir, "Increasing the Impact ...," *op. cit.*, p. 10.

³¹ S. Borchmeyer, W. Mir, "Increasing the Impact ...," *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³² Voting results on Resolution A / RS / 67/19 on the status of Palestine in the United Nations, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/738624?ln=en>

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joint EU proposals submitted to the UN forum. They organise more than 1,000 coordination meetings annually, including with third countries, such as with candidate countries or others related to the EU by partnership agreements.³³ Twice a year, on the EU's initiative, Member State heads of missions meet with the Secretary-General, and more often, with deputies and senior UN officials. Through the activities of the delegations, the EU actually plays—alongside the G77 and WEOG (a regional group in the UN that includes the countries of Western Europe, North America, and Australia)—the role of the most important negotiator in the ECOSOC and the driving force behind the resolutions it adopts.³⁴ Annual meetings are also held with the UN representation in Brussels.

Another important way of increasing the EU's influence in the UN is through coordination at the Council of the EU level. By way of conclusions, the ministers define the priorities for the General Assembly sessions³⁵ and try to resolve potential issues of dispute. For example, by establishing a sequence of candidates for ECOSOC, Member States limit competition between themselves (although, due to the lack of limitations on possible terms of office, some, e.g., Germany, remain members for years). Another example of effective coordination at the Council level was the election of the Bulgarian Kristalina Georgieva to Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), following intra-EU approval of her candidacy by EU finance ministers.³⁶ However, this is not a flawless mechanism, as was visible in the competition between Sweden, Italy, and the Netherlands to become a non-permanent member of the UNSC for 2017-2018, as a result of which a place on Security Council was awarded to Sweden, and Italy and the Netherlands divided their term of office as representative of the Western European and Others Group between themselves.³⁷

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Funding is an essential element in increasing the EU's influence in the UN. The EU is the largest non-state financial supporter of the United Nations. In 2020, independently from its Member States, it transferred €3.54 billion to the UN, which accounted for more than 6% of the total UN budget, and together with the Member States its contributions constitute about 25% of the organisation's total budget³⁸ (the EU countries account for about 14% of the UN members by country and only they are obliged to

pay contributions, not the EU). With the adoption of the European Peace Facility, an EU non-budgetary fund intended for activities under the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Union gained the possibility to finance peacekeeping missions³⁹, and thus, to engage even more. In addition, the EU is the largest donor of UN extra-budgetary funds (earmarked for specific funds).⁴⁰ In this respect, there is scope for further strengthening its role by better coordinating the financing of individual actions with the Member States (in order to avoid excessive fragmentation or duplication of the initiatives).⁴¹

Agreements and other written arrangements concluded between the organisations are another element of increasing the EU's influence in the UN. In 2018, the Commission signed with the United Nations (including with its individual specialised agencies and programmes, such as the FAO, UNDP, and the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF) the Financial and Administrative Framework

³³ S. Borchmeyer, W. Mir, "Increasing the Impact ...," *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 16.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 33-35.

³⁵ Council of the European Union, "EU priorities ...," *op. cit.*; The European Parliament also contributes to the coordination process by adopting recommendations to the Council on the priorities for UNGA sessions.

³⁶ European Parliamentary Research Service, "European Union involvement ...," *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

³⁷ R. Heath, "Sweden wins UN Security Council seat," *Politico*, 29 June 2016.

³⁸ European External Action Service, "How does the EU work at the United Nations," p. 2.

³⁹ A. Medinilla, P. Veron, V. Mazzara, "EU-UN Cooperation ...," *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁴⁰ S. Borchmeyer, W. Mir, "Increasing the Impact ...," *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁴¹ A. Medinilla, P. Veron, V. Mazzara, "EU-UN Cooperation ...," *op. cit.*, p. vi.

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Agreement (FAFA), aimed at regulating cooperation in the field of development aid, humanitarian aid, and combating climate change. The organisations pledged to strengthen mutual contacts and underlined the will to involve the Commission in the work of various UN formats. FAFA guarantees the participation of the Commission in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of actions it finances (or co-finances), promoting the visibility of the EU in the case of actions it finances (or co-finances) and the establishment of a UN-EU working group for better information exchange.⁴² In 2020, the EU and the UN concluded a Framework Agreement for the Provision of Mutual Support in the context of their respective missions and operations in the field.⁴³

In the joint communication of 17 February 2021 on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism, the Commission and HR proposed a number of measures that could translate into increasing the Union's visibility at the UN. They include holding regular EU-UN summits, establishing an annual strategic dialogue with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), clarifying or strengthening the EU's legal status or prerogatives in international organisations (as stipulated in treaties and limited to "appropriate cases"), and further enhancing the role and the

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presence of the EU in the governing bodies of UN agencies, funds, and programmes.⁴⁴ While these kinds of initiatives have a chance of success, the Member States, for reasons of national interests, are not in favour of their complete replacement by the EU at the UN. This is shown by the ineffectiveness of Commission initiatives for the EU to become a member of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the IMO,

which were not approved at the level of the EU Council.⁴⁵

Moreover, the problem of EU visibility is sometimes demonstrated by the selection of appropriate representatives. On the one hand, Member States declare their willingness to strengthen the role of the Union in the international arena, and on the other, make sure that key functions are not entrusted to individuals that would excessively increase the autonomy of EU institutions.⁴⁶

Conclusions and Perspectives

Further formal strengthening of the EU's status at the UN is unlikely in the short term. This is mainly due to the lack of political will of states afraid of weakening their position in favour of regional organisations. This applies to both EU members and third countries, which in practice prevents the adoption of a resolution extending the powers of the EU at the UN forum. In addition, the lack of unanimity of EU countries on many issues important to the United Nations (e.g., elections of non-permanent members of the Security Council, migration, handing over powers to the Union in the field of CFSP) undermines the readiness of the Union itself for full membership in the UN. While support for strengthening the position of the Community by Member States playing a lesser role in the international arena can be expected, the EU institutions and bodies, mainly the Commission and the HR, will remain the initiators of the changes. The latter will have to confront their ambitions with

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⁴² Points 1.2., 11.1. and 13.1 of FAFA.

⁴³ *Framework Agreement between the European Union and the United Nations for the Provision of Mutual Support in the context of their respective missions and operations in the field*, 19 November, 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A22020A1119%2801%29>.

⁴⁴ *Joint Communication ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 15, 19.

⁴⁵ *Annex to the Communication to the Commission from the President in Agreement with Vice-President Ashton*, "Strategy for the progressive improvement of the EU status in international organisations and other fora in line with the objectives of the Treaty of Lisbon," p. 3-4.

⁴⁶ F. Roux, "The external representation of the EU: A simple matter of protocol?" *European Policy Brief*, No 69, 2021, p. 3.

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the position of the Council (giving them a mandate to negotiate possible changes) and the interests of Member States that do not want to be completely replaced by the EU in the UN. Each UN specialised agency also has its own operating rules, which do not take into account the membership of a regional organisation; even in the FAO, the Union is treated differently from its state-members. As a result, together with the intra-EU division of competences, the Community currently needs the direct involvement of its Member States in order to actively operate in the UN system. Although the Lisbon Treaty has reduced their burden by transferring the Union's representation to Community structures (including delegations), only states remain entitled to vote, propose candidatures, or propose written acts to be adopted.

Therefore, it can be expected that the institutions of the EU will continue their activity to increase its influence on the activities of the United Nations, albeit indirectly by coordinating the negotiating positions of the states (Member States, as well as candidate and partner states), financing projects, and concluding working agreements. The involvement of the EU in the activities of the United Nations is beneficial from the perspective of Poland, for example, due to the obligations of the Member States that are members of the Security Council under the TEU to protect the interests of the Union as a whole and to provide information to other states. This is also demonstrated by the positive experiences of cooperation between the EU Member States during the Polish term of office in the UNSC in 2018-2019. At the time, EU members constituted a third of the Security Council and made common political arrangements and speeches.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ "Członkostwo Polski w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ 2018-2019" [Polish Membership in the UN Security Council 2018-2019], p. 6.

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THE EU'S STATUS IN UN SPECIALISED AGENCIES ⁴⁸

UN specialised agency	Status of the EU ⁴⁹	Representation/ competences of the EU	Agreements and other arrangements
World Bank (WB)	Partner	<p>Represented by the Member States.</p> <p>Based on Article 138 TFEU, the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt a decision establishing common positions on matters of particular interest for the economic and monetary union within the competent international financial institutions and conferences. The Council shall act after consulting the European Central Bank (only those Member States whose currency is the euro are voting).</p>	<p>Agreements between the Commission and the WB group (the first one is from 2001; the current one was signed on 8 July 2020).</p>
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Partner	<p>Based on Article 138 TFEU, the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt a decision establishing common positions on matters of particular interest for the economic and monetary union within the competent international financial institutions and conferences. The Council shall act after consulting the European Central Bank (only those Member States whose currency is the euro are voting).</p>	<p>Financial Framework Partnership Agreement signed by the Commission on 28 January 2020, which replaced the agreement of 2017.</p>
World Health Organisation (WHO)	Observer	<p>The Commission may participate as an observer in the meetings of the WHO Executive Board and the World Health Assembly.</p> <p>The country holding the presidency speaks after the WHO member states, proposes motions for resolutions, asks for the admission of the EU delegation to the work of individual working groups.</p>	<p>Cooperation between the Commission and WHO since the 1970s; in 2000, a framework for cooperation was established (exchange of letters of 14 December 2001), on which basis the working arrangements are adopted.</p> <p>FAFA.</p>
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)	Partner / <i>ad hoc</i> observer	<p>Representation by the EU Delegation (EU Delegation to the OECD and UNESCO in Paris and in the Principalities of Andorra and Monaco).</p>	<p>FAFA.</p> <p>Memorandum of Understanding of 2005 on education, culture, science and human rights.</p> <p>In 2020, the EU and UNESCO concluded 15 cooperation agreements regarding particular projects.</p>
International Labour Organisation (ILO)	Partner / <i>ad hoc</i> observer	<p>The Commission is invited to the International Labour Conference and to the sessions of the Governing Body.</p> <p>Member States speak on behalf of the EU at the ILO forum.</p> <p>The EU and ILO organise annual meetings (political dialogue and setting development priorities).</p>	<p>The first agreement on cooperation was signed between EEC and ILO in 1958.</p> <p>An exchange of letters between ILO and the Commission (on behalf of the Communities then the EU) took place in 1989 and 2001.</p> <p>FAFA.</p>
Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)	Organisation-member since 26 November 1991 (the only one of its kind)	<p>In the areas of EU competence, the Union (Commission or FAO Delegation) will exercise its membership rights; in policy areas where both the EU and its Member States are competent to act, the EU or its member states will jointly exercise the member rights of both the EU and its Member States. A detailed breakdown is included in the Commission Communication <i>The role of the European Union in the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) after the Treaty of Lisbon: Updated Declaration of Competences and new arrangements between the Council and the Commission for the</i></p>	<p>FAFA.</p>

⁴⁸ Own study based on information available on the websites of the individual specialised organisations and data of the European Parliament.

⁴⁹ Partner status means cooperation between the Union or the Commission and a specialised agency as provided for in an agreement or other arrangement concluded between the EU/Commission and the specialised organisation; *Ad hoc* observer status means irregular or informal admission of the EU to meetings of specialised agencies, as opposed to observer status—the formal and permanent right of the EU to participate in meetings resulting from the agencies' internal acts.

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		<p><i>exercise of membership rights of the EU and its Member States.</i></p> <p>In the Finance Committee, the Programme Committee, and the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, the EU has limited membership and does not participate in their work.</p> <p>Membership rights are shared with the Member States; the EU shares speaking time with them and they vote together.</p>	
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Partner	European Commission.	FAFA.
International Maritime Organisation (IMO)	Commission has had observer status since 1974 (attempts to enhance this status blocked by the EU Member States in 2002) ⁵⁰	<p>European Commission.</p> <p>The EU has the right to attend meetings, receive documentation and speak, without voting rights.</p>	<p>Cooperation agreement between the EEC and IMO of 1974.</p> <p>FAFA.</p>
World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)	Partner / <i>ad hoc</i> observer	Member States.	<p>Working arrangement between the Commission and WMO signed on 14 December 2020.</p> <p>FAFA.</p>
World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)	Commission is an accredited observer	The Commission may participate in formal WIPO meetings and consultations on current affairs.	Since 2000, the EU is party to the WIPO Copyright Treaty and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty.
International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)	<p>An <i>ad hoc</i> observer</p> <p>(The Commission proposed to negotiate membership in 2005, but the Council left this request unanswered)⁵¹</p>	The EU (Commission), like other organisations, can be invited to meetings, but does not formally have observer status.	FAFA.
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)	<i>Sectoral member</i> (status close to observer) ⁵²	No particular competences.	FAFA.
United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)	Partner / <i>ad hoc</i> observer	Conferences with third parties (e.g., African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) to which EU Commissioners (mainly DG DEVCO) are invited.	<p>Relationship Agreement signed between the Commission and UNIDO on 15 January 1993.</p> <p>UNIDO signed FAFA on 23 October 2003.</p>
Universal Postal Union (UPU)	Observer	The European Commission may participate in the meetings of the UPU Congress without voting rights.	None.
United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)	No particular arrangements	No particular arrangements.	None.

⁵⁰ *Annex to the Communication ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁵² European Parliamentary Research Service, "European Union involvement ...," *op. cit.*, p. 20,