For the first time the European Parliament will be represented at the UN General Assembly opening next Tuesday in New York. On Wednesday 26 September, its Vice-President Othmar Karas will represent it at a high-level meeting on the rule of law. From 24 to 27 September, he will also represent Parliament in the EU delegation, along with the European Commission and Council, thus giving it a parliamentary, democratic dimension.

Rule of law

Vice President Karas will focus on access to justice, the rule of law and the essential role that parliaments play in it at Wednesday's meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), on the occasion of the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the rule of law. The IPU brings together representatives of 163 parliaments.

Democratic dimension

Parliament's inclusion in the official EU delegation "shows the honest commitment of European Heads of State and Government to further democratisation and parliamentarisation of the European Union", said Vice-President Karas, who is responsible for relations with international institutions.

"If we are serious about making the EU not just a project of governments, but of citizens, then

the European Parliament, which is the citizens' chamber, must be involved in all EU decisions. In the EU and elsewhere, we see that traditional international law is reaching its limits. In an ever more interlinked world, more and more transnational decisions are necessary. This growing number of decisions cannot be taken without democratic legitimisation", he added

The official EU delegation will also include European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Catherine Ashton.

The IPU parliamentary meeting takes place on Wednesday, 26 September, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. in Conference Room 3 at the Temporary North Lawn Building (TNLB) of the United Nation Headquarters in New York (entrance at 1st Avenue and 47th Street).