



Secretary-General António Guterres called on the European Union and the United Nations to work more closely together to overcome the “unprecedented challenges” that the world is facing.

Speaking at a plenary session of the European Parliament meeting in Strasbourg on Wednesday, the Secretary-General expressed his appreciation and gratitude for the strong commitment of the European Union to multilateralism, citing in particular EU support for addressing conflicts and crises in Libya, Somalia, the Central African Republic and Mali.

“The European contribution today is an absolutely essential part of what is necessary to make the UN effective,” the Secretary-General told the assembled lawmakers.

He outlined a number of major challenges that need collaborative action by the European Union and UN, including the resolution of and prevention of conflicts, a broader coalition for human rights, implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change and addressing growing inequality that is the result of globalization.

“A strong and united Europe is an absolutely fundamental pillar of a strong and effective United Nations,” the Secretary-General said.

In a speech often interrupted by applause, the Secretary-General also evoked the difficult issue of migration and called for political, social and cultural engagement to help create inclusive societies.

“Diversity is a richness not a threat,” he said, adding, that “diversity will not be automatically a source of peace and understanding.”

Speaking as a European, the Secretary-General harked back to the great intellectual achievements in Europe during the 18th century Age of Reason.

“The values of the Enlightenment are the most important contribution that Europe has given to world civilization,” the Secretary-General said, urging Europe to embrace the Enlightenment values of tolerance and reason.