



General Assembly designates friendship day and grants EU higher participation status



General Assembly

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The General Assembly today **voted** to upgrade the status of the European Union's (EU) participation at the United Nations 192-member body, and to designate 30 July as International Day of Friendship in an effort to strengthen amity between peoples and cultures.

The General Assembly **resolution** on the participation of the EU in the work of the UN was adopted by 180 UN Member States and will allow senior EU representatives to present to the Assembly the common positions of the European bloc. Syria and Zimbabwe abstained and 10 countries did not vote.

It also gives EU representatives the right to make interventions during sessions; be invited to participate in the general debate of the General Assembly; and permits EU communications relating to the sessions and work of the Assembly to be circulated directly as documents of the Assembly.

Under the resolution, EU representatives will also be permitted to present proposals and amendments agreed to by EU member States, but not to challenge decisions of the Assembly's presiding officer.

EU representatives will also be allowed to exercise the right of reply regarding positions of the EU. The European bloc's representatives shall be ensured seating among the observers, but they will not have the right to vote or to put forward candidates.

Zimbabwe introduced an oral amendment that would have denied the EU the right of reply to statements made by UN Member States, but the proposal was defeated with only six votes in favour and 142 against. Twenty other countries abstained.

The resolution creating the International Day of Friendship was adopted unanimously in recognition of the fact that friendship can contribute to the efforts of the international community to promote dialogue among civilizations, solidarity, mutual understanding and reconciliation.

The resolution invites all UN Member States, organizations of the UN system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, to observe the International Day of Friendship in accordance with the culture and other appropriate circumstances or customs of their local, national and regional communities, including through education and public awareness-raising activities.

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