

**Video Message of António Guterres, Secretary General of United Nations, on the occasion of the European Parliamentary Week's Opening plenary session:
Investing in our climate, social and economic resilience: What are the main policy priorities?
22 February 2021**

Honourable Members of Parliament,

I thank the European Parliament and the Parliament of my home country, Portugal, for the opportunity to address you today.

The partnership between the United Nations and the European Union is strongly rooted in shared values and priorities.

This year's European Parliament Week comes as the world continues to face the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

What started as a global health crisis has triggered economic, social, humanitarian and human rights crises.

It has greatly exacerbated inequalities, within and among nations.

All while the world is facing an existential climate threat, biodiversity loss and pollution.

We will not overcome this situation by reverting to the old normal.

We have an opportunity to be ambitious.

We have an obligation to recover better.

We must embrace a sustainable and inclusive pathway.



Invest in health systems and social protection.

Build resilient infrastructure.

Support education and green jobs.

And of course, reduce debt pressure.

No country should be forced to choose between helping their populations and servicing their debts.

In these efforts, we have a framework to guide us: the Sustainable Development Goals.

The European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility holds great potential, representing the largest stimulus package in the EU's history.

Putting the European Green Deal at the heart of this effort is not only the right thing to do, but a smart investment in the future.

Support for a global rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations is also a crucial part of the solution.

Let's be clear: it is unacceptable that just ten countries account for 75 per cent of global vaccinations to date. It is not only unfair, but also dangerous.

I am calling for a Global Vaccination Plan to bring together all those with the required power, scientific expertise and production and financial capacities and ensure that everyone has access to the vaccine.

Only then can we defeat COVID-19 and rebuild more resilient economies and societies.

2021 must also be the year to build a global coalition for reaching carbon neutrality by the middle of the century.

At the same time, we must achieve a breakthrough on adaptation.

Donors should commit to increasing the share of climate finance allocated to adaptation, from 20 percent today to 50 percent in 2024.

Developed countries must also fulfil their pledge to mobilize \$100 billion annually for climate action in developing countries.

All development banks should align their portfolios with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals by 2024, and help mobilize private finance.

I thank the European Union's continued engagement towards this.

Meanwhile, geopolitical tensions are on the rise, including in Europe.

We must strengthen diplomacy for peace, build trust between institutions and society, and combat discrimination and misinformation.

We must adapt to complex situations, through a networked, inclusive and effective multilateralism.

As a former member, I know firsthand that Parliaments have a key role to play.

And EU leadership will be vital.

Only by working together, with the most vulnerable at the center of our efforts, can we truly build a more sustainable, just and resilient future.

I will continue to count on your vision and support.

Thank you.

António Guterres

Secretary-General of United Nations

