
European Parliament: Guterres (UN), need “to protect human rights of vulnerable people, regardless of how they arrive in Europe”

These are intense European days for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who addressed the plenary session of the European Parliament in Brussels today. “The strategic partnership between the European Union and the United Nations is more indispensable than ever”, he said, thanking Europe for its “voluntary contributions” to the UN budget and for being “the biggest humanitarian donor”. Guterres then spoke of the COVID-19 crisis and how “the pandemic is causing more deaths today than a year ago”. For this reason, he called for “vaccine equity” to be achieved by scaling up vaccine production and by joining forces for a “global vaccination plan”, one that takes into account all existing opportunities. Guterres also denounced “shocking” inequalities in the economic recovery plans of the world’s countries and spoke of a “tragedy” underway in Africa, where the prospects for recovery are low. Hence a call to solidarity and to make additional financial support available together with debt relief. Guterres also touched on the climate crisis issue, urging donors to support developing countries in their adaptation efforts. He then talked about cybersecurity, digital cooperation, technologies, artificial intelligence, and congratulated Europe again on its “human-centric approach”. He then said about peace: “We need more international cooperation” in the new fields that are opening up in the cyberworld, a “multilateralism that’s in a network”, a multilateralism that is inclusive. Then a call on the EU “to promote human rights” and “protect vulnerable people within the EU borders”, regardless of “how they arrive” in Europe. During the press conference, he returned to the subject of migration: “There is no way a country alone” can handle the migration issue, he said, urging the EU to join forces and establish forms of cooperation at all levels in a spirit of solidarity. “Huge investment is needed for integration”, he added. After his address to Parliament, Guterres reached the table of the Heads of State and Government for an exchange of views at the opening of the European Council.

Valentina Bombelli