EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations

2010/2298(INI) - 20/04/2011

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report drafted by María MUÑIZ DE URQUIZA (S&D, ES) on the EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations.

Members recall the EU's commitment to **effective multilateralism**, as stated in the European Security Strategy of 2003, is the guiding principle of European external action.

The representation of the EU and its Member States in multilateral organisations, informal summits and international regimes is fragmented, often ineffective, and still varies considerably which may prevent it from speaking with a single voice in the international arena.

(1) Reinforcing the role of the EU in the multilateral system: the committee notes that the EU's mechanisms for building consensus and taking concerted action make it a **model for a rules-based international order** and therefore stresses the need for the EU to cooperate with leading regional powers and actively participate in the building and improvement of an international environment that enables the EU to promote, as required by the Treaty, its values and interests. In particular in those fields where it has exclusive or shared competences, Members consider essential, with regard to the EU's aspiration and need to be an effective global actor and to safeguard its position, a strengthening of the internal coordination necessary to **speak with one voice**, the ability to shape multilateral cooperation and lead collective action **in addressing international challenges**, namely those arising from the responsibility to protect, and the need to enhance human security as a means of achieving global security. The EU Member States should increasingly consider and rely on the EU as a multiplier of power in achieving the objectives they cannot achieve independently.

Underlining the sharp increase in political and humanitarian crises in the world, Members call for the need for the EU to seize the moment and **make better use of its foreign policy instruments** so as to ensure better use of its leverage in multilateral organisations and to take the lead in addressing current and future international crises more effectively.

Members stress that the EU should play an active and leading role in global governance reform. They underline the need to apply a strategic approach and a coherent rationale in external representation by developing **a tailored EU strategy vis-à-vis each multilateral organisation** aimed at enhancing the EU' s role and strengthening of its position. The VP/HR and the Commission are called upon to draw up a White Paper on the role of the EU in multilateral organisations which proposes a comprehensive and strategic approach both for the short run and the medium-term future through to 2020.

Members take the view that, as a general rule and in the spirit of the Lisbon Treaty, in cases of exclusive competences the EU should be the pre-eminent actor with full membership of the given multilateral organisation while its Member States may also – but need not necessarily – be present as members, but usually without an independent role.

(2) The EU's role in the UN system: the report underlines the need for the EU to translate into action its **strategic support for the UN**, particularly as regards its policy and means of action in the humanitarian field (crisis and emergency response, development aid, action to combat poverty, mobilisation of emergency relief and resources to deal with natural disasters) and in the area of conflict resolution. It i nsists on the need to strike a new institutional balance between the emerging role of the G-20, the UN and

its agencies as well as the IFIs. While considering the G-8 and G-20 as important fora for the definition of global responses, Members call on the EU and its Member States to seek improvements to global governance that make the most out of synergies and complementarities and do not run the risk of eroding the UN system.

While retaining the EU's observer status in the UNGA, the Union is urged to ensure – in order to allow the new EU representatives to speak effectively and in a timely manner on global

issues – that the necessary arrangements for the EU's effective participation in the work of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) are put in place, while making full use of all the powers conferred on it by its status as a regional integration organisation, by consulting fully and comprehensively with UN Member States.

Members reiterate the view, in keeping with the purposes of the Lisbon Treaty in enhancing EU foreign policy and the role of the EU in global peace, security and regulation, that an EU seat in an enlarged UNSC remains a central, long-term goal of the European Union. However, they stress the need for a **comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council**, on the basis of the first ever negotiation text and widespread support for UNSC reform, in order to achieve greater clarification on the UNSC's competences in relation to other UN bodies and a review of the UNSC's working methods.

The VP/HR is urged to take the initiative to develop a common position of the Member States to that end.

The report stresses lastly the need to coordinate the positions of EU Member States and increase the coherence, visibility and credibility of EU action in the UN Human Rights Council (UN HRC).

(3) The EU's role in the International Financial Institutions (IFIs): the report underlines the need to review arrangements for the **representation of the euro area/EU in international bodies** in the area of economic, monetary and financial stability in line with its role as one of the world's foremost economic powers. The EU and its relevant Member States are urged to promptly agree on a **common seat and constituency on the IMF Executive Board**, possibly starting as a euro constituency, with a view, in the longer term, to securing **consistent EU representation**, involving the Ecofin Council Presidency and the Commission, subject to the European Parliament's scrutiny.

(4) The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO): the EU and NATO are called upon to redouble their efforts towards the establishment of a framework for integrated cooperation, including permanent structures for cooperation. Members call for systematic contacts between the Secretary-General of NATO and the VP/HR and propose that the implications of the establishment of mutual observer status at the level of the NAC and the PSC be studied in order to improve cooperative arrangements in the spirit of the Treaty of Lisbon.

(5) The World Trade Organisation (WTO): Members consider that the role of the EU within the WTO serves as one model for EU actions in other international organisations (including UNCTAD and OECD), given that through its exclusive competence the EU is a full member of the WTO and negotiates on behalf of all the EU Member States, while at the same time all Member States are WTO members in their own right and work together to act as a single block.

The report calls on the EU to take into account and uphold specific European interests within the WTO. It considers that it should in particular insist on special treatment for agricultural issues and act to defend certain sensitive European regions or sectors and to promote fair trade that fosters sustainable development.

(6) Ambitions in the G-8 and the G-20: Members take the view that the EU should fully participate in the G-7/G-8 process and should be fully represented in the meetings of the G-7 finance ministers. They

point out the need for enhanced EU coordination before G-7 and G-8 meetings, in particular by ensuring that the European Parliament is closely involved.

In addition, the EU and its Member States are called upon to work with partners towards achieving full coordination and alignment of messages among the five European countries and the EU representative sitting at the G-20 table in order to ensure effective participation of the EU at G-20 ministerial meetings.