66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

2011/2030(INI) - 09/05/2011

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Alexander Graf LAMBSDORFF (ALDE, DE) with a proposal for a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Members recall that new permanent structures were created by the Lisbon Treaty for the EU's external representation and, as a result, the new EU representatives are required to take over functions previously carried out by the rotating Presidency of the EU. They address the following recommendations to the Council:

The EU in the UN system: the committee recommended better coordination of internal EU consultations on UN issues and the promotion of greater outreach on a wide range of issues. The Vice-President/High Representative (VP/HR) should be authorised to draft guidelines for regular consultations between the ambassadors of Member States and the EU ambassadors, especially between those working at a multilateral level in places like Geneva and New York, and to foster greater cohesion both within the UN system and between the positions of EU Member States and candidate and potential candidate countries. The Council should also encourage Member States which are also members of the UN Security Council to invite the VP/HR to represent the EU in the UN Security Council whenever a common position has been defined. Members recalled that the Member States that currently belong to the UNSC (France, the United Kingdom, Portugal and Germany) failed, contrary to the provisions of the TEU, to act in concert and come up with a common position vis-à-vis military intervention in Libya, in particular in the context of the vote on UNSC Resolution 1973.

The EU and global governance: Members recommended that the Council seek sustainable solutions to the issue of the relationship between the G-formations and the UN system, on which basis thematic debates and the economic dimension could usefully be covered by those groups, provided that the UN retains its central role. At the same time, the G8 and G20 should be considered as important forums for the definition of global responses to which the EU must actively contribute through coordinated positions. The committee also stresses the need to:

- support an adequate budget for UN Women so that this body can fulfil its role of promoting gender equality and protect and empower women;
- ensure a comprehensive reform of the UNSC in order to strengthen its legitimacy, regional representation and effectiveness;

- promote a reform process that can be irreversibly launched by EU Member States if, in keeping with the aims of the Lisbon Treaty, they demand a permanent seat for the EU in an enlarged and reformed UNSC;
- bring Member States to develop a common position with that purpose, and until such a common position is adopted, to agree to the introduction of a rotation system in the UNSC, so as to secure a permanent seat for the EU in the UNSC;
- strengthen the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and encourage a close relationship between the ICC and the UN.

Peace, security and justice: Members make a series of recommendations on crisis prevention and management as well as nuclear issues and the reform of the IAEA. They recommend the strengthening of

crisis-prevention structures within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the EU's conflict-prevention structures and to improve cooperation in this area with the UN, the OSCE, the African Union (AU). They also recommend that the Council:

work towards developing a more operational approach to the doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) and encourage its implementation of RtoP, inter alia by further refining mechanisms for applying it and by strengthening the role of regional organisations;

- consider it an EU strategic priority to strengthen international crisis-management partnerships and to enhance dialogue with other major crisis-management actors, such as the UN, NATO and the AU, and third countries, such as the USA, Turkey, Norway and Canada;
- step up efforts to ensure that EU Member States make adequate contributions to UN missions further explore ways in which the EU as a whole can better contribute to UN-led efforts, such as by launching EU rapid response bridging or over-the-horizon operations or providing an EU component of a larger UN mission;
- take forward the recommendations of the Peace building Commission review process, support the emergence of a sound overall peacebuilding architecture on the basis of a partnership between developing and developed countries;
- as a consequence of the nuclear disaster in Japan, to reform the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by bringing to an end its dual function of both monitoring and promoting nuclear energy use and to limit the IAEA's responsibilities to overseeing the nuclear energy industry and verifying compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Council is also asked to work towards ensuring that from now on safety standards are set and monitored by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Development: Members recall that the EU is the world's largest provider of development aid and a major partner of the UN in its efforts across all three pillars of its work, including in crisis and post-crisis situations, and the Member States' contribution amounts to 38% of the UN's regular budget. They stress the need to harmonise the efforts of various UN bodies and to live up to the pledges made at the MDG summit as regards gathering together the resources needed to meet the targets by 2015, in particular by meeting the EU's commitments on official development aid. The Council is asked to advocate an increase in the level of financial investment in order to meet the MDG targets and to rapidly scale up and replicate proven innovative programmes and policies aimed at overall development and economic and social transformation. Members also stress the need to support the 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development, and to take appropriate measures to make RTD an integral part of development policy, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the work of UN human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms.

Human rights: the committee emphasises the need to participate actively in the review of the UNHRC in New York and address the UNHRC's ability to tackle urgent situations involving serious human rights violations, as in the recent cases of Libya and the Ivory Coast. It commends the UNGA's decision of 1 March 2011 to suspend Libya's membership of the UNHRC and wants the Council to seek ways of improving the UNHRC's election procedures in order to address the issue of the quality of UNHRC membership. The highest political and diplomatic priority must be given to all initiatives aimed at establishing a worldwide moratorium on female genital mutilation, and decriminalising homosexuality worldwide.

Climate change:the committee wants the Council to exercise leadership in the area of global climate governance and to develop a dialogue with other key actors, such as the United States, Russia, the emerging powers (China, Brazil, India) and developing countries, given that climate change has become a key element of international relations and a major threat to the achievement of the MDGs. It also refers to the need to develop the EEAS's capacities to build up a climate diplomacy policy, and to support the

active participation of the Commission in the ongoing debate on Protection Gaps and Responses launched by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It also recommends active participation in the debate on the term ‘climate refugee’.

Final recommendations: lastly, the report recommends a debate on the topic of the role of parliaments and regional assemblies in the UN system, which is expected to feature on the agenda of the 66th UNGA session, and on the topic of establishing a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA). It advocates the establishment of a UNPA within the UN system in order to increase the transparency of global governance and to allow for greater public participation in the activities of the UN.