# The EU and the defence of multilateralism

2020/2114(INI) - 06/07/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 454 votes to 73, with 112 abstentions, a resolution on the EU and the defence of multilateralism.

***Rebuilding multilateralism as part of the Union's core values***

Parliament welcomed the joint communication from the Commission and the VP/HR to Parliament and the Council on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism. It considered that this communication advances the reflection on the direction of the EU's foreign policy, namely the need to combine the objective of effective multilateralism with principled pragmatism, as well as the need to promote and preserve the Union's interests and values.

Members stressed the paramount importance for the EU to strengthen its external action and diplomacy toolbox with its own autonomous instruments, increasing its capacity to be a global actor and ‘speak with one voice’ in order to better defend multilateralism, which should include the creation of a European Diplomatic Academy as recently called for by Parliament.

Parliament believes that the EU must continue to act as a staunch and key defender of multilateralism in the world, but must respond to global forces, such as increased fragmentation, the weaponization of trade and protectionism, in order to preserve its competitive advantages.

The EU should **build on efforts to find solutions to global challenges**, such as climate change, or to promote stability and peace. It should also be more decisive and strategic in its approach to the growing global threats in a context where multilateral institutions risk being dominated by undemocratic regimes.

The resolution called on the Member States to muster the political will to strengthen the EU's position in multilateral organisations and fora. It also stressed the need to anchor qualified majority voting on foreign policy matters in future amendments to the Treaty on European Union.

***Strengthening the United Nations and the European Union’s participation in its system***

Parliament reiterated its strongest support for the programme of reforms introduced by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, and pointed to the need for further progress, especially regarding the inclusion of women, young people and persons in a vulnerable situation, as well as on raising awareness on intersectionality in UN structures. It stressed the **importance of a UN system that can continue to deliver effectively**.

Recalling that the EU can greatly reinforce the outreach and impact of UN programmes in third countries, the resolution stressed the value of close EU-UN consultation and cooperation. Members considered that the EU and the UN should hold annual summits to give the UN Secretary-General the opportunity to consult with the Council, the Commission, the EEAS and Parliament.

In addition, the EU should identify UN entities and other multilateral organisations that play a key role in promoting policy dialogue, convergence and solutions to global challenges and standard-setting and should define clear objectives and priorities for interaction with these entities and organisations and for support, including budgetary support, to them.

Members welcomed the suspension of Russia's participation in the UN Human Rights Council. They called on EU leaders and the leaders of other states to exclude Russia from the G20 and other multilateral cooperation organisations, such as the World Trade Organisation, UNESCO and others, as a clear sign that the international community will not resume normal relations with this aggressive state. They called on the EU to provide support through multilateral fora to third countries that wish to impose an embargo on Russian energy imports.

Parliament considered that the EU and its Member States should work towards finding a consensus on reforming the Security Council, including the provision of a **permanent seat for the EU**, in addition to the seats currently held by EU Member States.

***Rebuilding multilateralism through enhanced global partnerships to pursue common goals***

Parliament believes that **contacts with allies and like-minded partners** in international organisations and multilateral fora should be continued in order to consolidate a coalition of countries serving common values and objectives and committed to strategic dialogue and effective cooperation on the international scene.

The resolution stressed the relevance not only of traditional transatlantic or European partners such as the US and Canada, as well as the UK, the Western Balkans and other countries of the Southern and Eastern neighbourhood, but also of other like-minded democratic allies in Latin America, the Indo-Pacific region and Africa, which can create a broader area of common values and standards in partnership.

***Improved role the European Parliament***

Members believe that the EU should advocate the creation of a body within the UN system to **strengthen the democratic character, democratic accountability and transparency of global governance**. Parliament should foster synergies through its regular political and strategic contacts with the parliaments of EU Member States and third countries.

Parliament as a democratic and mobilising institution should provide a unique public forum and perspective for promoting multilateralism. To strengthen the parliamentary dimension of multilateral fora, Parliament should organise an annual conference of speakers from G7 and G20 countries on its premises. The structured dialogue between the Parliament and the UN system should be reinforced.

***Multilateralism as a driver to address urgent global issues***

Parliament called for the strengthening and institutionalisation of existing multilateral frameworks aimed at combating climate change. It called for continued multilateral efforts to mobilise funds for the Sustainable Development Goals and climate. It also encouraged the EU and Member States to promote the recognition of ecocide as an international crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Members recalled the key role of multilateral fora in overcoming the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and stressed that this situation illustrates the importance of these fora for the promotion and protection of global public health and universal health coverage. They called for specific measures to protect children, whom the COVID-19 pandemic could make even more vulnerable.

Parliament urged the EU to support the UN's counter-terrorism work and stressed the importance of launching and supporting initiatives to combat tax evasion, money laundering and corruption. It stressed

the importance of multilateralism in addressing emerging issues such as biodiversity loss, cyber security, biotechnology, digitalisation, geopolitical activities and governance in polar regions, AI and emerging threats such as the spread of disinformation.

Lastly, it stressed that it is vital to address gender equality and to fight for non-discrimination against women, girls and marginalised groups and their human rights globally, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.