



Minutes of 23/03/1999 - Provisional Edition

UN reform: public affairs at world level

[A4-0077/1999](#)

Resolution on the challenges of global governance and the reform of the United Nations

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 8 February 1994 on the role of the Union within the UN and the problems of reforming the UN⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 October 1995 on the financial crisis at the UN⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 November 1995 on the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 June 1998 on the International Criminal Court⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 June 1998 on the Second Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 January 1999 on the environment, security and foreign policy⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to the report of the UN Secretary-General of 14 July 1997 - Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform (Doc. A/51/950), together with subsequent documents adding to and clarifying that report,
- having regard to the resolutions adopted in Geneva by the 53rd and 54th sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights on the question of the death penalty,
- having regard to the report of the Council of Europe of 1 April 1998 on Reform of the United Nations (Doc. 8052/1998),

- having regard to the Memorandum submitted by the European Union to the last UN General Assembly,
- having regard to Rule 148 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy and the opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation ([A4-0077/1999](#)),

A. whereas the profound changes that have occurred in the second half of this century must be reflected in a change in the aims and structures of the United Nations Organisation, so as to give the UN adequate instruments and effective powers,

B. concerned at the growing complexity of the crises affecting world security at a time when the decision-making mechanisms regulating the right and duty to intervene still await clarification in terms of the UN Charter,

C. aware that the nature of armed conflict today has made national legal systems incapable of bringing to justice those guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide; emphasising the capital importance of establishing the International Criminal Court and appointing an independent prosecutor,

D. concerned at the dangers of a resumption of the nuclear arms race which challenges the robustness and effectiveness of the existing non-proliferation arrangements,

E. concerned at the persistence of human rights violations throughout the world and at the impoverishment and deplorable social conditions that prevail for a growing section of the world population,

F. concerned at the continuing use of capital punishment in many countries,

G. having regard to the growing interdependence of our societies and mindful of the impact of globalisation on economic, social and environmental policy,

H. mindful of the growing interaction of certain policies at international level such as foreign affairs, security, trade, environment and development,

I. mindful of the growing complexity of the tasks required of the public authorities, i.e. the need to create conditions for sustainable development encompassing not only peace, but also freedom, economic efficiency, monetary stability, social justice, protection of the environment and respect for cultural diversity,

J. whereas this complex mission calls for a coherent and evolving global institutional framework capable of taking the decisions needed to ensure progress towards these objectives,

K. concerned at the fact that, at the present time, the phenomenon of globalisation is not balanced by a global institutional structure capable of regulating its effects by means of a global governance role,

L. whereas the existing organisations with a universal vocation were almost all created in the 1940s or 1950s and are therefore inappropriate either because of their terms of reference or their mode of operation and now require fundamental reform,

M. whereas many of these institutions are based on limited representativeness and suffer from a lack of transparency and a clear public and democratic mandate,

N. regretting the lack of interaction, harmonised policies and joint decision-making between those institutions,

O. recognising the opportunity presented by the convening of a "Millennium Assembly" at the 55th Session of the General Assembly in September 2000 to focus public attention on the challenges of global governance that will confront the UN in the 21st century, and the part reform will play in meeting these challenges,

P. taking the view, in the context of the reform process, that increased efficiency does not mean less UN expenditure, but rather better, more effective and, where appropriate, more expenditure, particularly in the context of fostering sustainable development in the G-77 countries,

Q. underlining the importance of the policy and the activities of the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), which has produced significant preliminary results, and reaffirming that it is important that all its initiatives take place in the framework of respect for human rights,

R. being of the opinion that economic, social and cultural rights are not as well codified as civil and political rights and therefore deserve more attention; stressing at the same time the particular and fundamental importance carried by civil and political rights in the struggle to make human rights universally respected,

S. regretting in particular the persistent absence of environmental considerations in multilateral trade agreements,

T. criticising the process of economic globalisation for the de facto transfer of the powers of legitimate governments towards transnational economic power which, in the pursuit of competitiveness, is beyond all democratic scrutiny and often manages to circumvent the obligations to which national economic operators are subject with resulting erosion of the social fabric in the countries where that power is established,

U. acknowledging, therefore, the urgent need to create a more consistent institutional structure at world level that is capable of coping with the problems of globalisation,

V. desirous in this connection that the European Union, as an advanced model of regional association, should be able to fulfil a representative and coordinating function by assuming a role and a political authority commensurate with its demographic and economic weight, so as to arrive at a proper common foreign and security policy that will enable it to speak with a single voice,

1. Acknowledges that there can be no effective reform of the management of political affairs at world level without a corresponding change in the philosophy and logic of international relations accepting in particular that collective responsibilities are now global;

2. Is convinced that the UN, as long as it undergoes appropriate reform, remains the leading intergovernmental policy forum for discussion of, and establishing global consensus on, issues of international and common importance, including many aspects of globalisation;

3. Regrets, for this reason, the delay by some member countries, and in particular the United States, in paying their annual quota, which is impairing the proper functioning of its bodies;

4. Welcomes the Secretary-General's regrouping of the 30 or so main UN bodies into four thematic areas, notably: peace and security; economic and social affairs; development operations and finally humanitarian affairs; endorses this reform as a first step towards a more rational decision-making structure within the UN system;

5. Believes, in the long term, that many of these bodies could be merged into coherent single entities within this four-theme structure;

Peace and Security

6. Points out that the main duty of the UN Security Council remains the maintenance of peace and international security but notes that the means of action at its disposal no longer match the requirements generated by the impact of globalisation; underlines, therefore, the need for its reform;

7. Is of the opinion that the composition of the Security Council should be based on the democratic principles of fair and transparent geographical representation, while reflecting new world realities, including the EU, which is increasingly playing an important role on the international scene; suggests that a reform of the voting system might follow the existing rules of the OSCE which are based on the principle of unanimity minus one vote;

8. Believes it is essential that the UN should have effective instruments for diplomatic intervention and the ability to call upon appropriate rapid reaction forces in order to prevent the escalation of conflicts and for the purposes of peace-keeping; welcomes the Secretary-General's announcement of the establishment of a Strategic Planning Unit to enable the UN to conduct analysis, contingency planning, forward strategy, emergency planning and early warning

conflict alert as a means of bolstering the UN's ability to conduct preventive diplomacy;

Economic, social, development and humanitarian operations

9. Is convinced that a mechanism for coordinating their policies should be established between the existing organisations with a universal vocation, while the activities of those institutions should be made more transparent and more democratically legitimate;

10. Therefore proposes the introduction of a parliamentary dimension into the system of the UN organisations by creating parliamentary bodies composed of the chairmen of parliamentary committees of national and regional parliaments, starting e.g. with Environment and Foreign Affairs, thus strengthening the existing cooperation between the United Nations and the International Interparliamentary Union;

11. Hopes that by creating such parliamentary accountability at world level the UN could become more relevant in the parliaments of the world;

12. Supports the proposal to set up a permanent forum of the associations of civil society to convene before the sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations;

13. Stresses the importance of revitalising the global agenda for environmental protection and sustainable development;

14. Considers that, in the absence of rules capable of its governance, financial globalisation is creating an urgent need to reform the Bretton Woods design, and this must be carried out in a coordinated approach covering all the institutions in the system (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation and the World Trade Organisation); after launching of the euro, the EU must form one of the pillars of the new system;

15. Maintains that the structural adjustment conditions imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions on the poorest countries, in which heavy social spending cuts can undermine both the living conditions of large sections of the population and the conditions required for sustainable development, should be reviewed; considers combating poverty and fostering sustainable growth to be priorities which should be included among the missions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund;

16. Considers that the globalisation of democracy and the universal acceptance of human rights as fundamental values raise an urgent need to provide a universal juridical and judicial system that will be able to protect them and punish their infringement; this is another reason for convening a summit on globalisation at the United Nations;

17. Supports the recent proposals to create within the UN an economic Security Council to produce a synthesis of economic development, trade, social justice and environmental protection issues, provided such a body does not duplicate the work of the General Assembly;

18. Reiterates its support for the creation of a 'World Environment Agency' to balance the power of the WTO by possibly drawing together existing UN bodies responsible for environmental matters, and further calls for the implementation of the recommendation of the UN Task Force on Environment and Human Settlement;

19. Believes that the UN should work with national governments to help them take advantage of the benefits of globalisation, while managing the social and environmental implications;

20. Asks the European Union and its Member States to review their development cooperation policies in the light of the conditions created by globalisation by refocusing existing programmes on the mutual recognition of cultures and on human and social development itself based on structural and democratic reforms in the developing countries;

21. Emphasises that, as well as working within the framework of the UN's traditional purposes of peacekeeping and development promotion, the EU should be taking action on the major basic problems - such as democratisation, respect for human rights, the economic and social imbalances between North and South, major migrational trends etc. - and on the new sources of world instability - such as environmental destruction, arms and drugs trafficking, terrorism and organised crime etc.; it should also be entering into global politics in support of the sense of community, solidarity and social rights for workers;

22. Emphasises that development aid is of fundamental importance to the advancement of the common interests of the entire international community and that the United Nations system should increasingly take on a central role in the coordination and organisation of initiatives taken by international donors and those involved in implementing cooperation projects;

23. Draws attention to the important role which the EU traditionally plays at summits held on topics of worldwide interest and asks the Commission to consider ways of establishing networks of relations with the main components of civil society with a view to ensuring the follow-up to the decisions taken at these summits;

24. Is of the opinion that the notion of human rights needs to be brought up to date again by being looked at in close relation with civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights; believes, moreover, that the phenomenon of globalisation requires that the notion of universal responsibility also becomes an inseparable component thereof;

25. Welcomes the initiative of the UN High Commissioner in reaffirming the universality of human rights by providing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with a commentary for representatives of cultures other than that of the West and thus bringing it closer to the communities belonging to those cultures;

26. Welcomes the efforts made at the UN to introduce the human rights dimension into all policies of that organisation; decides, moreover, to redouble its own efforts to the same end as far as EU policies are concerned; calls on the

1999 session of the United Nations General Assembly to establish a universal moratorium on executions, with a view to the complete abolition of the death penalty;

27. Considers that regional organisations for economic integration have become an indispensable factor in international security; accordingly requests the EU to continue to revitalise the dialogue with them;

28. Welcomes the past initiatives by its committee responsible for foreign affairs in continuing a political dialogue with similar bodies in the parliaments of crisis-stricken countries;

29. Believes that such parliamentary diplomacy is an excellent means of making the management of international affairs more consistent and that it should be further developed;

30. Calls on the EU to expand its political authority to match its economic development involvement in regions posing particular risks by becoming the catalyst for the dialogue on security; suggests, moreover, that this dialogue could result in regional agreements on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, provided they do not undermine the Non-Proliferation Treaty;

31. Calls on the Commission and the Council to reflect on the consistency needed at world level in the relationship between the requirements of foreign policy and those of human rights, particularly in peace-keeping operations;

32. Calls on the Council and the institutions of the WEU to examine, in the light of the current challenges of world security and within the limits of Article J.7(2) of the Treaty on European Union, the possibility of redefining in terms of the UN Charter the right and duty of intervention - in order to recognise the right of humanitarian intervention as universally valid - and the way in which the architecture of global security could be erected around forces drawn from the UN and regional military organisations; this would mean extending the criterion of threatening international peace to include the criterion of protecting people from violation of their safety and fundamental rights;

33. Welcomes the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a major breakthrough in international law which introduces the international criminal liability of the individual; calls for the EU and its Member States to play an active part in the campaign that will be needed for ratification of the Treaty, particularly in relation to the United States, and to provide the resources necessary for the operation of the ICC;

34. Wishes to thank the 71 States that have already signed the Treaty establishing the ICC and invites them to ratify it as soon as possible and asks the Member States to work to ensure that recalcitrant countries also recognise its jurisdiction on their territory, in order that the ICC can start working effectively without delay;

Financial reform

35. Recognises the dire financial situation confronting the UN and reiterates its

call in its resolution of 8 October 1998⁽⁷⁾ to all UN Member States to pay their dues in full on time;

Interinstitutional provisions

36. Calls on the Council to transmit its Memorandum which it submitted to the last UN General Assembly to the European Parliament pursuant to future Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union with a view to it being adopted as a 'common strategy' within the meaning of future Article 13(2) of the Treaty;

37. Calls on the Presidency of the Council and the Commission, pursuant to Article J.7 of the Treaty on European Union, to report to it as soon as possible on the Union's position concerning the specific points contained in this resolution within the context of forthcoming meetings of the United Nations, its agencies and bodies, and all other relevant international fora;

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38. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General of the WTO.

⁽¹⁾OJ C 61, 28.2.1994, p. 43.

⁽²⁾OJ C 287, 30.10.1995, p. 203.

⁽³⁾OJ C 323, 4.12.1995, p. 117.

⁽⁴⁾OJ C 210, 6.7.1998, p. 213.

⁽⁵⁾OJ C 210, 6.7.1998. p. 222.

⁽⁶⁾Minutes of that Sitting, Part II, Item 8.

⁽⁷⁾OJ C 328, 26.10.1998, p. 197.

