



Multilateralism at stake

Europe, global powers, regional organizations and UN system reform

Online Symposium

Thursday, 22 April 2021
14:00-16:30 CET via Zoom

The current gap between global challenges and global governance is calling for a renewal of the multilateral system. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the pre-existing problems. The current multipolar world and the strategic competition between the United States (US) and China makes this renewal even more urgent. The risk of a global bifurcation is there but it can be prevented by a new multilateralism.

The European Union (EU) should take the lead in this debate. First steps were taken with the joint Communication by the European Commission and the High Representative and with a report on multilateralism that is currently discussed in the European Parliament. The last General Assembly of the United Nations defined a mandate to renew the multilateral system and President Biden's election in the United States has created an important window of opportunity.

A renewal of multilateralism should be driven by the ambition to cope with the new challenges with more effective and legitimate solutions, which also includes the building of a more inclusive and fairer multilateral system.

The EU should define a strategy to promote change in this direction. Here are some proposals for strategic priorities for EU action to renew multilateralism. The EU should:

- Become a driving force for large and multi-stakeholder coalitions involving the relevant multilateral organisations and focusing on the following particular global challenges: pandemics, climate, SDGs supported by the digital transformation;
- Develop inter-regional partnerships with the same purpose, and involving the relevant multilateral organisations, with some regional organisations: ASEAN, the African Union and Mercosur as a priority;
- Use plurilateral fora and bilateral agreements to strengthen multilateral solutions;
- Build on these dynamics to push for new working methods, instruments and arrangements in the multilateral organisations.

The basic assumption of this approach is that the EU's engagement for a new multilateralism and EU open strategic autonomy should be not only be complementary but intertwined. In its bilateral agreements, the EU should push for multilateral solutions. In its multilateral work, EU should use bilateral agreements that reflect its values and unique internal experience.



DRAFT PROGRAMME

14.00-14.10 **Opening Remarks & Book Launch**

Maria João Rodrigues, President, Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)

14.10-15.10 **Panel 1 – The EU and regional organizations: Drivers of a new multilateralism?**

Daniela Schwarzer, Director, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)

Mario Telò, Former Coordinator, Globalisation, Europe and Multilateralism (GEM) research and doctoral education program and Emeritus President, Institute for European Studies, Université Libre de Bruxelles (IEE-ULB)

Félix Peña, Director, Institute of International Trade, ICBC Foundation; Professor, National University of Tres de Febrero (UNTREF); Founding Counselor and Member, Executive Committee of the Argentine Council for International Relations (CARI)

Evi Fitriani, Head, International Relations Department, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences and co-founder, ASEAN Study Center, University of Indonesia (tbc)

Frank Mattheis, Research Associate, University of Pretoria, specialised in regional cooperation, Africa and interregional relations

Chaired by **Maria João Rodrigues**, President, Foundation for European Progressive Studies

15.10-16.20 **Panel 2 – The UN and beyond: Reforming multilateral organisations**

Nico Schrijver, Professor of Public International Law, Leiden University; Former Member, Senate of the Dutch House of Parliament; Former Vice-Chair, UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Jo Leinen, Former Member, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) and Member, Committees for Environment, Foreign and Constitutional Affairs, President of China Delegation, European Parliament

Paolo Guerrieri, Visiting Professor, Paris School of International Affairs, Sciences-Po (Paris), Business School, University of San Diego; Former Senator and Member, Economic Budget Committee and the European Policy Committee, Italian Senate

Pascal Lamy, Former Director-General, World Trade Organization; President Emeritus, Institut Jacques Delors

Augusto Lopez-Claros, Executive Director, Global Governance Forum

Chaired by **Nicoletta Pirozzi**, Head of Programme on European Union and Institutional Relations Manager, Istituto Affari Internazionali



16.20-16.30 **Closing Remarks**

Michèle Griffin, Senior Policy Advisor to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, United Nations (tbc)

Javi López, Member, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) and Rapporteur, EU and Defence of Multilateralism, European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), European Parliament

BOOK LAUNCH



Reforming Multilateralism in Post-Covid times

For a more regionalised, binding and legitimate United Nations

EDITED BY

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ABOUT

The world is facing a paradox. While the Covid-19 pandemic has confirmed the transnational and common nature of challenges such as infectious diseases, climate change, security, financial stability, extreme poverty, sustainable development, terrorism, etc, the main responses have been at national and local level. And multilateral global governance has been shown to be particularly weak. Defending the past multilateral legacy, and at the same time simply implementing a few managerial adjustments, is not a serious option. We therefore bring substantial arguments showing the urgent need to build a 'new multilateralism'. This book is not about a dream. It underlines the dynamic trends that already exist, going beyond a mere continuity with the past and addressing with courage the current deficits in multilateral legitimacy, representation and efficiency.

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In the framework of the FEPS project on a new, fair and inclusive multilateralism, led by FEPS President, Maria João Rodrigues.

LINK

<https://www.feps-europe.eu/resources/publications/773-reforming-multilateralism-in-post-covid-times.html>



Previous FEPS publication, launched on the eve of the UN General Assembly



Renewing Multilateralism for the 21st Century

The role of the United Nations and of the European Union

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

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LINK

https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/policy-report_multilateralism-2020-09-15-pp.pdf