



MULTILATERALISM AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE TIMES OF COVID-19

Opinion Articles



The European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean are currently facing challenges of a diverse and complex nature. The magnitude of these challenges in principle forces a rethinking of the set of multilateral agendas and the conventional way of building public policies given the impact that this phenomenon has had on international relations, health environments, social policies and domestic economies. However, it also means re-launching a multilateral order of cooperation that produces viable alternatives around the global efforts needed to mitigate the effects of an equally global event.

The nature of the disease that the world is facing calls for the strengthening of multilateral bodies. These are the instruments of collective relations between societies and governments that really exist and the most appropriate instruments for cooperation, management and common decision-making at this time.

When we talk about multilateralism and cooperation, we have to stress that the pandemic has shown that common international problems cannot be solved in isolation or in an autarchic manner. Cooperation, coordination, collective production of policies are necessary at times like these.

By virtue of the above, this edition of the Newsletter of the European Union - Latin America and the Caribbean Foundation (EU-LAC), an international organisation dedicated to promote the strategic partnership between both regions, has the contribution of the highest representatives of the Co-Presidencies of its Board of Governors: Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (EU) and Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (LAC), on what are the roles of multilateralism and cooperation in

the global efforts against the COVID-19 but also on the role that these two regions are called to play during and after the pandemic. Beyond the concepts, the presence of the two authorities also indicates the importance given to the relations between the two regions and to one of their instruments, the EU-LAC Foundation. We hope to repay that obligation with work.

Maria Helena André, Director of the Bureau for Workers' Activities of the International Labour Organization, also contributed on how the world should look after the crisis, based on an economic model of structural transformation, a global employment pact for the future, social protection and dialogue, and with multilateralism and international cooperation as a necessity.

Monica Hirst of the State University of Rio de Janeiro and professor at the Torcuato Di Tella University and Bernabé Malacalza of the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research and professor of the PhD in Economic Development at the National University of Quilmes take stock of the factors that are articulated in the process of international policy change and the challenges facing multilateralism.

Dr Jan Wouters of the EU Jean Monnet Chair and Director of the Centre for Global Governance Studies in Leuven, KU Leuven, shares with us some reflections on the crisis of multilateralism and the leadership role that the European Union could assume in the multilateral system, for which its strategic partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean is essential.

Adrián Bonilla
Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation



The way forward: Mexican multilateralism in the face of global crises

Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon

Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico

The crisis we are currently experiencing is unprecedented. At the very least, it affects two areas that are essential for our societies: public health and economic activity. In both fields, the pernicious effects of the crisis are multiplying, with rising unemployment rates, saturated public health systems, entire industries paralysed and devastated capitals for tourism- to mention just a few examples. However, we should include a third category that will also suffer from the ravages of the current pandemic: political institutions and the architecture of the international system.

I say “unprecedented” because the crisis triggered by SARS-CoV-2 combines the effects of the Great Depression of 1929 with the damage to public health caused by the Spanish Flu of 1918, the last great pandemic. The current situation brings together both categories in the context of a more deeply interconnected international arena. This degree of global interpenetration not only facilitates the exponential spread of the virus but also makes it impossible to shield against it. It rules out the viability of the isolationist option.

The virus spreads non-discriminately between individuals and between nations. Its central feature, as it is for any pandemic, is its universal presence. In this sense, the conclusion is clear: the world will be as immune to COVID-19 as the weakest of its links. However, there are voices that opt for the path of self-sufficiency. Some countries have decided not to participate in the global coordination exercise needed to address the pandemic. Others have chosen to hinder or even sabotage it. This is not Mexico’s vision. It is, in fact, its exact opposite.

Even before the crisis, the Government of Mexico has followed

the multilateral path on the basis of a robust and progressive foreign policy. Under the current circumstances, we have reiterated our conviction in favour of cooperation under an international system of common rules. The examples are compelling. Recently, Mexico submitted to the United Nations General Assembly a resolution to promote transparent, affordable and fair access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to deal with COVID-19, particularly for developing countries. Under Mexico’s leadership, the proposal received strong support from the international community: 179 countries, or 93 per cent of the total, cosponsored the resolution, which was adopted by consensus in the General Assembly.

The Mexican resolution is based on solidarity and renewed international cooperation, whose origin lies in the words that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador offered at the Special Summit of G20 Leaders. In March of this year, the President of Mexico emphasised the need to protect the most vulnerable countries and to base our public policies on scientific knowledge. Under the wise leadership of Ambassador Juan Ramon de la Fuente, Mexico not only pushed through the resolution described above but also achieved a seat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and secured re-election to the Economic and Social Council - another unequivocal sign of Mexico’s multilateral conviction. As the current *pro tempore* president of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, Mexico will represent Latin America in two of the main forums of the international system.

The Government of Mexico has accepted the invitation extended by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, Erna



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Solberg, to cooperate in the development of the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine. Mexico will join the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) to combine efforts in the development, production and distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine. In addition to committing a donation of 1 million euros for the corresponding research protocols, Mexico extends the call to Caribbean and Latin American nations to amplify our region's impact on this initiative.

The *Global Agreement* between Mexico and the European Union, which will be successfully concluded between the end of this year and the beginning of next, deserves a special mention. The next step in our strategic relationship will be a solid boost to the multiple commercial and investment ties that unite us, as well as to the different bilateral cooperation projects that we subscribe to under the same set of principles. The protection of human rights, the commitment to a sustainable environmental agenda, the advancement of feminism in the international arena, the intangible value of art and culture, the certainty of democratic legal frameworks and the broad social protection schemes of the welfare state are central values that we celebrate, share and lead together at the global level. The future between the European Union and Mexico is undoubtedly encouraging.

To Mexico's multilateral agenda, it is worth adding our participation in the Alliance for Multilateralism, at the invitation of France and Germany; Mexico's membership in the Pacific Alliance and the MIKTA group¹; as well as our candidacy to head the World Trade Organization (WTO), deposited with our experienced and strong negotiator, Jesus Seade Kuri. These are just a few examples that illustrate the underlying principle: Mexico has a robust and effective foreign policy, in clear defence of the multilateral order.

I referred previously to the historical background and the political effects of the pandemic. This leads me to the following conclusion: the profound rupture represented by the Second World War gave rise to the Bretton Woods system and the European Union. In clear contrast, the repercussions of the 2008-2009 financial crisis fuelled a wave of nationalism and isolationism that put the international scaffolding of the twentieth century

at risk. This implies that historical schisms have an impact on our values and political institutions. Mexico and Europe are unequivocal defenders of the multilateral order. Now is the right time not only to defend it further, but also to rethink a successful international architecture equipped to meet the challenges of the future. Today, the European Union and Mexico are expanding their dialogue and their alliance to do so together.

¹ Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and Australia.



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Effective multilateralism in the face of global risks

Josep Borrell Fontelles

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The clear shortcomings in the global management of the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate the lasting relevance of Ulrich Beck, the brilliant German sociologist who died in 2015. Beck left us with profound and insightful reflections on the consequences of globalisation. He was also the originator of the famous global risk society theory, which shaped the debate in the 1990s.

This theory was based on a clear contradiction in the phenomenon of globalisation: on the one hand, nation states' capacity for action was shrinking as a result of greater connectivity and interdependence; on the other, meanwhile, the system continued to be based on the traditional concept of sovereignty, anchored in the territorial state.

It defined a large, transnational space with no adequate regulatory frameworks and institutions, and without the necessary mechanisms for managing the externalities specific to that process. On that basis, Beck arrived at the conclusion that the global risk society involved serious 'organised irresponsibility'. Global risks would entail a sort of 'enforced cosmopolitanism', or cosmopolitan realpolitik, on the assumption that the nation state and territorial approaches to national security would no longer be suitable for global risk management. It would therefore be necessary to have effective multilateral institutions and rules placing nation states within a framework of collective action, without which it would be impossible to deploy an effective response.

The idea of effective multilateralism to address global risks has been taken on board by the European Union when it has had

to outline its external action. In the Global Strategy, which was adopted in 2016 and is still in force, the European Union identified building societal resilience as one of its main objectives. This concept refers to the ability of each country and society to absorb and overcome an external shock. That objective called for an EU that knew it was vulnerable to global risks. It was also an objective of our cooperation with less-resilient developing countries, and of a policy explicitly focused on reforming and strengthening the multilateral system to make it more legitimate and more effective. This is one of the areas where the European Union reconciles values and interests: multilateralism is among the fundamental principles of the EU, and at the same time a means of and key strategy for achieving its objectives, and those of its partners, in terms of security, prosperity and freedom.

The 2008 financial crisis, and more recently the COVID-19 crisis, have shown that Beck's ideas were more than a mere academic exercise. As an expression of 'global risk', the systemic extent of the COVID-19 crisis seems to be due more to the lack of preparedness of governments, societies and the multilateral response than to the disease itself, although this virus is admittedly particularly harmful and difficult to diagnose. Likewise, COVID-19 is also a vindication of the focus on resilience building that the European Union set out in its Global Strategy, both in its own institution building and in its cooperation with third countries and with multilateral organisations. It is too early to take stock of the long-term consequences of the pandemic, but one of the key lessons is that societal resilience depends in large part on international cooperation and effective multilateralism. It requires effective, representative and stronger regional



and global organisations, and more coordinated action at national level that is consistent with what has been agreed within these shared frameworks.

The COVID-19 crisis also demonstrates that, when dealing with infectious diseases, health is defined as a 'public good'. That is to say it is a good with positive externalities, which benefits everyone regardless of whether or not they have contributed to the cost of it. At global level, in order to guarantee global public goods such as public health – and prevent 'public evils' such as the coronavirus pandemic – robust international cooperation is essential to ensure that action is taken in concert and there are no 'weak links' where a state has fewer capacities or resources. Of course, there are different starting points in terms of capacities and responsibilities, but without cooperation and mutual support, the impact will be worse for everyone.

As regards COVID-19 there are a number of priority actions which the European Union is undertaking at multilateral level, and which are of particular relevance for Latin America.

Firstly, we are providing additional financial support to multilateral bodies and initiatives, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, in order to tackle COVID-19 as well as other diseases for which the immunisation campaigns should not be neglected. We are working to share resources with a view to the production of new treatments and an effective vaccine, which we believe should be accessible to all.

Secondly, we are calling for a concerted macroeconomic response, both in Europe and worldwide, to facilitate access to the necessary funding. This is the only way that all countries will be able to meet the most immediate health needs and also adopt comprehensive monetary and tax programmes to support income, employment and productive activity, thereby widening the budget and policy margins of each government. To that end, we support a strong response by the G-20, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral financial institutions, with the involvement of central banks and governments.

Thirdly, we advocate concerted and orderly action to re-establish trade and international mobility, meeting both health requirements and the imperative of a recovery in employment and economic activity, with nobody left behind.

Fourthly, we must take concerted action to tackle the disinformation campaigns that undermine the response to the pandemic and try to exploit this situation in order to polarise and divide societies, weaken the public sphere of democratic debate, and gain advantages in terms of power politics within the international system.

Finally, this crisis has arisen to a large extent because of the shortcomings and weaknesses in a development model that has serious failings in terms of social inclusion, opportunity, and respect for the biosphere's environmental limits. As part of the major multilateral commitment that is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the European Union considers that this crisis provides an opportunity to promote new 'green pacts', which will ensure a fair transition to new patterns of production and consumption and more inclusive and sustainable global development, as we have identified in the context of the partnership between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the region of the world with which the EU has the closest institutional links. The Americas are also home to a large number of the partners with whom we share a desire to promote a multilateral order based on international law. A strong relationship between Europe and Latin America is now more important than ever. In recent months, we have all faced the same threat. A virus that travels without a passport and does not respect borders. Each country has responded in its own way: some earlier, some later; some have been more affected, and others less. But what is clear is that we will only overcome this crisis if we are united.

The EU will continue to increase its support to Latin America. Applying the 'Team Europe' approach, the EU has redirected around a thousand million euro to meet the basic needs of some of the countries in the region. But we can and must do more, starting with stronger medium-term support under the new EU budget for 2021-2027.

As Ulrich Beck showed us, in the face of global risks our action cannot be guided by a parochial outlook or the 'epidemiological nationalism' that has sprung up in this pandemic, because global governance and collective action are essential for survival, both in terms of health and in terms of our shared prosperity.



The world should look different after the crisis Building Back to a Better Normal through Multilateralism and International Cooperation

Maria Helena André

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Owing to COVID-19, the issues and concerns are many, both due to a severe health crisis threatening the wellbeing of millions, but also due to the resultant economic and social impacts. To respond, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is drawing from a considerable wealth of experience shaped over years of setting international labour standards, policies and frameworks. Coming in handy in this regard is the **ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization**. Adopted in 2008 by the ILC, the declaration place full, productive employment and decent work at the centre of economic and social policies. The declaration is anchored on four mutually inclusive strategic objectives: employment, social protection, social dialogue, tripartism, and fundamental principles and rights at work, with gender equality and non-discrimination as crosscutting themes (ILO, 2008). Overall, the **ILO COVID-19 policy framework** (ILO, 2020) entrenched in the **ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of work (ILO, 2019)** is the all-encompassing approach for tackling the economic and social impacts of the crisis and assisting in “building back to a better normal”.

1. Toward a structural transformation economic model

The World Bank describes the ongoing crisis as the deepest global recession in eighty years with the global GDP expected to shrink by 5.2 percent in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). The situation is dire for the Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) region as the regional economy is expected to contract by 7.2 percent in 2020. This is a much steeper decline than that experienced during the global economic and financial crisis

further highlighting the fragility of the LAC regional economies.

From a macro-economic perspective and in the short term, stimulus packages have to ensure that fiscal and monetary policies are injecting direct support into the economy targeting particularly the sectors most severely affected by the crisis. Various measures such as public investment programmes providing direct employment opportunities to those who have lost jobs and livelihoods as a direct and indirect result of the crisis should be considered. Investments in both physical and digital infrastructure and in the green economy and active labour market policies to support workers throughout the crisis are paramount.

In the long term, countries need policy approaches that focus on sustained employment creation and resilience to shocks. This requires that industrial policies focus on the structural transformation of the economy. Within that, the state can promote industrial policy as a consumer, financier, producer or a regulator, overseeing close coordination of the fiscal, monetary and industrial and employment policies. Ultimately, the fiscal policy needs to capture and invest resource rents into long-term economic, physical and human infrastructure including transportation and energy to support other economic potentials and boost intra-regional trade.

2. A Global Jobs Pact for the Future

The ILO estimates that the loss in working hours is equivalent to 305 million full time jobs before the end of the first half of



2020. This is a huge drop compared to the estimated 22 million full time job losses experienced during the 2008-2009 global economic and financial crisis. While all regions are highly impacted, the Americas with 13.1 per cent present the largest losses in hours worked in the 2nd quarter of 2020 followed by Europe and Central Asia (12.9 per cent) (ILO, 2020).

As a response to the jobs crisis, the ILO reflects back to the **Global Jobs Pact**, adopted in 2009 in response to the global economic and financial crisis. At that time, the ILO and its constituents made the point that “the world should look different after this crisis” accepting that global challenges require overarching global responses. The constituents called on donor countries and multilateral agencies to consider providing funding, including through existing crisis resources toward the recovery process. This call is more relevant than ever, reiterated by the ILO constituents with the adoption of the ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work in June 2019.

3. Social protection and social dialogue as the greatest equalizers

History has taught that major crises create opportunities for accelerating social, economic and political reforms. Social protection is undeniably an effective fiscal tool for economic and social recovery. ILO Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors offers a multi-dimensional and functional social, health and economic role to ease immediate deprivations and cushion against future shocks. Besides the social protection instruments, the ILO Recommendation 205 ‘Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience’ provides strategic guidance in times of crisis. These instruments can guide all countries irrespective of their level of development toward more sustainable and crisis resilient social protection systems.

Another must have ingredient to recover from this crisis is social dialogue, a process of decision making likely to gain more traction in the remaining and recovery phase of the crisis. As stated in the [UN General Assembly Resolution on the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work](#), this is a key pillar of sustainable development and should therefore be a priority objective for national policies and international cooperation. The Resolution requests all UN entities to mainstream the Centenary Declaration in their policies and in

the Cooperation Frameworks (UN, 2019). In these dialogues, workers organizations should call for the strengthening of occupational safety and health measures in all work places, including those in informal and platform economies and other work place arrangements such as domestic work. Workers should call for the adaptation of work arrangements and methods; fight against discrimination and exclusion and for the provision of access to health services to all including expansion of access to paid leave (ILO, 2020).

4. Multilateralism and International Cooperation- a must

The ILO Centenary Declaration highlights the need to intensify cooperation within the multilateral system, strengthening policy coherence while acknowledging that in a globalised world no country can unilaterally govern the forces of a globalised economy. COVID is enabling us to strive for better global governance and policymaking that is firmly entrenched in the Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) that “leave no one behind” as captured in the UN framework for Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 (UN, 2020).

Furthermore, multilateral institutions should view and experience this crisis as a solemn opportunity to fine tune global policy making to today’s interconnected world to build back to a better normal. “Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic has re-emphasized the importance of a multilateral approach to sustainable development; the importance of combining social, economic and environmental priorities. It has confirmed the reality of the interconnectedness of different national economies – regardless of whether niche political ideologies choose to recognize this – and that uncoordinated national actions will not be effective in minimizing the virus’ impact or eradicating it all together” (André, 2020).



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Testing keys to reinvent multilateralism

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The COVID-19 crisis shows the languid state of the global multilateral architecture that was so laboriously built from the second half of the 20th century onwards. This deterioration and paralysis of multilateralism occurs within the framework of processes of change in international policy which, although they were already taking place, are gaining intensity and incorporate new meanings derived from the pandemic crisis.

Three factors are involved in this process: (i) the breakdown of the post-war international order, (ii) the impact of the United States-China confrontation, and (iii) the failures and frustrations accumulated over decades in the history of multilateral institutions.

First, the breakdown of the post-war international order and the crisis of US hegemony has led to the prostration and fatigue of Wilsonian ideology. Over the last three decades, Washington has progressively abdicated its global political leadership, opting first for reluctance and later for neglect and disinterest.

The second factor is the result of the acceleration in the configuration of a bipolar order, in which the confrontation between the United States and China straddles the framework of the world system. This division has stimulated a political-ideological confrontation with paralysing effects for the United Nations Security Council. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also seen its financial conditions affected by the clash, and the autonomy of its deliberations compromised by the recent announcement by the United States of its withdrawal.

Finally, the discredit that hangs over multilateralism is marked by a deep crisis of legitimacy that affects its decision-making processes. Trends towards nationalism, bilateralism and securitisation of global issues, together with the lack of international cooperation, erode the space for multilateral policies. This follows the gap between the challenges of real interdependence and the existing mandates of multilateralism to address them. Multilateral institutions do not have a political or institutional mandate, nor can they count on either human or material resources to exercise authority and assume functional tasks of global gov-



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ernance. At WHO, for example, there have been no problems in cleaning up day-to-day bureaucracy, dealing with budgetary constraints, resisting pressure from the transnational pharmaceutical industry and maintaining some space for action.

What these three factors lead to is the deterioration and paralysis of the global multilateral architecture, especially of the United Nations System. Breaking this trend requires political will, a call to action and inclusive logic. In the case of the new coronavirus pandemic, an effective collective response will depend on a qualitative leap in the area of global governance. Conceived in the second post-war period and anchored in the hegemony of the United States, multilateralism has three major challenges ahead: to revitalise itself, to repower itself and even to reconfigure itself.

For the first of these challenges, the revitalisation of multilateralism as a tool of global governance, a strong signal from high politics will be needed, which should come from the G20. During the 2008 crisis, the G20 assumed a proactive role in intergovernmental coordination and linkage between the major economies and emerging powers. At the last emergency meeting convened by Saudi Arabia in March, the group's declaration postponed the definition of its response until the annual summit of Heads of State, scheduled for the end of November.

The challenges facing global governance require politically-driven collective responses, they also demand a substantial injection of resources for the creation of fiscal spaces and the strengthening of the capacity to provide public goods across the globe. These actions depend on a Herculean effort to revitalise multilateralism and international cooperation. Given the deadlock, the G20 must reach the political agreement needed to break this and avoid a planetary crisis of even greater dimensions.

Meanwhile, the second challenge, the revitalisation of multilateralism, will only be possible if a plurilateral consensus is reached to move forward in an agenda for the future. The United States-China confrontation acts as a corrosive that reduces the margin of multilateralism and constrains the response capacity of global governance. Although it will be difficult to think of collective coordination without the understanding of the two big players, the European Union, accompanied by some Latin American, African and Asian countries and some power-

ful non-governmental organisations, could be able to make a significant contribution to the development of a plural agenda focused on the notion of global public goods.

For example, the arrival of Mexico and Norway as non-permanent members of the Security Council, countries that are also promoters of the Coalition for Innovations in Epidemic Preparedness (CEPI), could help unblock this space and advance towards an agreement to accept public health as a global public good. The same should apply to the climate change and humanitarian crisis agendas.

The challenge of reconfiguring multilateralism will require its disengagement from logics that subordinate it to conditionalities, coercive practices and prescriptions that are subordinated to pre-established interests coming from poles of power. One step in this direction could be a call by the UN General Assembly to address the reform of the mandate of multilateral institutions, avoiding the failure of the UN bureaucracy. The sense of urgency can only be imposed with creativity and credibility.

The essential inclusive logic, in order to ensure innovative action in response to this shock, will gain in diversity if it adds the regional dimension that integrates the international community. The specificities of Latin American multilateralism based on the ethos of development and social inclusion, of the European experience of social welfare and regulation for environmental sustainability, of the Asian experience of productive interdependence and technological cooperation and of the African experience of association of post-colonial bases of peace and preservation of identities represent essential inputs. Interregional articulation can be an optimal path to design and implement strategies for pandemic prevention and may lead to multilateralism regaining credibility. Reinforcing the notion of common interest will be vital for the effective governance of global public goods such as health, humanitarian protection, the fight against inequality and environmental sustainability.

(**)Some of the ideas in this article have been developed by the authors at ¿Podrá reinventarse el multilateralismo? El orden internacional y el coronavirus, Nueva Sociedad no. 287 (May-June 2020).

Available at: <https://nuso.org/articulo/podra-reinventarse-el-multilateralismo/>



Two Birthdays and a Funeral. Some Thoughts on the Crisis of Multilateralism

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An “UNhappy birthday”: in these terms The Economist referred to the 75th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco on 26 June 1945.² The Charter entered into force on 24 October 1945 and the United Nations (UN) came into being, initially with 51 Member States. The fact that the UN still exists today, and has grown into a worldwide organization of 193 countries, is a success in its own right. But there is not much cause for celebration. Multilateralism is facing enormous challenges today, and the corona crisis has only made them worse – partially because personal contact between diplomats and world leaders has faded away, at least temporarily. While the crisis of multilateralism affects both global and regional organizations, this contribution only focuses on two global institutions that celebrate a special anniversary this year: the UN and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which came into being in 1995 and is therefore 25 years old in 2020. The “funeral” mentioned provocatively in the title does – fortunately – not refer to an organization, but to the lack of international leadership of the US. Let us further explore this.

First of all, one should point to a paradox. In spite of the ever-expanding globalization and the corresponding need for more international cooperation to tackle transboundary problems – could there be anything more convincing than the current Covid-19 crisis to illustrate the point? – multilateralism has not been doing well in the past years. With “multilateralism” we mean the institutionalized cooperation between three or more countries. Let us take a quick look at both the UN and the

WTO. Much has to do with international power shifts, changing attitudes of countries and the fragmentation of the global governance landscape, to name just a few factors. Let us, however, take a look specifically at the UN and the WTO.

At age 75, the UN is suffering from various ailments, from burocratization to politicization, underfunding, understaffing, overload (or mission creep) and mutual competition between its constituent parts. Most of all, the dynamics to significantly reform the UN and its components are currently close to inexistent. Everyone knows, for instance, that the Security Council in its current composition, with five permanent members from the northern hemisphere which each have a veto right, needs to be reformed urgently. While the Cold War is now 30 years behind us, new tensions – in particular between the West on the one hand and China and Russia on the other hand – are paralysing the functioning of the Council in important areas, from the war in Syria to the response to Covid-19. It is telling that on 8 May the US vetoed a draft resolution on a cease-fire for armed conflicts in times of the corona crisis – an important initiative of the UN Secretary-General – because the draft contained an implicit reference to the World Health Organization. One thing is certain: in its current composition and functioning the Security Council is not able to take on the great challenges of the next 75 years. It needs both a stronger legitimacy and a higher efficiency, but countries are totally divided about the way forward. And the current permanent members can also veto any attempt at Council reform.

One would be inclined to think that a younger organization like the WTO – only a quarter of a century old – would have few-

² <http://espresso.economist.com/ad5db5924e3e97ed8a387a499e-fa9fa0>



er sorrows. Nothing is further from the truth. The multilateral trading system is currently under immense pressure: new trade agreements hardly come about because of a lack of consensus among the WTO's 164 Members, the Trump administration has launched various trade wars, and the US has brought the WTO's Appellate Body – so vital for the legally correct settlement of trade disputes – to dysfunction by blocking the (re-) appointment of its judges. Now that the organization's Director-General Azevêdo has thrown in the towel prematurely, there is an urgent need to find a competent successor. With all of this and the proliferation of preferential trade agreements, the global multilateral trade order is in danger of slowly fading away.

All of this brings us to the current lack of international leadership. In the construction of the post-World War II international order the shaping of global institutions has – with some exceptions, such as the International Criminal Court – always happened with American leadership. It was the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, which in the 1940s took the lead in designing the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank). A visibly emotional president Harry Truman, when signing the UN Charter in San Francisco on 26 June 1945, emphasized that the Charter puts a special responsibility on powerful states to reign in their power and to use it for the benefit of world peace: *'We all have to recognize – no matter how great our strength – that we must deny ourselves the license to do always as we please.'* He rightly argued that the UN Charter could only work if UN Member States were determined to use it, and that, *'if we fail to use it, we shall betray all those who have died so that we might meet here in freedom and safety to create it. If we seek to use it selfishly – for the advantage of any one nation or any small group of nations – we shall be equally guilty of that betrayal.'* It is language which we are not used anymore from a US president. On the contrary, in his address to the UN General Assembly in September 2019, the current US president emphasized that *'the future does not belong to globalists. The future belongs to patriots'*. The year before he had assured the General Assembly that the US would *'never surrender America's sovereignty to an unelected, unaccountable, global bureaucracy'* and that *'responsible nations must defend against threats to sovereignty ... from global governance'*. Under the present US administration, the United States of America is increasingly withdrawing itself from international institutions and

international agreements, and refuses to take a leading role in the existing multilateral frameworks. Ian Bremmer rightly describes the current corona crisis as the first global crisis without leadership (*'the first G-Zero crisis'*).

Who can take over the international leadership role of the US? In the UN system, it is clear that China is quickly filling the vacuum. It has recently become the second financer of the UN and of UN peace operations (after the US, but before Japan and all European countries); it already counts 4 Directors-General at UN agencies, and a Chinese candidacy for a fifth one was defeated in March of this year; and it is promoting its "Belt and Road Initiative" under the flag of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. However, it is rather debatable whether a Chinese domination of the UN would be desirable, especially from the point of view of the respect and the promotion of human rights and democracy.

What about the European Union? The EU has always been enthusiastically committed to working together with the UN. Its own founding Treaty – Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union – explicitly endorses its commitment to *'promote multilateral solutions to common problems, in particular in the framework of the United Nations'*. A too dominant China within the UN system could lessen this enthusiasm to work together with the UN, though. The best we can hope for is that Europe will show reinvigorated leadership within the UN and the UN system, if possible with a number of like-minded democracies from other regions which share its fundamental values and commitment to multilateralism, such as, for instance, Latin America and the Caribbean, region with which the EU has a strategic partnership since 1999.

However, while coordination between the 27 EU Member States takes place in a number of UN gremia, this is by no means a generalized practice. Our Member States are often still pursuing their individual national interests within UN organs, programmes, funds and agencies. They are also greatly attached to their own institutional position, privileges and seat. And the UN, it should be said, continues to be a club of and for nation states, which complicates a serious role for the EU – itself a regional organization. It is time for a thorough reflection and, hopefully, a new strategy in this respect.



EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC



NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE EU-LAC FOUNDATION

Dr Adrián Bonilla (Ecuador) assumes functions as new Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation for a four-year term.

Doctorate and Master's degrees in International Relations from the University of Miami. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Public and Social Sciences from the Central University of Ecuador. Before joining the EU-LAC Foundation, Adrián Bonilla was National Secretary of Higher Education with ministerial rank in his country (2018-2019); served as Secretary-General for the entire region at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences FLACSO (2012-2016), and also as Director of the Office in Ecuador (2004-2012) of this international academic organisation.

Dr Bonilla has published as an author and editor fifteen books and numerous articles in prestigious academic journals and books in Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and the United States. He has been a lecturer and visiting professor at several universities and is current member of the editorial bodies of Global Governance, Contexto Internacional and the CIDOB journal D'Afers Internacionals, amongst other specialised publications. His work topics are related to foreign policy, security and multilateralism in Latin America and the Caribbean.

He was also Vice-President of the Advisory Board on Foreign Relations in Ecuador, and has also served as an international electoral observer. He has been a governing member of the Council on International Relations of Latin America (RIAL), of the Latin American Defence Studies Network (RESDAL), of the Global-Observatory of European Union-Latin America Relations (OBREAL) and of the Ibero-American Network of International Relations (RIBEI).

Publications of the Foundation



<https://eulacfoundation.org/en/documents/revisiting-bi-regional-relations-eu-latin-american-dialogue-and-diversification>

REVISITING BI-REGIONAL RELATIONS: THE EU-LATIN AMERICAN DIALOGUE AND DIVERSIFICATION OF INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

This collective book presents the papers submitted to discussion at the panel “The Euro-Latin American dialogue and diversification of interregional cooperation” during the 9th Congress of CEISAL that took place in Bucharest in July 2019. The focus of this panel was on discussion of the evolution, state-of-the art and paradigmatic changes in EU-Latin American (and, to some extent, Caribbean) relations, and the identification of pathways for strengthening these collaboration efforts in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. The contributions approach these topics of EU-Latin American dialogue and cooperation from different perspectives, including the overarching bi-regional, multilateral framework, traditional bi-lateral cooperation, as well as alternative, sub-regional or even local (city-driven) networks.

Many current bi-regional processes are analysed and reflected throughout the book. For instance, the role of the social dimension in EU-Latin American and Caribbean cooperation and dialogue; general perspectives of EU-LAC cooperation and its evolution during a period of 30 years; two Scandinavian countries, Sweden, an EU member state, and Norway, a member of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA), and their respective approaches to cooperation with Latin America; the contribution of the EUROsocial+ and Socieux programmes as examples of EU-initiated development cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean countries; the role of subnational units in interregional cooperation; and some perspectives on Euro-Latin American dialogue and international cooperation about the necessary changes to jointly achieve the SDGs.

EU-LAC Webinars

Webinars Serie on COVID-19

Following its mandate to promote dialogue on priority issues on the bi-regional agenda, the EU-LAC Foundation is organising a series of webinars to compare and share experiences to face the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 and to discuss the current challenges of the two regions. These webinars have been held since April and are accessible to anyone with just one registration process. In addition, recordings

are available on the Foundation's website for those who have not been able to follow them online.

You can access the recordings of the webinars through the following link:

<https://eulacfoundation.org/es/videos-de-la-fundación-eu-lac>

4th EU-LAC WEBINAR ON COVID-19 25 MAY 2020

“EU-LAC Scientific Cooperation for the management of Pandemics”

The fourth webinar was opened by the Co-chairs of the Foundation's Board of Governors, represented by Ambassador Mauricio Escanero, Head of Mission of Mexico to the EU, and by Claudia Gintersdorfer, Head of Americas Regional Division at the European External Action Service.

In this event participated Antonella Cavallari, Secretary General of the Italo-Latin American Institute (IILA); Gustavo Cabrera Rodríguez, Director General of Scientific and technical Cooper-

ation of AMEXCID; María Alejandra Davidziuk, Coordinator of Argentina-European Union Link Office on Science, Technology and Innovation at the MINCYT; Esther Rodríguez, Coordinator of Projects Office at Instituto de Salud Carlos III, and; Joy St John, Executive Director of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA).

 Video: bit.ly/2BHAGeU



EU-LAC WEBINAR ABOUT COVID-19

EU-LAC SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF PANDEMICS



MONDAY, 25 MAY 2020
17:00 - 18:30 (CEST)

PANELISTS

4TH EU-LAC WEBINAR

OPENING



Claudia Gintersdorfer
Head of Americas
Regional Division -
European External
Action Service (EEAS)



Antonella Cavallari
Secretary-General of
the Istituto Italo-
Latinoamericano
(IILA)



Gustavo Cabrera
Director-General of
Technical and
Scientific Cooperation
AMEXCID
Representative of the
Government of Mexico
(PPT CELAC)



Joy St John
Executive Director
of the
Caribbean Public
Health Agency
(CARPHA)



Mauricio Escanero
Ambassador
Head of the Mission of
Mexico to the EU - PPT
CELAC



Esther Rodríguez
Coordinator of
Projects Office
Instituto de
Salud Carlos III



María Alejandra Davidziuk
Coordinator of the Liaison
Office in Argentina -
European Union for
Science, Technology and
Innovation at MINCYT

Opening: Paola Amadei, Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation
Moderator: Ramon Torrent, President of the OBREAL-Global Observatory

EU-LAC Webinars

Webinars Serie on COVID-19

**5th EU-LAC WEBINAR
ON COVID-19**
15 JUNE 2020

“Pandemic and Infodemic: Experiences of journalists in the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean”

The 5th edition of the EU-LAC Webinar was opened by the Co-chairs of the Foundation’s Board of Governors, Ambassador Edita Hrdá, Executive Director for the Americas at the European External Action Service (EEAS), Ambassador Mauricio Escanero, Head of Mission of Mexico to the European Union and Representative of the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC, and by Ms Hilde Hardeman, Head of the Service of Foreign Policy Instruments of the European Commission.

In this exercise, moderated by Carlos Malamud, Senior Analyst at Elcano Royal Institute, and Juan de Oñate, Director of the Association of European Journalists, the following

journalists participated: Wesley Gibbings (Trinidad and Tobago) - Association of Caribbean Media Workers; Tom Hennigan (Ireland) – Irish Times; Adriana León (Peru) – Instituto Prensa y Sociedad; Tatiana Mora (Chile) – Independent journalist; Óscar Schlenker (Venezuela) - Deutsche Welle; Helene Zuber (Germany) – Der Spiegel; and the academic Ángel Badillo of the University of Salamanca and Elcano Royal Institute. Roberto Da Rin (Italy) – Reuters could not participate due to technical issues.

 Video: bit.ly/3exRJhL



EU-LAC WEBINARS ABOUT COVID-19
PANDEMIC AND INFODEMIC: EXPERIENCES OF JOURNALISTS
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

MONDAY, JUNE 15TH, 16:00-17:45h CEST



OPENING	PANELISTS	5TH EU-LAC WEBINAR
 Edita Hrdá Managing Director for the Americas European External Action Service  Mauricio Escanero Ambassador Head of Mission of Mexico to the EU PPT CELAC  Hilde Hardeman Head of Service for Foreign Policy Instruments European Commission	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Ángel Badillo (Spain) Elcano Royal Institute </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Wesley Gibbings (Trinidad and Tobago) Association of Caribbean Media Workers </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Adriana León (Peru) Instituto Prensa y Sociedad </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Óscar Schlenker (Venezuela) Deutsche Welle </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Roberto Da Rin (Italy) Reuters </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Tom Hennigan (Ireland) Irish Times </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Tatiana Mora (Chile) Independent journalist </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Helene Zuber (Germany) Der Spiegel </div> </div>	
Opening: Paola Amadei, Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation Moderators: Carlos Malamud, Senior Analyst at Elcano Royal Institute and Juan de Oñate, Director of the Association of European Journalists		

EU-LAC Webinars

Webinars Serie on COVID-19

**6th EU-LAC WEBINAR
ON COVID-19**
29 JUNE 2020


“Tackling Climate Change in the Age of COVID-19”

This Webinar was inaugurated by Ambassador Mauricio Escanero, Head of Mission of Mexico to the European Union and Claudia Gintersdorfer, Head of the Americas Regional Division of the European External Action Service, both as Co-Chairs of the Foundation’s Board of Governors, as well as by Felice Zaccheo, Head of Unit for Regional Operations Latin America and the Caribbean of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation.

The seminar was moderated by Tania Guillén Bolaños - Associate Researcher at the Climate Service Centre Germany,

with the participation of Lara Lázaro-Touza - Senior Analyst at Elcano Royal Institute, Horst Pilger - Head of Sector of the Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation of the European Commission/EUROCLIMA+, Ismo Ulvila - Expert of the Directorate-General for Climate Action of the European Commission, Graham Watkins - Acting Chief, Climate Change Division of the Inter-American Development Bank and Colin Young - Executive Director, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre.

 Video: bit.ly/38ijGb5










EU-LAC WEBINARS ABOUT COVID-19

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

MONDAY, JUNE 29th, 16:00-17:45h CEST



OPENING	PANELISTS	6TH EU-LAC WEBINAR
<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  Mauricio Escanero Ambassador Head of Mission of Mexico to the EU PPT CELAC </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  Claudia Gintersdorfer Head of Americas Regional Division European External Action Service </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Felice Zaccheo Head of Unit Regional Operations Latin America and the Caribbean Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development European Commission </div>	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  Tania Guillén Moderator Researcher, Climate Service Centre Germany </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Ismo Ulvila Expert, Directorate-General for Climate Action, European Commission </div>	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  Lara Lázaro-Touza Senior Analyst, Elcano Royal Institute </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  Graham Watkins Acting Chief, Climate Change Division, Inter-American Development Bank </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Horst Pilger Head of Sector, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission EUROCLIMA+ </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Colin Young Executive Director, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre </div>
Opening: Paola Amadei, Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation		

Online Resources

Mapeo

Mapeo is an online database of various EU-LAC entities (universities, research centres, non-profit organisations, international organisations, SMEs, government entities/agencies, individual researchers and graduate students). This tool aims to promote possible alliances and synergies in thematic areas relevant to the bi-regional partnership.

You can register in the MAPEO database through the following link: <https://eulacfoundation.org/en/search/mapeo>

Digital Library

The Digital Library is a repository for knowledge and research on EU-LAC relations, offering a unique service for researchers and those interested in the bi-regional relationship and the topics covered by it. This virtual archive has more than 2,600 documents available free of charge for consultation, available at: <https://eulacfoundation.org/en/digital-library>

To access all the Foundation's publications, you can visit our website via the following link:

<https://eulacfoundation.org/en/search/ipaper>

Repository of the Foundation's Newsletter

The Foundation's thematic Newsletter repository has 11 editions dedicated to relevant issues to the bi-regional relations with contributions from decision-makers, officials, academics, experts and civil society representatives from more than 45 countries in the two regions, available through the following links:

2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable access by women and men to public services (bit.ly/2U2n5Vv)
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Investment and Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development" (bit.ly/2U2zqJD) "Culture as a tool for social transformation" (bit.ly/2U2mflx)
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable and Inclusive Cities as motors of social transformation" (bit.ly/2U2mtzn) Innovation and Technology" (bit.ly/3cr3d4P) Migration and Diaspora (bit.ly/2yWnbH7)
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Why should Latin America and the Caribbean be important to the European Union and viceversa" (bit.ly/2ZW8E9s) "New Development Paradigms: Building inclusive societies in the context of Agenda 2030" (bit.ly/2As4JXb) "Youth and Participation in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean" (bit.ly/301QoLK)
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Cultural Heritage in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean" (bit.ly/3gSL4k7) "Bi-regional Academic Cooperation" (bit.ly/2XP5IJ0)



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