

# EURO-LATIN AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



## **RESOLUTION:**

### **on international cooperation and multilateralism in a COVID-19 context**

based on the report by the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights

Co-rapporteurs:            Fernando Arce (Parlatino, Panama)  
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**Thursday, 27 July 2023 – Madrid, Spain**



## **EUROLAT – Resolution of 27 July – Madrid**

based on the report by the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights  
**on international cooperation and multilateralism in a COVID-19 context**

*The Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly,*

- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations of 26 June 1945,
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals,
- having regard to the September 2021 report by the UN Secretary-General entitled ‘Our Common Agenda’,
- having regard to the March 2020 report by the UN Secretary-General entitled ‘Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19’,
- having regard to the G7 Leaders’ communiqué of 13 June 2021 entitled ‘Our shared agenda for global action to build back better’,
- having regard to the work of the Alliance for Multilateralism, established in 2019,
- having regard to the November 2020 report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) entitled ‘COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean: An overview of government responses to the crisis’,
- having regard to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) report entitled ‘Social Panorama of Latin America 2020’, published in 2021,
- having regard to the Regulation (EU) 2021/947 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Joint Communication by the Commission and the European External Action Service entitled ‘on strengthening the EU’s contribution to rules-based multilateralism’<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Joint Communication by the Commission and the European External Action Service on the EU’s global response to COVID-19<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolutions: of 17 April 2020, on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences; of 25 November 2020, on foreign policy consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak; and of 29 April 2021, on the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America (2021/2645(RSP)),
- having regard to the resolution of the first session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean of 31 May 2023,

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of 9 June 2021.

<sup>2</sup> JOIN(2021) 3, of 17 February 2021.

<sup>3</sup> JOIN(2020) 11 final, 08 April 2020.

- having regard to the paper drafted by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the use of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to finance development efforts entitled ‘Un ensayo sobre los derechos especiales de giro (DEG) y su papel en la arquitectura financiera internacional’ (An essay on Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and their role in the international financial architecture),
  - having regard to the declarations by its Co-Presidents, in particular those of 30 March 2020 on the COVID-19 pandemic, 5 November 2020 on a comprehensive and bi-regional EU-LAC strategy to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and 6 May 2021 on cooperation with a view to the equitable and fair distribution of COVID-19 vaccines,
- A. whereas COVID-19 has affected the political, economic and social order on a global scale, and some of the changes that have arisen, such as digitisation or the fight against climate change, were already under way before the pandemic broke out, although it did accelerate those changes;
  - B. whereas one of the main effects at political level has been the strengthening of the role of state public administrations and the momentum in international cooperation, particularly in the fields of global health, economic policy coordination, the fight against climate change, technological development and trade, with the aim of reaching real global solutions in the interests of all;
  - C. whereas the pandemic has highlighted global interdependence and the obstacles that lay in the path of international cooperation, and it has confirmed that global challenges require a more coordinated and effective global partnership to overcome this and other potential pandemics, to underpin the economic and social recovery with more solid foundations and to jointly address other global challenges in a coordinated manner;
  - D. whereas the pandemic has revealed divergent visions of the future international order, some of which promote values and political and social models very different from those of the democratic world, and with which they seek to enter into competition, thus squeezing space for consensual multilateralism in fields as varied as health and vaccinations, the economy and trade, and climate and technology;
  - E. whereas dependency on certain raw materials or components has been used by some actors as an instrument of power and geopolitical influence, if not blackmail, as is the case with ‘vaccine diplomacy’, and is coming to represent a strategic threat to the political independence and stability of some countries; whereas some international organisations, such as the UN, the WHO and the WTO, which were created to achieve common goals, have also seen their hands tied by these conflicting interests, if not by isolationist, unilateralist or even denialist positions;
  - F. whereas governments should seek to strike a balance between finding useful international cooperation instruments and defending the interests and needs of their own citizens, as COVID-19 has highlighted;
  - G. whereas the changes in the international order brought about by COVID-19 mean that a renewed commitment to multilateralism is needed, building and strengthening coalitions on strategic issues, but it must also be approached from a new perspective in line with the current situation;

- H. whereas, during the COVID-19 pandemic, medical supplies and equipment have become components of national security, and the WHO and other organisations dealing with health matters at regional level, such as the European Commission and the Pan American Health Organization, have become key entities for planning, adopting and implementing global coordinated responses to COVID-19 and other global health threats;
- I. whereas the European Union, which opted from the outset for multilateral frameworks for the production, distribution and export of COVID-19 vaccines, has found it harder to make its global commitment to the fight against the pandemic visible than other world powers that chose a bilateral approach, despite the EU being the world's largest donor and exporter of vaccines;
- J. whereas the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges for the EU and for Latin America and the Caribbean, while also creating the opportunity to rethink the future of both regions and their bilateral relationship, mainly through multilateral mechanisms and cooperation that make it possible to set joint goals, including trade and association agreements, parliamentary diplomacy, political dialogue and sharing best practice;
1. reaffirms its strong commitment to the principles and values of the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular to international cooperation as a means of resolving international problems of a political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian nature, and to developing and promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; also reaffirms the value of multilateralism as a key tool for freedom, peace, security, human well-being and the fight against inequality;
  2. notes that COVID-19 has highlighted the existence of global threats and proved that they can best be addressed through effective international cooperation; also notes that the pandemic has demonstrated that it is necessary to act jointly and with a sense of urgency as to the proximity and severity of these threats;
  3. believes that the current multipolar model, combined with different geopolitical conceptions, makes multilateral cooperation more complex, all the more so insofar as some of these centres of power have sought to capitalise on the pandemic in their struggle for predominance of global power; believes, however, that in the new climate of international competition, there is a clear need to seek consensus on some basic aspects for the survival or well-being of the world's population, hence the need for international cooperation;
  4. notes with concern the rise of nationalism and populism, in particular as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic and social crises that have followed in its wake, as well as authoritarian tendencies and the use of propaganda and disinformation; considers that rational nationalism and multilateralism can be compatible;
  5. notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the important role that public administrations play in the economy and society, in particular as a means of protecting the most vulnerable sectors, while the benefits brought about by involving civil society and private enterprise in designing policy actions stand out;
  6. believes that research and international cooperation at the scientific level have been a resounding success, as evidenced by the fact that COVID-19 vaccines were developed

in the record time of one year from the outbreak of the pandemic; regrets, however, that the production and distribution of vaccines have been the object of instrumentalisation by the major powers to increase their global influence; in addition, takes the view that, despite the actions of states, international organisations and supranational initiatives, such as the EIC Accelerator and the COVAX mechanism, to establish multilateral mechanisms to ensure fair and equitable access to COVID-19 treatments and vaccines, there have been major disparities in vaccine supply worldwide, both in terms of quantity and time scale, the countries and populations with the least resources being the most affected;

7. invites governments and other public administrations to draw the appropriate conclusions about the causes and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the steps that were taken, in order to avoid new pandemics or mitigate their effects; deems it appropriate, at state level, to adapt national health plans and support primary health care systems and scientific research, while also adopting a preventive rather than a palliative approach to future pandemics;
8. recommends, at a more global level, increasing research and production capacity and diversifying production sites for medical equipment, medicines and vaccines, as well as seeking to reduce barriers to trade in essential health care products, including vaccines and their ingredients, and fostering technical knowledge transfer and training; believes that international health regulations with more legally binding provisions would also be advisable, for example, on identifying disease outbreaks, informing the WHO about them, information sharing, contingency preparedness and response to alerts; additionally, international health organisations should be given greater autonomy, authority and resources;
9. takes the view that we need to harness the momentum in international cooperation brought about by the pandemic to ensure greater coordination and find global solutions to other transnational problems that will be on the global agenda post COVID-19; for this reason, calls on governments to strengthen and prioritise international cooperation on defending peace and global security, defending and promoting democracy and human rights and fighting corruption, as well as on promoting world health, a healthy and sustainable environment, education, access to technology and facilitating trade, among other aspects;
10. calls on the EU and Latin American and Caribbean countries to support the ongoing negotiations at the WHO to establish a Pandemic Treaty in order to better prepare for next pandemics, and define strong cooperation mechanisms based on common but differentiated responsibilities, ensuring access and sharing of pathogens and with a strong emphasis on benefits sharing;
11. highlights, in particular, the link between health and environment and, in this respect, calls for complying with the 2015 Paris Agreement and the decisions taken at successive Conferences of the Parties, promoting the technological and energy transitions with a view to progressive decarbonisation, and harmonising the classification systems used to assess sustainable economic activities; affirms the commitment of governments and international organisations to harnessing the potential of green bonds as key climate finance mechanisms with which to achieve progress in sustainable recovery efforts; calls on all stakeholders to actively support and contribute to these efforts to ensure a green and inclusive recovery;

12. takes the view that, as regions sharing many principles and values, the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean are ideally placed to deepen their historic relations and play a leading role in the shift towards a new model of international cooperation and solidarity to which all are invited to contribute; understands, in particular, that post COVID-19 bi-regional strategic cooperation and association should be the driving force for a successful recovery from the pandemic crisis and that all stakeholders, public and private, as well as civil society, are encouraged to take part;
13. invites the European Union, its Member States and the regional organisations and states of Latin America and the Caribbean to seek more ambitious commitments and levels of cooperation and association, so that their trade, policy and cooperation agreements include or extend cooperation in sectors such as health and new health emergency preparedness, environmental protection, biodiversity and combating climate change, as well as scientific and technological research; calls for specific support to countries facing large migratory flows, as well as those acting as transit points, thus ensuring their capacity to address the needs and vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees;
14. recognises the importance of promoting and strengthening South-South cooperation, taking into account the diverse needs, capacities and priorities of the countries involved; further urges all parties to redouble their triangular cooperation efforts, actively contributing to harnessing the potential of such cooperation tools by means of knowledge exchange and technology transfer to address challenges and meet shared aspirations in the region;
15. stresses the importance of the immediate ratification of the association agreements between the EU and Mercosur, Chile, Mexico, as instruments that promote the bi-regional alliance; stresses the importance of integrating gender equality in the negotiation, implementation and monitoring of partnership agreements, recognising women as agents of change to promote sustainable and inclusive development;
16. underlines that a side effect of the pandemic has been an increase in poverty and inequality, to the extent that progress made in recent years in areas such as food security, education and health has been rolled back or paralysed, affecting the most vulnerable groups of our societies the most; stresses that reducing poverty and sovereign debt will be key elements of the global recovery, and this can be achieved with more and better international cooperation;
17. urges governments and the OAS to consider special drawing rights as an innovative funding source with which to foster social and economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19, preparedness for possible new pandemics, greater resilience and adaptation measures to help countries in the Latin American region to cope with climate change and natural disasters;
18. insists on the validity of the principles enshrined in the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and calls for cooperation between all public and private stakeholders in order to meet those goals by the planned deadline;
19. believes that EU development aid policy will have to adapt to the new health, economic and social situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU's partner countries, and refocus its planning to address these challenges, in coordination with other EU strategies, such as those set out in the Communication on the Global EU response to

COVID-19 (Team Europe)<sup>4</sup>, in which the EU institutions, EU Member States and European financial institutions all participate; welcomes new initiatives for regional health cooperation, such as setting up a transnational institute for infectious diseases;

20. instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, to the parliaments of the Member States of the European Union and of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, to the Latin American Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the Andean Parliament and the Mercosur Parliament, the Secretariat of the Andean Community, the Committee of Permanent Representatives of Mercosur, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System, the CELAC Pro-Tempore Presidency and the countries making up the CELAC Troika, and the Secretaries-General of the Organisation of American States and the United Nations.

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<sup>4</sup> JOIN(2020)11 of 08 April 2020.