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TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**The European Union and the United Nations:
The choice of multilateralism**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
1. Ensuring that multilateral targets and instruments have the impact they deserve: the EU's contribution	5
1.1. The front-runner commitment: taking an ambitious approach to negotiating and implementing UN instruments	5
1.2. Making multilateral and bilateral policy mutually supportive	9
2. The EU and the UN: towards greater efficiency and impact by working together	11
2.1. Laying the foundations for a wider partnership	11
2.2. Beyond development: enhancing co-operation on peace and security issues	13
3. Promoting the EU's values and interests effectively in the UN system	16
3.1. The EU at the UN: good progress so far	16
3.2. Giving the EU the means to contribute more effectively to UN debates	17
Conclusion	23
ANNEX I: Action plan for implementation of the Communication	24
ANNEX II: The UN system – main bodies and acronyms	31

INTRODUCTION

The European Union's commitment to multilateralism is a defining principle of its external policy. Taking international co-operation as a precondition for meeting numerous global challenges, the EU has a clear interest in supporting the continuous evolution and improvement of the tools of global governance. Building and maintaining global institutions is painstaking work. Success rests with the determination of states to obey the rules they have set themselves, and their commitment to persuade others to obey them when they are most tempted to do otherwise. And as the coverage of our institutions slowly expands, the tests we face to keep them standing are set to multiply, not diminish.

In the years ahead, therefore, Europe's attachment to multilateralism – and to the United Nations, as the pivot of the multilateral system – will help determine whether, and how, the institutional architecture established in the years after World War II can continue to serve as the bedrock of the international system. The alternative would be devastating – not only in its implications for international peace and security, but also for the wider multilateral agenda, ranging from the follow-up to recent international conferences to the development of a rule-based international trading system.

This is all the more relevant and important at a time when it is essential to renew the Union's support for the multilateral and UN system, particularly in view of the grave concern raised by acts of violence against humanitarian personnel and UN and associated personnel including, most recently, in Iraq.

An active commitment to an effective multilateralism means more than rhetorical professions of faith. It means taking global rules seriously, whether they concern the preservation of peace or the limitation of carbon emissions; it means helping other countries to implement and abide by these rules; it means engaging actively in multilateral forums, and promoting a forward-looking agenda that is not limited to a narrow defence of national interests.

Great strides have already been taken by the Union towards fulfilling its potential as a central pillar of the UN system¹. The importance of enhancing co-operation with the UN, and of strengthening the EU's voice in the UN, has been underlined repeatedly by all major institutions of the Union². Yet much more can be done.

The starting point: substantial challenges remain for the EU if it is to fulfil its potential in the UN.

While the EU has moved progressively towards speaking with a common voice in UN debates, its real influence – and its ability to project European values – on the world stage still falls short of its economic and combined political weight, or indeed its contribution to the funding of UN organisations³. The example of those cases where the EU has acted decisively

¹ The United Nations system is taken in this Communication to mean the principal organs of the United Nations, notably the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as well as their subsidiary bodies, the Security Council, the Secretariat, as well as the UN programmes and funds and the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions.

² See also the Gothenburg European Council Conclusions of June 2001.

³ The EU (EC and Member States) accounts for some 55% of international official development assistance. EU Member States provide around 37% of the UN regular budget and around 50% of all UN Member States' contributions to UN funds and programmes, and both Member States and the EC provide substantial voluntary contributions.

and cohesively, such as the promotion of the Kyoto Protocol, the preparation of the International Conference on Financing for Development, or the creation of the International Criminal Court, provides a sound indication of what the EU could potentially achieve across a much wider range of issues. Yet too often, the EU is still content to play a reactive role. Taking a more proactive stance would involve more extensive dialogue and preparatory work with other countries and groups. Furthermore, while the EU has adopted the practice of systematic EU co-ordination in most key UN policy bodies, votes in which the EU is unable to agree on a common line continue to occur, mainly on issues in the area of CFSP. While in the past the practical implications of such split votes have generally been marginal, their impact on the EU's credibility is disproportionate – particularly in cases where there are established CFSP Common Positions on the issues in question. Moreover, after the internal divisions which occurred in the case of Iraq, there is a strong case for serious reflection within the EU.

A general reflection on the role of the Union in the UN system is timely.

“We need to build an international order based on effective multilateralism” is one of the three strategic objectives contained in the Security Strategy presented by the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy to the European Council in Thessaloniki on 20 June 2003. It also states that *“The fundamental framework for international relations is the United Nations Charter. Strengthening the United Nations, equipping it to fulfil its responsibilities and to act effectively, must be a European priority”*.

The results of the European Convention, and the outcome of the subsequent Intergovernmental Conference, have the potential to shape profoundly the way in which the EU contributes to the work of multilateral institutions. The enlargement of the EU will create both significant opportunities and serious challenges for the way in which the EU functions at the UN: it will increase the numerical weight of the EU; it will create new challenges for the day-to-day co-ordination of EU positions; and it will open up questions like the composition of the regional groups in the UN. The role of the EU in international organisations is one of the main themes in the ongoing work in the Council on the effectiveness of the EU's external relations – and the effectiveness of the EU in the UN is necessarily a central aspect of this⁴. Finally, the UN system itself is going through a major reform process and faced with enormous challenges, including in the field of peace and security and as regards implementing the commitments made at recent major Conferences – and the EU's contribution to these processes will be crucial to their success.

In short, there is a strong case for the EU to take stock of the significant progress already achieved in building an effective common presence in and vis-à-vis the UN, and to reflect on the measures which will enable it to face upcoming challenges with confidence. The present Communication looks, first, at how the EU can help to ensure that decisions taken in the multilateral system are effectively followed up and implemented. Second, it suggests how the EU and the UN can work together more effectively. And third, it looks at possible adjustments in the EU's *modus operandi* in the UN – a necessary precondition for adopting a more active, and indeed militant, multilateral poise.

⁴ See the General Affairs Council Conclusions of 18/19 February 2002, which deal *inter alia* with “reinforcing the role of the EU in international organisations, and in particular the UN”.

1. ENSURING THAT MULTILATERAL TARGETS AND INSTRUMENTS HAVE THE IMPACT THEY DESERVE: THE EU'S CONTRIBUTION

The challenge: helping the multilateral system to deliver on its key objectives

The challenge currently facing the UN is clear: 'global governance' will remain weak if multilateral institutions are unable to ensure effective implementation of their decisions and norms – whether in the 'high politics' sphere of international peace and security, or in the practical implementation of commitments made at recent UN conferences in the social, economic and environmental fields. The EU has a particular responsibility in this regard. On the one hand, it has made multilateralism a constant principle of its external relations. On the other, it could and should serve as a model to others in implementing – and even going beyond – its international commitments.

Two aspects, in particular, of the EU's contribution to the effectiveness of multilateral legal instruments and commitments established under UN auspices could be further developed. First, the EU's ability to act as a **'front-runner'** in developing and implementing multilateral instruments and commitments. And second, **support, where necessary, for the capacity of other countries** to implement their multilateral commitments effectively.

1.1. The front-runner commitment: taking an ambitious approach to negotiating and implementing UN instruments

a) As well as driving the momentum of the international community towards ambitious shared targets, the EU must demonstrate its own commitment to these with prompt, concrete measures. Where the EU has lent its active and undivided support to the adoption and effective implementation of key multilateral legal instruments – such as the Kyoto Protocol or the International Criminal Court (ICC) – its voice has often been decisive in ensuring the 'critical mass' to facilitate their entry into force. The EU has recently demonstrated its willingness to take the lead with an ambitious approach to the implementation of measures in support of global (UN) goals across a wide range of issues. Examples include the **Everything but Arms** initiative, lifting all tariffs and quotas on imports from least developed countries, and the **Regulation on tiered pricing of medicines** to promote the sale of pharmaceutical products to developing countries at substantially reduced prices; the EU Water and Energy Initiatives, as well as the Renewable Energy Coalition, launched at the Johannesburg **World Summit for Sustainable Development** (WSSD). It is specifically worth mentioning in this context the commitments made by the EU at the Monterrey Conference of **Financing for Development** (FfD), especially those relating to taking tangible steps by 2007 towards reaching the UN's 0.7% ODA target, advancing the effectiveness of aid through better co-ordination of policies and harmonisation of procedures, the untying of aid, increasing trade-related capacity building and actions in favour of debt sustainability.

In the field of Information Society, the EU made a significant contribution to the preparatory process of the World Summit on Information Society to be held in two phases, Geneva 10-12 December 2003 and Tunis, November 2005. This field may offer new opportunities for international co-operation.

b) The EU must also assume a more active role in the UN reform, support the institutional ability of the UN system to follow up on its main objectives, and promote greater coherence between all branches of global governance. This will require in particular:

- Taking new initiatives to drive the **UN Reform** agenda forward: the EU action should focus on the key decision-making bodies (General Assembly, ECOSOC and its functional commissions), bearing in mind not only the need to make the UN more efficient and relevant in a rapidly changing world, but also the impact of reform on implementation of the development agenda. Ensuring that the objectives of the reform process are further reflected in the UN annual budget, and in future budget cycles, will also be important. The EU has an interest in further developing existing institutions and supporting new ones such as the International Criminal Court. A renewed spirit of partnership between the UN system, the EU and its Member States will help further the UN reform agenda. Efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council in all its aspects should be intensified. The Commission believes the EU could and should play a constructive role in advancing these discussions.
- Ensuring an **integrated follow-up** to the major Conferences and the Millennium Declaration Goals, including monitoring of progress towards targets. The role of the EU will be crucial in ensuring that this process is successful – both by keeping up the political momentum in the UN, and by ensuring that there is a coherent, streamlined follow-up rather than a multiplication and fragmentation of resolutions and processes.
- Promoting greater coherence and balance between institutions of **global governance – economic, environmental and social**. To that end:
 - Coherence between the core UN system, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the WTO⁵ should continue to be promoted. If the EU is to play a ‘front-runner’ role here, it will be necessary, in the context of an examination of the governance of the Bretton Woods Institutions, to consider strengthening the EU representation in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.
 - Co-operation between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) on one side and the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the other should be reinforced. The relationship between MEAs and WTO rules should be clarified, with a view to enhancing their mutual supportiveness.
 - A coherent approach to issues of social governance by and across all concerned UN bodies and a strengthening of the key institutions representing the ‘social pillar’ of global governance (notably the ILO) are needed as well as reinforced co-operation between the ILO and the WTO⁶. Further reflection on the creation of an Economic and Social Security Council should be encouraged.

⁵ See also the Commission Communication on Trade and Development: Assisting developing countries to benefit from trade, COM(2002) 513 final of 18 September 2002.

⁶ UN bodies dealing with social issues include in the first instance the International Labour Organization (ILO), but also the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Commission for Social Development, and the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), as well as the major Conferences. The Commission has significantly strengthened its co-operation with the ILO, and put forward concrete proposals for an institutional strengthening of the ILO in the Communication “Promoting Core Labour Standards and Improving Social Governance in the Context of Globalization”, COM(2001) 416 final of 18 July 2001.

c) In addition, given the EU's long-term progress towards a more effective and cohesive common foreign and security policy, it should envisage a similarly proactive role in areas related to international **political, security and human rights** issues:

- With the creation of a European military capacity, the question of the EU's possible contribution to UN-mandated **peacekeeping** and **peace-making** operations becomes more urgent than ever. As CFSP and ESDP are underpinned by the wish to act to uphold the principles and Charter of the UN, providing active and early support to UN-mandated or UN-led operations is a clear track for the progressive framing and deployment of the EU's security and defence policy and capabilities (Chapter 2.2 will address this issue in more detail). Particularly against the background of recent events in Iraq, and following the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1502 on the security of UN personnel, the EU should also lend its unequivocal support to ongoing efforts in New York to strengthen the protection afforded by international law to humanitarian personnel and UN and associated personnel.
- In the global fight against **terrorism**, the EU has an important lead role to play in implementing key UN instruments – both because of the unique degree of integration of its internal policies in many areas covered by UN action against terrorism, and because of its potential role as a model and catalyst for other regions of the world. The EU already has a solid record in this regard, having acted swiftly to implement Security Council Resolution 1373 within the Union, and co-operating fully with the work of relevant UN bodies⁷.
- At the EU Summit of Thessaloniki, the EU endorsed a set of Basic Principles and an Action Plan for an EU Strategy against Proliferation of **Weapons of Mass Destruction**. This is the result of the recognition of the threat posed by WMD and their delivery missiles to international peace and security. The acquisition of WMD or related materials by terrorists represents an additional threat with potentially uncontrollable consequences. The EU will place particular emphasis on defining a policy reinforcing compliance with the multilateral treaty regimes. Such a policy must be geared towards enhancing the detectability of significant violations and strengthening enforcement of the norms established by the regimes. The role of the UN and in particular the UNSC as a final arbiter on the consequences of non-compliance – as foreseen in multilateral regimes – needs to be effectively strengthened.
- To implement UN **sanctions**, action has to be taken in many cases at EC/EU level. For this to be done as effectively and smoothly as possible, a higher level of EU co-ordination would be desirable, in accordance with Article 19 TEU, while respecting the special responsibilities of EU members of the Security Council.

⁷ See the two reports on implementation of Resolution 1373 submitted by the EU to the Counter-Terrorism Committee, S/2001/1297 and S/2002/928; the EU adopted specific measures designed to implement particular aspects of the Resolution at the level of the EU, and co-operated closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the UN Security Council, as well as with sectoral bodies like the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

- In the promotion of **human rights**, the EU's practical commitment to working with the UN is evident in the very active role it plays in the work of the main UN forums, conferences and initiatives concerned with human rights⁸. In the context of the UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in particular, the 'front-runner' commitment is reflected in the large number of country and thematic initiatives pursued by the EU. Proposals to make the EU's contributions to the CHR and other bodies more effective are set out in Chapter 3.2. below.
- With regard to UN initiatives on combating **transnational organised crime and drug trafficking**, the EU has been active in supporting the work of such bodies as the UNDCP, UNCND, UNODC and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The EC has participated actively in negotiations on the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its three Protocols on Smuggling of Illegal Migrants and against Trafficking in Persons and Firearms. The EU should continue to support the work of these institutions and to encourage them to work effectively together.
- In the area of **refugee and asylum policy** (which has to a great extent become a common policy at the EU level), UN instruments and institutions already play a crucial role for the EU both internally and beyond Europe's borders. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is an essential partner for the Commission, both against the background of the establishment of the Common European Asylum System, and as a partner for EC actions in enhancing asylum capacity-building and refugee protection in candidate and other third countries world-wide. The EU (EC and Member States) is the major donor to the budget of UNHCR. The current shared challenges for the EU and UNHCR are the modernisation of the international protection system and the implementation of UNHCR's Agenda for Protection, which aims at improving the global governance of refugee issues⁹.
- The EU could make a significant contribution to the UN in developing **dialogue between civilisations and cultures** – an effort which has been given renewed impetus in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, and for which UNESCO has been given a specific mandate. The EU's contribution in this regard could focus on ensuring that such a dialogue delivers practical results for ordinary citizens, and targets education and citizen-to-citizen contacts as a means of promoting intercultural understanding. Similarly, the EU could play an active role in the international debate on cultural diversity, as a follow-up to the November 2001 UNESCO Declaration and Action Plan on Cultural Diversity, notably on the question of whether a new standard-setting instrument should be drawn up on cultural diversity.

⁸ Notably the UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR) as well as the Third Committee of the General Assembly, the Commission on the Situation of Women, the World Conference against Racism of 2001, the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children of 2002 and in its active support for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

⁹ See Communication from the Commission "The Common Asylum Policy and the Agenda for Protection", COM(2003) 152 of 26.3.2003 and Communication from the Commission "Towards more accessible, equitable and managed asylum systems", COM(2003) 315 of 3.6.2003.

- ***The EU should adopt a determined ‘front-runner’ approach to the negotiation and implementation of important UN initiatives in the fields of sustainable development, poverty reduction and international security, taking a more proactive approach to the development of international instruments and specific EU implementing actions. Moreover, the EU should give renewed impetus to the UN reform.***

Acting as front-runner implies the earliest possible ratification of UN instruments by Member States (and where appropriate, the Community), and then taking decisive action at an early stage to implement key UN measures at the EU level – thus setting an example and demonstrating a ‘clean record’. On the external front, it means identifying where possible specific EU initiatives to build on and take forward objectives agreed in the UN, and ensuring that important multilateral institutions have the means to deliver results effectively. The EU’s approach to the implementation of WSSD targets could serve as a model in this regard. The EU should also encourage the UN to follow more consistently an approach based on benchmarking and clear targets in the follow-up to the major Conferences, such as WSSD.

Opting for a front-runner approach would also make it necessary for the EU to establish common positions as early as possible in major UN events and meetings, including those of the Security Council, and to build alliances with its partners so as to create the ‘critical mass’ necessary for the success of important multilateral initiatives.

If there is to be tangible progress in current UN reform efforts, the EU and its Member States must, in a spirit of partnership, be active in supporting the reform process and taking new initiatives - notably in promoting greater coherence and balance between institutions of global governance such as between the core UN system, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the WTO. In this context, a strengthening of the EU’s representation on the World Bank and IMF will have to be considered.

1.2. Making multilateral and bilateral policy mutually supportive

a) There is often a serious gap between targets adopted at global level and their implementation on the ground. In seeking to fill the ‘implementation deficit’, the EU needs to address the capacities of its partners in the developing world in particular to meet their international commitments, and to explore the possibilities for a more consistent focus on assistance linked to specific global targets and commitments. The EC, as one of the world’s largest providers of development assistance, already makes a significant contribution in this regard by integrating the necessary support for the implementation of key targets and commitments into its assistance programmes to third countries.

- ***The EC will examine how to effectively take into account global targets and instruments in the programming and delivery of assistance aimed at third countries.***

The areas concerned range from the existing priorities of external assistance – which may need to be adjusted to take into account the new goals defined by the Millennium Declarations, WSSD, FfD and the Doha Development Agenda – to the political, security and human rights issues which are now increasingly in the EU’s remit:

- ✓ The Commission is working towards mainstreaming the **sustainable development** objectives established at the Johannesburg Summit into its external assistance. The Commission is examining new activities to support the EU Water and Energy Initiatives defined at Johannesburg, and, to this end, will work in close partnership with both EU Member States and civil society. Similarly, **trade-related assistance** and capacity-building, including in the field of trade and environment, should continue to be enhanced as work proceeds on the Doha Development Agenda.
- ✓ In order to ensure that the work of UN **human rights** bodies (notably the CHR) is accompanied by tangible improvements on the ground, the EU should strengthen its support for efforts to promote human rights (and democratisation) in third countries. The Commission will envisage a greater use of its bilateral instruments to that end, drawing on the human rights priorities identified in the Country Strategy papers and combined with the use of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The Commission will also look at ways of increasing significantly the delivery of capacity-building assistance focusing on the promotion of **core labour standards**.
- ✓ If Security Council Resolution 1373 is to be effective in the fight against **terrorism**, it will need to be implemented universally, leaving no loopholes for terrorists and their supporters. The EU is committed to supporting the capacity of other countries to implement Resolution 1373, and the Commission, working closely with the Council and Member States, is implementing a new strategy for delivering targeted capacity-building assistance to countries outside the EU in support of the implementation of Resolution 1373. These efforts will complement the long-term development and institutional capacity-building programmes which remain a fundamental means of reducing the threat of disaffection and terrorism.
- ✓ Linked to this, the EU should offer strong support to the UN in its efforts to combat **transnational organised crime** and **drug trafficking**, not only by engaging actively in the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, but also by helping other countries apply key UN instruments such as the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. To this end, the Commission is *inter alia* examining the scope for enhanced co-operation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (ODC).

b) What is called for in the long run is nothing short of a systematic **integration of multilateral and bilateral policy objectives**.

Very often, the agenda of bilateral meetings between the EU and its partners does not reflect the objectives pursued by the Union in multilateral forums – and vice versa. Greater use could be made of the regular meetings that take place between the EU and countries or groups of countries within the framework of the EU's bilateral agreements, with a view to building bridges between the EU's positions and objectives in the UN and those of its partners – and this could be helpful both in preparing resolutions or other political initiatives and in conducting negotiations under the aegis of the UN. Equally, in the consultations which do take place between the EU and its partners in the margins or in the preparation of UN events, the Union does not sufficiently use the 'leverage' which its bilateral relations should provide it with. Further efforts should be undertaken to overcome this lack of efficiency and dispersion of influence.

- *The EU should introduce points relating to the multilateral agenda more systematically into regular bilateral discussions with its partners, and should free up time currently spent on internal co-ordination in order to make use of its privileged bilateral ties more extensively at the major UN sites.*

In concrete terms, the Council Secretariat and the Commission should ensure that the multilateral context is reflected consistently in the agendas of bilateral meetings with third countries or groups of countries – such as Summits and Ministerial meetings, Association Council or Joint Committee meetings, as well as troika meetings. Given that the EU's existing bilateral consultations with its partners in multilateral forums often take place too close to relevant UN events to have any significant impact, and are usually disconnected from the bilateral context, the influence which the EU enjoys by virtue of its extensive ties with other countries and groups of countries could thus be brought to bear more effectively on the multilateral agenda. The closer and more regular UN-Commission desk-to-desk dialogue detailed below will help in this aim.

2. THE EU AND THE UN: TOWARDS GREATER EFFICIENCY AND IMPACT BY WORKING TOGETHER

2.1. Laying the foundations for a wider partnership

In recent years, there has been a sea-change in the way the EU and the UN perceive each other. Reconciling the unique institutional shape and role of the EU (and before that, the EEC and EC) with a UN system founded on sovereign member states may initially have posed challenges for both organisations. Yet, the benefits of co-operation, combining the universal legitimacy of the UN with the EU's economic and political clout, are now beyond debate and have given rise both to regular high-level contacts and extensive co-operation on the ground. A process of twice-yearly high-level meetings between the UN and the EU has been initiated, permitting regular contacts between the UN Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General and the Council and Commission. Consultations and co-operation now take place as a matter of course across numerous policy areas.

The Commission itself has begun to move its relations with the UN system into a higher gear, starting with development and humanitarian issues, as testified in the 2001 Communication on “**Building an Effective Partnership with the UN in the field of Development and Humanitarian Affairs**”¹⁰. Many of its recommendations, dealing with policy dialogue, the general framework for operational co-operation and strategic partnerships have already been, or are well on the way to being, implemented:

- In the context of increasing **policy dialogue**, both high-level and working-level meetings have become habitual and more forward-looking, taking stock of existing co-operation and identifying common ground to take it further. In many cases, the Commission has concluded agreements with UN agencies, funds or programmes, which lay down a general framework for co-operation¹¹. As regards co-operation with the WHO, for example, joint strategies are being developed to address a wide range of health issues¹².

¹⁰ COM(2001) 231 final of 2 May 2001

¹¹ Notably, the EC-UNHCR exchange of letters of 6 July 2000; the EC-WHO exchange of letters of 14 December 2000 and the EC-ILO exchange of letters of 14 May 2001.

¹² For example joint Commission-WHO efforts were instrumental to establish a strong and globally binding WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (SCTC). Co-operation should also be extended to the recently launched EC initiative for a Clinical Trial Platform.

- An increasing effort has been made to ensure a regular presence of EC officials at the meetings of UN governing and policy bodies and in the wider context of the UN Conferences. However, representation of the EC **in UN forums** has still to be further strengthened.
- Coherence between the policy priorities of the EC and those of the UN **in the field** has been strengthened by introducing consultation and co-operation with the UN bodies present in the country in question when drawing up the Commission's Country Strategy Papers (CSPs). Work is in progress to identify ways of co-operating more closely on country-level analysis including data sharing. This issue is also to be considered on the occasion of the mid-term review of the CSPs.
- The Commission has successfully created an improved enabling environment for EC/UN **co-operation at the financial level**. This involves the new EC-UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement, signed on 29 April 2003, on EC funding of UN actions, including the application of the Verification Clause, which covers the UN Secretariat and associated funds and programmes. It allows for funding of multi-donor UN operations and adopts a result-oriented, rather than input-oriented, approach. The agreement creates a better enabling environment for the EC to finance UN operations and speed up the handling of pending projects. The Commission will also propose to UN specialised agencies that wish to benefit from Commission funding to apply the agreement. On 8 July 2003 the ILO signed an agreement to that effect, and on 17 July 2003 the FAO did the same.
- The Commission is taking concrete steps towards the establishment of **strategic partnerships** with UN agencies, funds and programmes (UNAFP) in the fields of development and humanitarian affairs. A pre-selection of the strategic partners has been made on the basis of an analysis of the concordance of the mandate of the UNAFP with EC objectives, their operational capacity, management capacity, efficiency and accountability record, with due consideration also for the EC's policy priorities. The Commission is now entering into bilateral dialogues with the selected UNAFP¹³ with a view to establishing the strategic partnerships, the main features of which will be greater EC involvement in policy dialogue and governing bodies; more stable, predictable financial co-operation in operational activities; and support for core capacities of the selected UNAFP. The establishment of strategic partnership is an open and evolving process. In the future the Commission might also consider strategic partnerships with other UNAFP.
- In parallel, the Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) has developed Strategic Programming Dialogues (SPD) in **humanitarian affairs** to ensure that ECHO funding of operations carried out by the UN focuses on activities where the UN has a proven track record or has a comparative advantage, as recommended by the Communication. The scope of the SPDs has been widened since 2001, from discussing mostly administrative issues to discussing horizontal/political/tactical issues. SPDs have also allowed ECHO and its UN partners to progressively gain a better mutual knowledge of each other and thus build a more effective relationship.

¹³ Discussions in view of strategic partnership are being initiated with UNDP, FAO, ILO, WHO, UNCTAD, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNIDO and UNRWA. In parallel, similar work is in hand to strengthen co-operation with UNEP.

2.2. Beyond development: enhancing co-operation on peace and security issues

The next challenge is to extend a reliable and systematic framework for co-operation to other areas which are essential to effective global governance – most notably those related to the EU's widening role in contributing to **international peace and security**. The evolution of CFSP/ESDP has significantly increased the EU's options for engagement in the political, diplomatic and military spheres, adding impetus to the Community instruments that have thus far provided the principal means of supporting political strategies towards crisis regions.

Ensuring the coherent and effective deployment of the range of tools now at the Union's disposal already requires substantial co-ordination between the relevant players at EU level – the Member States and the Presidency, the High Representative for the CFSP and the Commission. Given that EU actions in this area will invariably be consistent with, and in many cases complementary to, decisions and frameworks developed by the UN, the need for effective complementarity with the UN is also crucial.

Recognition of this fact has already resulted in high level dialogue being stepped up since 2001, with, for example, the UNSG or his Deputy meeting at least twice yearly with the EU troika, the UN Deputy Secretary General Fréchette having twice met the Political and Security Committee (PSC) of the Council, and the EU participating actively in the biennial high-level meetings between the United Nations and Regional Organisations. The latter provides an opportunity to take stock of progress on implementing the “13 modalities” for practical co-operation. One such action was the August 2002 EU regional conference on conflict prevention in Helsingborg, Sweden. These high-level contacts should now lead to improved contacts at operational level on issues ranging from country analysis and early-warning mechanisms to co-operation in crisis management. Translating closer co-ordination into more effective results will require bold steps to be taken in terms of information-sharing and the adoption of common operational standards, for example. Yet, the potential dividends of smooth and effective links are beyond doubt.

Conflict prevention and crisis management lie at the intersection of the development and security agendas. They are also areas in which the goals and activities of the EU and UN are united by the premise that the case for multilateralism and international co-operation is unequivocal. The need for complementarity of purpose and operations is therefore beyond debate¹⁴. In particular, in its Conclusions of 21 July 2003, the Council of the EU “reasserted the commitment of the EU, as well as of its Member States, to contribute to the objectives of the UN in conflict prevention and crisis management”.

At the level of country assistance, the Commission and the UN have already taken the first steps towards better synchronization of their activities for conflict prevention. The Commission and the UN Secretariat thus agreed earlier this year to initiate a ‘desk-to-desk’ dialogue on conflict prevention and risk assessment in certain focus countries. The objective of this dialogue, which should also be open to relevant specialised agencies, will be to ensure a regular upstream exchange at the operational level on policy, programming and project

¹⁴ This need has been recognised by the Commission, Council and UN, notably in the General Affairs Council Conclusions of 11-12 June 2001, the EU Programme on prevention of violent conflicts, adopted in Gothenburg on 15/16 June 2001, the Commission Communication on Conflict Prevention, COM(2001) 211 final of 11 April 2001, and the 2001 Report of the UN Secretary General on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, which specifically calls for co-operation with regional organisations. Progress in implementing the EU Programme on the Prevention of Violent conflicts is reported annually, most recently to the Thessaloniki European Council of 20 June 2003.

assessments. This should help to ensure co-ordinated action in target countries - and, wherever possible, identify possibilities for joint activities on conflict prevention and peace-building. The first set of target countries have already been identified by the UN and the Commission.

For the Commission, which manages the bulk of instruments deployed in EU civilian crisis management operations, the need for open lines of communication with the UN is further accentuated by the creation of the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM), which is increasingly being used to support UN operations directly¹⁵.

Comparative advantages in terms of experience or field presence of each partner should be exploited¹⁶. Regarding crisis management actions, enhancing the compatibility of practices will extend to the recruitment and training of field personnel¹⁷, efforts to facilitate exchanges of headquarters officials, and joint training activities¹⁸. All such partnership activities should above all be practical, whether at policy level or on the ground.

Recent years have seen a clear evolution of joint activities by the EU and the UN in the areas of **crisis intervention and post-crisis reconstruction**. Experience of collaboration now extends from the rebuilding of failed states and territories emerging from conflict to the deployment of military peacekeeping personnel.

In Afghanistan, there has been close co-operation with UNAMA, UNDP and other agencies. The EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina took the baton from the UN task force which preceded it. The EU Pillar of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMiK) is an integral part of the interim administration, with effective co-operation being pursued by the Commission and the UN for the implementation of EU-compatible standards and legislation. And most recently, the EU launched the 'Artemis' emergency military operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Bunia), in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1484 and at the UNSG's request, in anticipation of a strengthened UN military deployment.

In addition to these headline examples of EU-UN co-operation in peace and security actions, there has been substantial co-ordination between the EU and the UN on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, from the Great Lakes to Cambodia. For its part, the Commission now works regularly alongside the UN when putting in place tools of

¹⁵ Examples of operations funded under this 'kick-start' fund (€30m for 2003) include support for the UNDP-administered trust fund for the Afghan Interim Administration and funding for a disarmament and demobilisation process led by the UNDP in Congo (Brazzaville). Other EC instruments have also contributed to UN activities in conflict prevention, such as contributions by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) to the UN Trust Fund for Preventive Action and to a UNHCHR project on criminal procedures in crisis situations.

¹⁶ A more detailed overview of the Commission's experience in these areas is presented in the Communications on Conflict Prevention and on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development, COM(2001) 153 final of 23 April 2001.

¹⁷ The modules for the Commission pilot project on training for civilian aspects of crisis management already take into consideration the training standards and training materials developed by the UN, which has provided a number of course speakers. Personnel will be trained for peace missions and field activities of the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and other international organisations, as well as for possible EU-led missions. The Italian Presidency of the Council is organising a conference on training standards in the second half of 2003, with the participation of the UN.

¹⁸ Staff secondments have already taken place on an individual basis in other areas of EC-UN co-operation, such as between the Commission and the WHO or between the Commission and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, Commission staff have already taken part in UN training courses on conflict prevention.

post-conflict rehabilitation, ranging from mine clearance projects to comprehensive reconstruction and assistance strategies as in the Western Balkans.

All of this provides mounting **evidence of positive co-operation** between the EU and UN in conflict prevention and crisis management, both on the ground and between headquarters institutions. Maintaining the momentum of this process of concertation will require further, systematic steps. For example, the country-specific dialogues for conflict prevention cited above should cover crisis management and peacekeeping matters too, enhancing both Council Secretariat and Commission engagement with the UN in these areas. Only through long-term improvements in mutual knowledge and confidence will the EU and UN be able to scale up the effectiveness of short-term, complementary responses to emergency and crisis situations.

If dialogue in these areas is to remain streamlined as it becomes more frequent and more operational, it will need to be carefully organised, on the basis of the respective competences of the relevant EU and UN institutions. Key partners on the UN side, include the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). On the EU side, the Council Secretariat, Commission, Presidency and Member States¹⁹ are involved. In this domain more than in any other, it is important that future developments in the EU's arrangements for external representation facilitate rather than inhibit clear and productive communication with UN counterparts.

- *The EU (Presidency, Commission and General Secretariat of the Council) should deepen the regular dialogue with the UN Secretariat on their respective roles in the EU contribution to peacekeeping operations, including civilian aspects.*
- *The Commission will work with the UN (including specialised agencies, where appropriate) to establish an effective upstream dialogue on country-level assessments, building on steps already taken in the Commission's reform of external assistance to ensure complementarity with other donors.*
- *The EU and the UN should work together to ensure that standards of training of field personnel are compatible (as well as, where appropriate, with those of the OSCE). The Commission will continue to work with the UN to ensure the compatibility of standards for recruitment where the EC is providing personnel for crisis management operations.*
- *The Commission will explore ways of further promoting the exchange of personnel and facilitating joint training activities with organisations of the UN system.*
- *The Commission will encourage closer and more regular working-level contacts between staff working on crisis regions in the UN (notably DPA, DPKO, OCHA and UNDP) and the Commission at headquarters and in the field. Such desk-to-desk dialogue will focus increasingly on specific geographical areas of concern.*

¹⁹ The Gothenburg Programme commits the EU and its Member States to implementation and states that "the Union and its Member States will, in accordance with article 19 of the Treaty of the European Union, co-ordinate their action to promote conflict prevention in international organisations where they are members".

Finally, the steps already taken for better co-ordination between the EU, the UN and **regional** organisations such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe need to be pursued²⁰, for which effective follow-up to the Helsingborg EU regional conference on conflict prevention will be essential.

- *The EU and UN should co-ordinate systematically with regional organisations in conflict prevention and in crisis and post-crisis situations, and complement each other's resources where possible.*

3. PROMOTING THE EU'S VALUES AND INTERESTS EFFECTIVELY IN THE UN SYSTEM

If the EU is to contribute effectively to strengthening the multilateral system, it needs to be in a position to participate actively and dynamically in policy debates in multilateral forums. As underlined at the outset of this paper, the EU is founded on values which are inherently supportive of the wider multilateral system. Yet, in order to promote its values in the global arena it must engage effectively and regularly in dialogue with other countries and groupings. Remarkable progress has already been made in recent years towards establishing a cohesive EU presence in policy debates at the United Nations. In order to better promote both EU values and interests, this positive evolution should continue, taking into account the proposal of the European Convention to grant legal personality to the EU, and parallel work to consolidate the Union's external representation on the basis of the proposals of the European Convention²¹. The arrival of ten new Member States will create both challenges and opportunities for the EU's role in the UN system – and may require a serious effort by the EU if it is to maintain an effective and responsive presence. Furthermore, there are issues which the EU may need to address irrespective of the precise institutional adjustments that may emerge out of the Convention and the IGC – such as enhancing the role of Council groups in Brussels in providing strategic guidance to EU representatives on the ground, or making EU co-ordination procedures more effective.

3.1. The EU at the UN: good progress so far

Since the inception of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the EU has become a permanent fixture in policy debates at the UN. Thanks to the efforts of successive Council Presidencies and the EU Heads of Mission at the main UN sites, the EU now **co-ordinates** its position effectively in most important UN policy forums, such as the General Assembly (in which there is an EU common position on almost 95% of resolutions), ECOSOC, the main committees and functional commissions, other subsidiary bodies such as the Economic Commission for Europe, and most specialised agencies as well as in major Conferences. Recent public information initiatives undertaken jointly by the Council and the Commission have considerably heightened the visibility of the EU in this regard²². Good progress has also been made in recent years in the exchange of information and co-ordination among EU Member States on Security Council affairs. Awareness of the EU's political role has been heightened by the frequent participation of the Presidency – and on some occasions, the High Representative for the CFSP – in open meetings of the Security Council. The application of

²⁰ The EU welcomed the Security Council high-level meeting of 11 April 2003 on the topic of “The Security Council and regional organizations: facing the new challenges to international peace and security”.

²¹ See in particular articles III-188 and III-201.

²² Notably the interinstitutional ‘[EU@UN](http://europa-eu-un.org)’ website (<http://europa-eu-un.org>), launched in January 2002.

Article 19 of the Treaty on European Union, where fully applied, has also improved coherence between the CFSP and positions taken in the Security Council²³.

The European Community, for its part, has emerged as an important participant in policy debates in the UN, notably in areas of normative activity in which the EC has specific responsibilities in the EU's institutional architecture – thus contributing to coherence between the internal and external policies of the Union. In one specialised agency, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the EC has full membership; and the EC will also soon have full membership of the Codex Alimentarius, following the amendment to the Rules of Procedure recently approved by the Codex Commission and the Directors-General of the FAO and WHO. This option should also be pursued for other relevant organisations that belong to the UN system. In this respect, the Commission has submitted a recommendation to the Council for full membership of the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)²⁴. Furthermore, the EC has been able to participate actively in an increasing number of other UN forums and events²⁵.

The evolving role of the Delegations of the European Commission at the main UN sites has made an important contribution to this process.

3.2. Giving the EU the means to contribute more effectively to UN debates

a) *More 'upstream' preparation of EU positions*

All too often the EU's stance in multilateral forums is still a reactive one, with the agenda set by other players. The EU should promote its core objectives in the UN more actively – this would not only further its own interests, but also advance the agenda of the UN overall²⁶. **The role and functioning of the Council bodies responsible for UN matters**, notably the Working Party on the United Nations (CONUN) and the Working Group for the Preparation of Major UN Conferences, need to be addressed in this context. This will mean ensuring that they are enabled to deal with substantive policy issues and to set EU objectives for major UN events. That would *inter alia* mean that those groups would meet with sufficient frequency to be able to deal proactively with important UN events and to steer the co-ordination process more efficiently.

Strengthening the role of Council bodies should also help the EU address the occurrence – rare but nonetheless detrimental to the EU's influence – of **split votes** by the EU in UN forums²⁷. These split votes are usually the result of a lack of consensus between Member States in Brussels. They should in particular be addressed by intensifying coordination between the Member States within the EU institutional framework. Particularly in cases where proposals considered in the UN touch on areas covered by the CFSP, the greatest

²³ Article 19 TEU provides *inter alia* that “Member States which are also members of the United Nations Security Council will concert and keep the other Member States fully informed. Member States which are permanent members of the Security Council will, in the execution of their functions, ensure the defence of the positions and the interests of the Union, without prejudice to their responsibilities under the provisions of the United Nations Charter.”

²⁴ See document SEC(2002) 381 final.

²⁵ In a number of UN bodies and in the preparation of major Conferences such as LDC III, WSSD and FfD, as well as in the negotiation of many UN legal instruments, the EC has been able to participate fully.

²⁶ The EU Priorities Paper prepared for each General Assembly session could provide a basis in this regard.

²⁷ Most recently, this concerned a small number of votes in the UNGA, and several important votes in the Commission on Human Rights. There have moreover been situations in which a common position already adopted by the EU was subsequently disowned by individual partners.

possible use should be made of relevant Council bodies to ensure consistency between the two. In principle, this implies that there should be no split EU vote on issues covered by a common position. Under the Present Treaties, the Presidency, the High Representative for the CFSP and the Commission have a particular responsibility in this regard. The appointment of a European Minister for Foreign Affairs, as provided for in the draft Constitutional Treaty, should provide a further impetus for ensuring consistent common positions within the EU and, in the line of Article III-206 of that draft, for their presentation in the UN²⁸.

EU Member States in the **Security Council**, and notably the Union's two permanent members, should explore more systematic ways of fulfilling their commitments under Article 19 of the Treaty on European Union. Where there is a common EU position on an issue under discussion, this could involve the permanent members ensuring that one of them (in turns) explicitly presents that position. EU members of the Security Council should intensify their efforts pursuant to Article 19, regarding consultation and concertation on Security Council discussions, building on recent efforts to this end by the current EU members of the Security Council. There is still substantial scope for improving the practical implementation of Article 19, thereby reinforcing the efficiency and coherence of EU external action.

- ***The role of the Council working groups dealing with United Nations issues in providing guidance for EU positions in the major UN sites should be strengthened. The presentation of common EU positions should be stepped up in all UN bodies, including the Security Council.***

Where an issue considered in a UN forum is covered by the CFSP, the role of the relevant Council bodies in Brussels should be reinforced actively as regards the monitoring, and where necessary, adequate preparation of the implementation of agreed policies in a cohesive manner.

✓ CONUN should be reinforced. This would entail:

- ensuring that the group's **agenda** corresponds more consistently to substantive policy issues being dealt with on the ground at the major UN sites, so as to provide clear and relevant guidance to EU representatives on the ground; to this end, coordination between CONUN and the relevant sectoral Council working parties should be reinforced.
- using CONUN more systematically to **identify EU objectives** for meetings of bodies like the main committees or the functional commissions;
- adapting the **schedule of meetings** to coincide with UN business; and
- convening the CONUN at **UN Directors level** twice a year to provide a steering function.

✓ A high-level steering function could also be performed by the **Political and Security Committee** – ensuring cohesion between CFSP positions and the EU stance at the UN - depending on the importance and urgency of the issues at stake. An important objective would be to avoid split votes on issues where an EU position exists.

²⁸ Article III-206 of the draft Constitution notably provides that where the Union has a defined position on a subject on the Security Council's agenda, the Minister for Foreign Affairs shall be asked by EU members of the Security Council to present the Union's position.

The objective of better upstream preparation could also be furthered by a more extensive use of EU **position papers**, **guidelines** or *argumentaires*. The existing practice of single-issue expert meetings to prepare for major UN events – again, already used in the preparation of certain major Conferences – could be extended to other UN events as necessary.

- *The EU should consolidate and reinforce the practice of establishing concise orientation notes, guidelines or position papers for selected UN events and meetings; where necessary, preparatory sessions could be organised to identify key issues and EU priorities. The Commission is ready to contribute to such a process with discussion papers.*

Moreover, while the practice of co-ordination has allowed the EU to affirm its presence in most major New York-based bodies, as well as in most specialised agencies, a coherent approach by the EU would call for an extension of **EU co-ordination** to better cover the entire UN system, as well as other related institutions of global governance.

- *The EU should consolidate and reinforce systematic EU co-ordination across the UN system, while ensuring that co-ordination is focused and unbureaucratic, and enables the EU to engage effectively in dialogue with other actors.*

In the case of international **social policy** issues, the EU should aim to speak more consistently with one voice. Speaking with one voice in forums such as the Third Committee and the Commission for Social Development, while approaching similar issues only from a national perspective in the International Labour Organization (ILO), is both inconsistent with the EU's overall commitment to a more coherent international approach to social development, and detrimental to the EU's effectiveness in promoting the European social model at the global level.

The EU's credibility and impact on **health** and health-research related issues, such as the fight against HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, would also be strengthened by more consistent co-ordination across the UN system (notably WHO joint strategies, , UNGA 3rd Committee and the Commission on Population and Development). In recent years, the EU has mounted strong and proactive approaches to international health and population issues in 'newer' multilateral bodies (e.g. WTO - access to medicines, Global Fund to Fight AIDS TB & Malaria). These approaches, which are fully in line with the relevant UN declarations and conclusions, should be pursued with equal vigour in the UN system, especially at a time when shared international goals are most in need of reinforcement.

Further progress should moreover be made in introducing EU co-ordination in certain forums dealing with **development co-operation and humanitarian assistance**, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The need for adequate 'upstream' preparation of EU positions and effective co-ordination is particularly acute in the case of the UN's **human rights** bodies – and this is one area in which considerable work has already been done in the appropriate Council bodies, notably as a result of the disappointing outcome of the 58th session of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR).

It is vital that the EU works to reinforce the soundness and credibility of the UN human rights system. The CHR has recently displayed an increasing tendency to reject country resolutions, with the vast majority of UN members reluctant to issue invitations to the special procedures²⁹ which would trigger detailed scrutiny of the human rights situation in a given country or on a chosen theme.

In this context, the EU should ensure greater recourse to the instruments at its own disposal, using its range of political dialogues with third countries and regional groups to promote improved co-operation in the CHR and other forums. One lever for such dialogue is the human rights ‘essential element’ clause contained in Community agreements. This not only relates to a third country’s respect for human rights in a domestic context, it also impacts on the approach of the third country to human rights in the international arena³⁰.

In particular, countries elected or seeking election to the CHR should be challenged to support the special procedures which the CHR creates and to look closely at their ratification and implementation of key international human rights instruments.

This reinforcement of political dialogue on human rights should be complemented by a careful consideration of how external assistance can assist third countries in meeting their international commitments, or in addressing concerns which have been raised in CHR special procedures. In turn, the positions adopted by the EU in the CHR should reflect improvements in the human rights situation in a particular country, with due consideration given to whether an EU initiative is required and, if so, what shape such an initiative should take³¹.

• ***The EU should intensify its efforts to act in a co-ordinated and united way in UN human rights bodies.***

The EU should ensure greater coherence in its use of political dialogue, its programming of relevant assistance, and its positions in UN human rights forums. A number of improvements are already being implemented in this regard in the Council, including a calendar for action by the EU, shorter draft resolutions focusing on key human rights problems, earlier finalisation of texts and burden-sharing. These efforts are being evaluated in the wake of the 59th Session of the CHR and further initiatives – including rationalisation of the number and length of statements delivered by the EU – are under consideration. These efforts should be complemented by an EU contribution to reinforce the credibility of the UNCHR.

Similarly, in order for the EU to contribute more effectively to the strengthening of the multilateral system regarding **finance, economic and development** issues, and to ensure that its policy preferences are more consistently reflected, the nature of EU representation in the World Bank and the IMF should be kept under review. Given the impact of the work of the IFIs on trade and sustainable development policies, and against the background of EU economic integration, notably in the Eurozone, the lack of an effective EU presence in the IFIs looks increasingly anachronistic.

²⁹ ‘Special Procedures’ comprise the establishment of Working Groups (composed of experts acting in their individual capacity).

³⁰ For example, the Cotonou agreement (which came into force on 1st April 2003) states in Article 9 that: “respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, which underpin the ACP-EU Partnership, shall underpin the domestic and **international policies** of the Parties and constitute the essential elements of this Agreement”.

³¹ For example, a resolution might be moved from Agenda Item 9 (Country Resolutions) to Item 19 dealing with technical assistance.

- ***The EU should seek to reinforce progressively its representation in the governing bodies of the Bretton Woods Institutions.***

In the first instance, greater EU co-ordination in the IFIs should be envisaged – and eventually a move towards a unified EU (or Eurozone) representation.

Finally, as with other facets of the EU's role in the UN, the EU's upcoming **enlargement** may have a substantial impact on the functioning of EU co-ordination. The numerical expansion of the EU will see the Union eventually comprising up to 15% of the UN's membership, creating both opportunities and challenges – notably for the effectiveness, and indeed viability, of EU co-ordination. Enlargement should prompt the EU to consider a general shift in the way co-ordination takes place: rather than focusing on the time-consuming preparation of precise EU statements, a more extensive use of **mandates and guidelines** for the pursuit of UN discussions could be envisaged.

- ***The Presidency (or other EU representatives) should be given greater flexibility to promote EU positions effectively in UN forums, on the basis of agreed mandates or guidelines, rather than on the basis of detailed EU statements.***

Giving the partner who is representing the EU in a given forum more flexibility in the presentation and advocacy of EU positions, would help the EU to become a more active and operational participant in UN discussions.

Also in the context of EU enlargement, the EU will need to address the composition of the **regional groups** in the UN, as it will find itself in the position of having its membership distributed across more than one regional group. It would be desirable for the EU to work towards a common position on the issue at an early stage.

- ***The EU should adopt a common position as soon as possible on the future shape of regional groups in the UN.***

Another level of co-ordination, which the EU may need to address concerns **elections** and **candidacies** for UN posts. While these have largely been excluded from the scope of EU co-ordination until now, the question has been raised by a number of recent elections in the UN system. In the Commission's view, moving towards more consistent co-ordination on posts and elections – without reducing the role of the regional groups – might well reinforce the EU's aggregate influence in key UN bodies, and would certainly enhance the Union's credibility.

b) Towards enhanced EU capacity for dialogue and outreach

The above improvements in internal EU co-ordination would free up time to engage more consistently in **dialogue** with other key actors, notably other groups, so as to further understanding of the EU's objectives and build alliances in UN forums. As suggested in Chapter 1, this should be backed up by better integration of multilateral questions in the EU's regular bilateral dialogues. The EU, in the form of the Troika, already engages in extensive regular dialogue with other countries and groupings on UN issues, and successive Presidencies have taken great strides in establishing the EU as a credible interlocutor for its partners in the UN. However, there is scope for developing a stronger multilateral dimension in the privileged bilateral relations the EU already enjoys with certain countries and groups of countries, particularly in the context of important UN events.

- *The EU should engage in more extensive and regular dialogue with other groups and countries in the UN, and make sure that such dialogue is better focused and more timely with regard to the main issues discussed at major UN events and meetings.*

The EU should notably develop more regular informal contacts ahead of and in the margins of key UN events – which should be made possible, in particular, by a shift towards a mandate-based approach to EU co-ordination. It should also seek, where possible, and more frequently than at present, to move towards more long-term preparation of issues discussed in UN forums with key partners from other regions and across a wide range of policy areas.

A more consistent effort to engage in dialogue with its partners outside the EU should lead the EU to consider a greater use of **burden-sharing** among the Presidency, different Member States and the Commission where relevant and taking into account the responsibilities under the Treaty.

This ‘division of labour’ approach, enabling given Member States or the Commission to act as facilitators for specific tasks, notably in the preparation of EU initiatives and contacts with other countries and groups, is already being adopted with the EU’s WSSD follow-up on water and energy.

- *The practice of ‘burden-sharing’ between the Presidency, Member States and the Commission in outreach to third countries and other groups in UN forums should be further developed and consolidated.*

The practice of burden-sharing has already been explored by the EU in some major UN Conferences such as FFD and WSSD, by allocating specific Member States and the Commission specific tasks as well as in the context of the CHR. It should be examined whether this approach could equally apply elsewhere in the UN system. Without detracting from the current central role of the Presidency in representing the EU, and without moving towards a multiplicity of voices speaking for the EU, the specific expertise and experience of individual partners could thus be used to greater effect.

c) Ensuring an effective interface with policies agreed at the European level

The EU needs to ensure that measures taken at the European level are consistent with, and where necessary complemented by, measures adopted at the global level. At present, UN instruments and activities touch on policies of the **European Communities** (EC) across a wide range of sectors, ranging from international trade to environmental protection, health and consumer protection to energy policy. Many of these are areas in which globalisation accentuates the need for effective international instruments, and it is important to ensure that the Commission participates to the fullest extent possible in work in the UN system which concerns issues for which it is responsible within the Union.

The observer status of the European Economic Community (precursor to the European Community) in the UN was initially granted in 1974, at a time when the EEC was almost alone in having permanent observer status (there are now 41). Since then, there has been a significant extension of the EC’s competence. It could thus be argued that the EC’s overall status in the UN no longer reflects the level of integration the Community has attained. Progress has already been made in finding pragmatic solutions in a number of specific cases, and in the long run, the EU’s external representation will be boosted through the European Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the meantime, further efforts should be undertaken to ensure that the EC is able to contribute to the work of UN bodies, in close concertation with Member States.

- *The EC should be given the possibility to participate fully in the work of UN bodies where matters of Community competence are concerned, and Member States should contribute effectively towards this.*

Specific examples include the need to ensure that the EC is in a position to participate effectively in negotiations for global environmental conventions to which the EC must later become a Party and to participate in the work of the Global Environmental Facility³²; or to participate effectively in UN bodies dealing with refugee and asylum issues – and notably pursuing efforts to enable the EC to make a fully effective contribution to the work of UNHCR through enhanced observer status in the UNHCR Executive Committee³³.

CONCLUSION

This Communication has set out from two basic premises. First, that a commitment to multilateralism is more essential than ever, and therefore must remain a central strand of the EU's external action. Second, that the role of the United Nations as the backbone of the multilateral system, and the need to make it deliver concrete solutions to many key global challenges, are beyond doubt. On that basis, the Communication has sought to take a wide-ranging look at the way in which the EU works in, and with, the UN, with a view to determining whether, and how, its effectiveness in helping the UN deliver effective global governance can be improved, especially in the fields of sustainable development, poverty reduction, security and peace. One basic conclusion in that regard is positive: interaction and co-operation with the organisations of the UN system is already present at unprecedented levels across a wide range of areas. At the same time, the EU could be more effective in its contribution to shaping policy within the UN; and both the EU and the UN stand to gain from further improvements and greater synergy in their operational co-operation.

A series of practical proposals are put forward in the Communication as to how the EU might make a more effective contribution to global governance with the UN. Only some of these are within the exclusive responsibility of the Commission – many would require action from the Council and Member States; and in many cases, a concerted effort by several institutions and at different levels is needed. To clarify the implications and respective roles of different actors in the process of implementation, an action plan for implementation of the Communication is annexed to the text.

The Commission invites the Council and Parliament to consider the analysis and the Recommendations put forward in this Communication; and looks forward to working closely with the Member States and with the United Nations to advance the shared objective of more effective global governance and strengthening the architecture of the multilateral system.

³² The Global Environmental Facility is a multilateral fund that finances actions to address six critical threats to the global environment: biodiversity loss, climate change, degradation of international waters, ozone depletion, land degradation, and persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

³³ Such a move towards enhanced observer status for the EC has already been supported by the Council of the EU (cf. GAC Conclusions of 11 March 2002).

ANNEX I: Action plan for implementation of the Communication

1. Ensuring that UN targets and instruments have the impact they deserve: the EU's contribution

Recommendation	Implementing action	Timeframe	Chef de file / institution
<i>The EU should adopt a determined 'front-runner' approach to the negotiation and implementation of important UN initiatives in the fields of sustainable development, poverty reduction and international security, taking a more proactive approach to the development of international instruments and specific EU implementing actions. Moreover, the EU should give renewed impetus to the UN reform.</i>	1. Early identification of key EU interests, and preparation of EU initiatives, through appropriate Council groups 2. Systematic consideration of specific EU follow-up / implementation actions for UN instruments / targets by relevant Council groups 3. New initiatives on UN reform.	Continuous As of the 58 th UNGA	Council (CONUN; relevant groups); Commission
<i>The EC will examine how to effectively take into account global targets and instruments in the programming and delivery of assistance aimed at third countries.</i>	Examine, with recipient countries, integration into EC programming of specific objectives related to e.g. WSSD; counter-terrorism; organised crime/drugs; human rights	Continuous	Commission
<i>The EU should introduce points relating to the multilateral agenda more systematically into regular bilateral discussions with its partners, and should free up time currently spent on internal co-ordination in order to make use of its privileged bilateral ties more extensively at the major UN sites.</i>	Ensure that important multilateral issues (both normative and follow-up to / implementation of major Conferences) are regularly included on agendas of Association Council/Joint Committee/Troika (or similar) meetings	Continuous	Council (Presidency; General Secretariat); Commission

2. The EU and the UN: Towards greater efficiency and impact by working together

Recommendation	Implementing action	Timeframe	Chef de file / institution
<i>The EU (Presidency, Commission and General Secretariat of the Council) should deepen the regular dialogue with the UN Secretariat on their respective roles in the EU contribution to peacekeeping operations, including civilian aspects.</i>	Council Secretariat and Presidency to build on recent experience of co-operation with UN forces in Western Balkans and D.R. Congo. Commission to ensure co-operation on relevant civilian aspects and conflict prevention activities.	Continuous	Council; Presidency; General Secretariat of the Council; Commission
<i>The Commission will work with the UN (including specialised agencies, where appropriate) to establish an effective upstream dialogue on country-level assessments, building on steps already taken in the Commission's reform of external assistance to ensure complementarity with other donors.</i>	1. Issue guidelines on concertation with UN to country desks. 2. Follow-up / regular reporting on these contacts 3. Evaluation of coherence with UNDAFs etc.	Continuous	Commission
<i>The EU and the UN should work together to ensure that standards of training of field personnel are compatible (as well as, where appropriate, with those of the OSCE). The Commission will continue to work with the UN to ensure the compatibility of standards for recruitment where the EC is providing personnel for crisis management operations.</i>	1. Where the EC has developed specific training modules these will systematically be made available to the UN. 2. Contacts between EC and UN training focal points to ascertain UN training standards. 3. Where necessary, adjust standards to ensure compatibility, in co-ordination with UN.	By end-2003	Commission; Council

<i>The Commission will explore ways of further promoting the exchange of personnel and facilitating joint training activities with organisations of the UN system.</i>	1. Initiate discussions with UN Secretariat and agencies 2. Establish a database of eligible posts and an inventory of relevant EC and UN training activities	First results by end 2003	Commission
<i>The Commission will encourage closer and more regular working-level contacts between staff working on crisis regions in the UN (notably DPA, DPKO, OCHA and UNDP) and the Commission at headquarters and in the field. Such desk-to-desk dialogue will focus increasingly on specific geographical areas of concern.</i>	1. Initiate annual meetings between Commission headquarters staff with DPA/DPKO/OCHA counterparts. 2. Develop more systematic directory of UN and EC desks (building on New York experience); update regularly.	First meetings to be held in 2003	Commission
<i>The EU and UN should co-ordinate systematically with regional organisations in conflict prevention and in crisis and post-crisis situations, and complement each other's resources where possible.</i>	Implementation of "13 modalities"	First results by end 2003 (after July 2003 meeting)	Commission; Council; General Secretariat of the Council

3. Promoting the EU's values and interests effectively in the UN system

Recommendation	Implementing action	Timeframe	Chef de file / institution
<i>The role of the Council working groups dealing with United Nations issues in providing guidance for EU positions in the major UN sites should be strengthened. The presentation of common EU positions should be stepped up in all UN bodies, including the Security Council.</i>	1. Encourage short, focussed discussions in CONUN on key issues in future meetings of main committees / functional commissions, with a view to defining clear EU mandates 2. Arrange CONUN calendar with a view to calendar of important UN meetings (notably UNGA/ECOSOC and main subsidiary bodies) 3. Schedule twice-yearly CONUN meetings at UN Directors level	As of autumn 2003	Council (CONUN; WG on major UN Conferences; relevant working groups as appropriate) EU members of Security Council
<i>Where an issue considered in a UN forum is covered by the CFSP, the role of the relevant Council bodies in Brussels should be reinforced actively as regards the monitoring, and where necessary, adequate preparation of the implementation of agreed policies in a cohesive manner.</i>	Ensure sufficiently 'upstream' consideration by horizontal (PSC, CONUN) and geographical Council bodies of CFSP-related issues considered in UN forums	Immediate and continuous	Council (PSC / CONUN / geographical groups); General Secretariat of the Council

<i>The EU should consolidate and reinforce the practice of establishing concise orientation notes, guidelines or position papers for selected UN events and meetings; where necessary, preparatory sessions could be organised to identify key issues and EU priorities. The Commission is ready to contribute to such a process with discussion papers.</i>	1. 'Lead' EU partners (MS or Commission) to prepare papers identifying EU priorities in advance of key meetings of UN bodies 2. Preparatory sessions to be held in framework of (and possibly back-to-back with) CONUN or other Council groups ahead of key UN meetings	As of autumn 2003	Council; Commission; General Secretariat of the Council
<i>The EU should consolidate and reinforce systematic EU co-ordination across the UN system, while ensuring that co-ordination is focused and unbureaucratic, and enables the EU to engage effectively in dialogue with other actors.</i>	1. Ensure that EU co-ordinates and intervenes consistently in all main UN bodies and policy bodies of AFPs dealing with social and health policy issues 2. Important sectoral issues to be prepared adequately by Council groups (CONUN/sectoral group) in Brussels	Immediate and continuous	Council (HoMs/experts at UN sites; CONUN; relevant groups); Commission

<i>The EU should intensify its efforts to act in a co-ordinated and united way in UN human rights bodies.</i>	1. Appraisal of progress made so far following the 57th UNGA Third Committee within COHOM and identification of further possibilities for improvement prior to the 60th CHR. 2. Systematic inclusion of Human Rights issue – including the CHR/Third Committee angle – at meetings with third countries throughout the year. Thorough analysis of a third country's stance and voting record at the CHR/Third Committee will be required in order to make this effective.	Immediate and continuous	Council; Commission
<i>The EU should seek to reinforce progressively its representation in the governing bodies of the Bretton Woods Institutions.</i>	Strengthening of EU co-ordination as a first step towards a unified EU representation	Progressive	Council; Member States
<i>The Presidency (or other EU representatives) should be given greater flexibility to promote EU positions effectively in UN forums, on the basis of agreed mandates, rather than on the basis of detailed EU statements.</i>	1. Promote mandate-based approach in co-ordination on the ground in main UN sites, with detailed negotiated statements only for opening / formal sessions 2. Agree on mandates for major UN events in advance in Brussels-based Council groups	Progressive	Council (CONUN / HoM and experts at UN sites); Commission

<i>The EU should adopt a common position as soon as possible on the future shape of regional groups in the UN.</i>	Internal consultations with a view to preparing an EU position	Before accession of the new Member States	Council (CONUN); Member States
<i>The EU should engage in more extensive and regular dialogue with other groups and countries in the UN, and make sure that such dialogue is better focused and more timely with regard to the main issues discussed at major UN events and meetings.</i>	Develop practice of regular informal contacts (notably in troika format) with other key groups in UN, notably ahead of meetings of main committees / functional commissions	Immediate and continuous	Council; Member States; Commission; HoM
<i>The practice of ‘burden-sharing’ between the Presidency, Member States and the Commission in outreach to third countries and other groups in UN forums should be developed and consolidated.</i>	Burden-sharing to be encouraged in main UN bodies and policy bodies of AFPs	Immediate and continuous	Council; Member States; Commission
<i>The EC should be given the possibility to participate fully in the work of UN bodies where matters of Community competence are concerned, and Member States should contribute effectively towards this.</i>	Progressively enhance EC participation in bodies where EC competences are not yet sufficiently articulated	Continuous	Commission; Council (in consultation with UN partners where appropriate)

Abbreviations and acronyms:

AFPs: UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes
CONUN: United Nations Working Group
PSC: Political and Security Committee
UNDAF: UN Development Assistance Framework

CHR: Commission for Human Rights
COHOM: Human Rights Working Group
HoM: Heads of Mission

ANNEX II: The UN system – main bodies and acronyms

Principal organs and main subsidiary bodies

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and Main Committees

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and functional Commissions

Trusteeship Council

International Court of Justice (ICJ)

United Nations Secretariat

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

United Nations Programmes, Funds and Offices

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

World Food Programme (WFP)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)
United Nations University (UNU)
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)
United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)
United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Specialized Agencies

International Labour Organization (ILO)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
World Health Organization (WHO)
World Bank
International Monetary Fund (IMF)
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Universal Postal Union (UPU)
International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
International Maritime Organization (IMO)
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Related organizations

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

World Tourism Organization (WTO)

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty Organization (CTBTO)

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

Principal departments and offices of the Secretariat

Office of the Secretary-General (OSG)

Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

Office of Legal Affairs (OLA)

Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA)

Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services (DGAACS)

Department of Public Information (DPI)

Department of Management (DM)

Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD)

Office for Drugs and Crime (ODC)

UN Office at Geneva (UNOG)

UN Office at Vienna (UNOV)

UN Office at Nairobi (UNON)