

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

A6-0265/2008

26.6.2008

REPORT

with a proposal for a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on the EU priorities for the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly (2008/2111(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Alexander Lambsdorff

CONTENTS

	Page
PROPOSAL FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL.....	3
PROPOSAL FOR A RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL (B6-0176/2008)	13
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE.....	15

PROPOSAL FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

on the EU priorities for the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly (2008/2111(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal for a recommendation to the Council by Alexander Lambsdorff and Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck on behalf of the ALDE Group on the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (B6-0176/2008),
 - having regard to the UN Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger Freedom", the subsequent Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit and the Secretary-General's report entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide",
 - having regard to the EU Priorities for the 62nd General Assembly of the United Nations,
 - having regard to its resolutions of 29 January 2004 on the relations between the European Union and the United Nations¹, of 9 June 2005 on the reform of the United Nations² and of 29 September 2005 on the outcome of the United Nations World Summit of 14-16 September 2005³,
 - having regard to the preliminary agenda of the 63rd regular session of the General Assembly of 11 February 2008 and specifically to the items headed "Maintenance of international peace and security", "Development of Africa", "Promotion of Human Rights" and "Management Reform",
 - having regard to the results of the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, held from 19 to 30 May 2008 in Bonn,
 - having regard to the 2009 Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
 - having regard to Rule 114(3) and Rule 90 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A6-0265/2008),
- A. whereas the EU's foreign policy is based on strong and unequivocal support for effective multilateralism, as embodied in the United Nations Charter,
- B. whereas the European Union is a key political and financial partner of the United Nations in fighting poverty and promoting economic and social development, providing collective security, including protecting the livelihood of endangered populations, and upholding human rights throughout the world,

¹ OJ C 96 E, 21.4.2004, p. 79.

² OJ C 124 E, 25.5.2006, p. 549.

³ OJ C 227 E, 21.9.2006, p. 582.

- C. whereas the reform agenda of the United Nations, which encompasses the establishment of new bodies, the radical overhaul of others, the reshaping of the management of its ground operations, the reorganisation of its assistance delivery and an in-depth reform of its Secretariat, is extremely ambitious and requires continuous political support, particularly at a time when, following the definition of the new policy framework, the implementation stage has started,
- D. whereas two new key bodies, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, have entered a crucial phase, in which they have to prove their ability to achieve the goals respectively set for them by the UN Member States,
- E. whereas the long overdue reform of the United Nations Security Council has yet to be achieved, given the sensitivities involved and the tension between greater accountability and increased geopolitical balance, on the one hand, and the need to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of that body, on the other hand,
- F. whereas 2008 is a crucial year for the efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) worldwide by 2015, and whereas EU Member States should provide global leadership ahead of the relevant key meetings to be held in the second half of this year,
- G. whereas, with regard to the achievement of the MDGs, EU efforts serve as an important catalyst and an example to other donors but will nevertheless, if current trends are not reversed, still fall short, by EUR 75 billion, of the EU's official development aid commitments by 2010,
- H. whereas in sub-Saharan Africa many countries are not on track to meet any of the MDGs, and whereas in many middle-income countries too there are regions and ethnic groups made up of millions of people who are making unsatisfactory progress towards meeting the targets,
- I. whereas soaring food prices and slowing global growth threaten to set back progress on the MDGs by an estimated 7 years unless further investment is made in the agricultural sector and the agro-food industry in developing countries,
- J. whereas the UN General Assembly decided to hold on 4 and 5 October 2007 the High-level Dialogue on interreligious and intercultural cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion or belief and cultural diversity, in coordination with other similar initiatives in this area,
- K. whereas 2008 is the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue,
- L. whereas the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly is not yet sufficiently focused and streamlined, which it needs to be in order to make the work of that body more consistent and to facilitate the follow-up of its resolutions,
- M. whereas the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations currently manages 20 field operations involving over 100 000 troops, half of which are deployed in Africa,

- N. whereas the degree of coordination of EU Member States' positions within the United Nations varies from body to body and from policy to policy,
 - O. whereas such coordination should not be achieved to the detriment of negotiations with countries from other geopolitical blocs, which are an essential prerequisite for striking necessary alliances within the UN,
 - P. whereas such coordination requires closer cooperation between the relevant Brussels-based working groups of the Council and the EU Offices and the Member States' Permanent Representations in New York and Geneva,
 - Q. whereas the Treaty of Lisbon confers legal personality upon the European Union, a novelty which has major repercussions on the representation of the EU at the United Nations,
1. Addresses the following recommendations to the Council:

The EU at the UN and ratification of the Lisbon Treaty

(a) calls for the Union's political priorities for the next UN General Assembly session to be the subject of an in-depth, wide-ranging debate between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission,

(b) considers that this formal position should be regarded by the Permanent Representations of EU Member States in New York as a binding political platform to be used in negotiations with other countries,

(c) believes that the coordination of EU Member States' positions within the United Nations should generally begin in the relevant working groups of the Council, thus making it easier for New York diplomats to achieve a common position on specific issues in the UN bodies and allowing more time for consultations and negotiations with other regional groupings or countries belonging to such other groupings,

(d) invites the Council and the Commission to consider a reorganisation and expansion of their offices in New York and Geneva in view of the increased powers and responsibilities that the EU's representatives will be expected to exercise with a view to ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, guaranteeing optimal coordination and synergy between Community policies, programmes and funds and the instruments and missions comprised in the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy,

(e) urges the Council and the Commission to study in depth the implications which the Treaty of Lisbon has for the Union's future representation at the United Nations, and calls on EU Member States to commit themselves clearly and unequivocally to ensuring that the Union enjoys adequate visibility and authority within the UN bodies and fora,

(f) encourages the Council to negotiate and define, as soon as possible, the operational nature of the EU's observer status at the United Nations,

(g) calls equally on Member States to seek a review of the current structure of regional

groupings within the United Nations in order to ensure that this reflects the membership of the European Union resulting from the last enlargement,

(h) invites the Council and the Commission to inform Parliament on a regular basis about the implications, including the budgetary ones, of any possible steps towards reorganisation of the EU's presence within the various component parts of the UN, including the Secretariat, as well as its funds and programmes,

The EU contribution to UN reforms

(i) welcomes the resumption of the activities of the Working Group on the revitalisation of the UN General Assembly tasked with identifying ways to enhance the Assembly's role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency, and calls on the EU Member States to promote, in this context, a strengthening of the role of the President of the General Assembly, matched by the allocation of adequate financial, human and infrastructural resources, and the establishment of more systematic cooperation between the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the UN Security Council, in order to increase the latter's accountability and legitimacy,

(j) encourages Member States to continue to demand the long-awaited mandate review intended to strengthen and update the programme of work of the United Nations, so that it responds to the contemporary requirements of Member States, by reviewing all mandates more than five years old which originate from resolutions of the General Assembly and other organs,

(k) reminds Member States of the pledges made at the 2005 World Summit to strengthen the United Nations through a number of management and secretariat reforms; calls on the Council to support those reforms in order to increase accountability and oversight, to improve management performance and transparency, and to strengthen ethics, efficiency and organisational capacity by, first and foremost, focusing on reforming the structure of the Secretariat,

(l) urges the Council to ensure that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs are staffed to a level commensurate with their tasks and responsibilities and to support efforts by the Secretary-General in this respect,

(m) urges the Members State to support efforts by the UN Secretary-General in the process of implementation of the concept of 'responsibility to protect', as endorsed at the 2005 World Summit; calls on Member States to participate actively in this process,

(n) invites the Council to fully support the re-launch of negotiations aimed at implementing the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence, and recommends the EU Member States to cooperate actively with developing countries which are recipients of European or national assistance and to exert the Union's collective influence as well as the Member States' individual influence in order to secure the support of those countries for the overhaul of UN assistance delivery and the promotion of greater coherence between UN policies on the ground,

(o) calls on Member States to arrive at a more cohesive position on the reform of the UN Security Council – one which, whilst maintaining the ultimate objective, within a reformed United Nations, of one permanent seat for the European Union, aims in the meantime at augmenting the weight of the Union in a manner which is commensurate with the EU's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations and to UN development assistance,

(p) reminds Member States in this respect that it is of the utmost importance to ensure that EU Member States present in the UN Security Council uphold EU official positions, duly brief other Member States on the discussions taking place in the Security Council and actively coordinate their positions with the relevant working groups in the EU Council of Ministers,

(q) calls on Member States to support President Kerim's Task Force on Security Council reform; welcomes in this regard the momentum for reforming the Security Council created as a consequence of the initiative referred to as the "Overarching Process"; encourages the Council to promote a discussion focusing on points of convergence with a view to achieving tangible progress in this respect,

The EU and the UN Human Rights Council

(r) urges EU Member States, especially France and Slovakia as newly elected members of the UN Human Rights Council, to redouble their efforts in ensuring the successful operation of the Human Rights Council in order to protect and promote universal rights; in this respect, calls for greater accountability in the procedure for the establishment and renewal of Special Procedures and for the appointment of mandate holders, which should be based on the principles of transparency and real competition,

(s) stresses the importance of participation by civil society in the work of the UN Human Rights Council, and urges the EU Member States taking part in the work of the UN Human Rights Council to introduce effective ways and instruments enabling civil society to participate in the UN Human Rights Council in order to better protect human rights in the world and to contribute positively to the transparency of the institution,

(t) calls on the Council to sustain efforts aimed at increasing the accountability of UN member states in the field of human rights by increasing the efficiency of the Universal Peer Review, notably by tightening up procedures to avoid deliberate obstruction or diversionary tactics,

(u) is concerned by recent criticism of the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; calls on the Member States to support the Office, especially in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, so as to ensure that there is no interference with the independence of the Office and that the Office is granted all the financial resources needed to enable it to carry out its mandate; calls on EU Member States to closely monitor the procedure for the appointment of the new High Commissioner, when the mandate of the current incumbent expires in June 2008,

(v) calls on all EU Member states to remain engaged in the preparations for the 2009 Durban Review Conference and to ensure that the Conference provides the opportunity

for all stakeholders to renew their determination and commitment to fight racism, racial and caste discrimination, xenophobia and all other forms of intolerance and to adopt concrete benchmarks with a view to the eradication of racism, on the basis of, and fully respecting, the Durban Declaration and the Programme of Action,

(w) calls on the Council to ensure that there is no recurrence of the negative events associated with the initial Durban conference; calls on all EU Member States to make sure that civil society takes part in the 2009 Durban Review Conference in Geneva, in accordance with the UN Charter and Resolution 1996/31 of the UN Economic and Social Council of 25 July 1996,

(x) calls on all EU Member States to promote and protect the rights of children by supporting the mainstreaming of children's rights in all activities within relevant organs and mechanisms of the UN system,

The EU and the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

(y) takes the view that EU Member States should collectively support a strengthening of the role of the PBC in relation to the UN system, ensure that its recommendations are adequately taken into account by the relevant UN bodies and advocate increased synergies between the PBC and UN agencies, funds and programmes; stresses the importance of closer cooperation between the PBC and international financial institutions actively involved in countries emerging from conflict,

(z) invites the Council and the Member States to encourage contributions to the UN Peacebuilding Fund in order to ensure that it is provided with sufficient resources,

(aa) urges EU Member States in the Security Council to facilitate consultation of the PBC on the referral of new countries to the Peacebuilding Commission and on the mandate of integrated peace-building operations, in particular with a view to ensuring a smooth transition, in due course, from peacekeeping to peacebuilding; welcomes in this respect the fact that the Peacebuilding Support Office is associated with the integrated mission planning process,

(ab) considers it essential that, besides improving coordination between actors, ensuring predictable financing and extending the international attention paid to post-conflict countries, the PBC should also address, in conjunction with the relevant UN departments, the need to improve the organisation's learning capacity in the field of peacebuilding,

(ac) in view of the above, stresses the need to ensure that human and financial resources available to the PBC are proportionate to the tasks and expectations of UN bodies and of the beneficiary countries, and calls on the EU Member States to raise this issue in the relevant committee of the UN General Assembly,

The EU and the MDGs

(ad) urges the Council to support the calls by President Barroso and Commissioner Louis Michel for Member States to draw up clear, binding national timetables and budgets to increase real aid in order to reach the promised collective target of 0.56% of gross national

income in 2010 and 0.7% in 2015,

(ae) reminds Member States that no new promises or new procedures are needed now to achieve the MDGs, and that the focus must be on meeting the promises and pledges already made and scaling up the existing procedures,

(af) notes the continued need for the crisis in the public financing of health services to be addressed if the three health MDGs are to be put back on track, through adequate and predictable recurrent funding for human resources, access to medicines and decentralised and participatory management, and calls on EU Member States to make every effort to strengthen universal, integrated health systems which respond to local needs, and gradually to include the integration of disease-specific programmes (MDG 6),

(ag) considers that gender equality (MDG 3) is an essential element in efforts to meet the MDG targets and recommends that EU Member States urgently address the global financing gap for the achievement of MDG 3; notes that, alongside education, the empowerment of women significantly contributes to the attainment of MDG 4 on child mortality and MDG 5 on maternal health, which are critical indicators of overall progress in development,

(ah) notes that, despite significant progress towards universal primary education in recent years, some 93 million children of primary school age were still not in school in 2006, the majority of them girls; calls on the EU Member States to address the increased financial needs to support education, including in conflict-affected fragile states,

(ai) recalling the EU's commitments to promote policy coherence for development, recommends that the Council and the EU Member States encourage a UN-wide discussion on how to ensure that efforts and targets on climate change reinforce the attainment of the MDGs; notes that much greater contributions to adaptation funds are required in order to 'climate-proof' development in the poorest countries,

(aj) urges the Member States to participate actively in the High Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs (NEPAD) to be held on 22 September 2008 and in the United Nations High Level meeting on the MDGs to be held on 25 September 2008 in New York,

(ak) recommends that the Council and EU Member States renew discussions about debt relief at the UN level, with a view to redefining debt sustainability criteria in such a way as to promote the advancement of development goals rather than debt reimbursement,

(al) considers that maternal mortality rates remain unacceptably high in many developing countries, with more than 500 000 women dying each year from treatable and preventable complications relating to pregnancy and childbirth; therefore urges EU Member States to dramatically step up efforts and funding so as to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, which are essential for the attainment of the health MDGs, gender equality and the fight against poverty,

(am) in the light of the current food crisis, urges the Council and EU Member States to take steps to reduce trade distortion,

Improving EU-UN cooperation in practice

(an) urges the Member States and the Commission to support the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), in both political and financial terms,

(ao) calls on the Council, and particularly on those EU Member States which are permanent or non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, to advocate a revision of the UN sanctions system (terrorists' blacklists) to bring it into line with the obligations of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UNCCPR), in particular via the establishment of appropriate notification and appeal procedures; welcomes in this respect, as a first step in the right direction, the adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 1730 (2006) which establishes a de-listing procedure and a focal point for de-listing requests within the UN Secretariat,

(ap) calls on the EU Member States to launch, within the UN and prior to the Review Conference, a debate on the challenges faced by the International Criminal Court which may undermine the Court's effectiveness, with a view to achieving an agreement on the still outstanding definition of the crime of aggression and the conditions under which the Court could exercise its jurisdiction, as provided for in Article 5(2) of the Rome Statute,

(aq) believes, in view of the evident effects of climate change on the livelihood of millions of people, that the EU should actively encourage the parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to pursue negotiations with a view to concluding an international climate change agreement by the end of 2009, and calls on the Member States to take the lead in such comprehensive global negotiations; furthermore, urges Member States to promote, in this context, the use of renewable and CO₂-neutral energy sources; finally, takes the view that Member States should consider recommending the establishment of a disaster counselling unit at UN level, which would offer systematic advice to governments on effective disaster preparedness,

(ar) calls on both EU and UN actors to give general consideration to EU-African Union cooperation in the establishment of peace and security on the African continent, focusing specifically on ways in which the UN can improve the quality of its missions by making use of the EU's complementary abilities; recommends that careful consideration be given to the merging of capabilities so as to create synergies not just with regard to technology and military equipment but also with regard to legitimacy and acceptance, as well as cost-effectiveness and suitability for the mandate,

(as) calls on the Council to continue to give high priority to building successful cross-regional partnerships, in particular working with partners in all regions of the world to ensure effective implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 62/149 calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty,

(at) takes note of the fact that the United Nations Secretary-General has decided to reconfigure the UN Mission to Kosovo, thus allowing the EU to play an enhanced operational role in the field of the rule of law, and calls on EU Member States, who have unanimously endorsed the launch of EULEX, to monitor closely the implementation of this decision on the ground,

(au) is concerned about the stalemate in disarmament-related negotiations on such issues as a fissile material cut-off treaty and a verification protocol for the biological weapons convention as well as a lack of movement in ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; nevertheless recognises that the 63rd UN session offers the EU an excellent opportunity to show leadership in promoting ratification and universalisation of the recently agreed treaty banning cluster munitions, and in opening negotiations with a view to the conclusion of an International Arms Trade Treaty and an international treaty imposing a global ban on depleted uranium weapons; calls on the EU and the UN to continue their efforts towards strengthening the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and expanding the scope of the Ottawa Treaty banning landmines,

(av) urges the Member States to make the necessary efforts to secure an international consensus that will enable the negotiations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism to be concluded,

(aw) calls on the Council to encourage all activities and appropriate financing aimed at the mainstreaming of gender issues into all aspects of the UN's activities,

(ax) urges the Council to support all activities aimed at combating the extinction of species and protecting the environment as well as mobilising the necessary financial resources;

2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council and, for information, to the Commission.

17.4.2008

PROPOSAL FOR A RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL (B6-0176/2008)

pursuant to Rule 114(1) of the Rules of Procedure

by Alexander Lambsdorff, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the UN Secretary General's report entitled 'In Larger Freedom', the subsequent Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit and the Secretary General's report entitled 'Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger organisation worldwide',
 - having regard to the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly,
 - having regard to Rule 114(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas EU foreign policy is based on strong and unequivocal support for effective multilateralism as embodied by the United Nations Charter,
- B. whereas the European Union is a key political and financial partner for the UN in fighting poverty and promoting economic and social development, providing collective security and upholding human rights throughout the world,
- C. whereas the long overdue reform of the UN Security Council has yet to be carried out,
- D. whereas the coordination of EU Member States' positions within the United Nations varies sharply from body to body and from policy to policy,
- E. whereas such coordination requires closer cooperation between the relevant Brussels-based Council working groups and the relevant EU offices and the Member States' Permanent Representations in New York,
- F. whereas the Treaty of Lisbon confers legal personality upon the EU, an innovation which will have major repercussions for the representation of the Union at the United Nations,

Addresses the following recommendations to the Council

Visibility of the European Union at the United Nations

1. Calls for the Union's political priorities for the next UN General Assembly session to be the subject of an in-depth, wide-ranging debate in Brussels, and to be spelt out in a formal

position of the Council;

2. Considers that this formal position should be regarded by Permanent Representations in New York as a binding political platform to be used as a basis for negotiations with other countries;
3. Invites the Council and the Commission to consider, with a view to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, reorganising their offices in New York;
4. Urges the Council to study in depth the implications which the Treaty of Lisbon has for the Union's future representation at the United Nations and Member States to commit themselves clearly and unequivocally to taking all the necessary steps to ensure that the Union enjoys adequate visibility and authority within the UN bodies and fora;

The EU contribution to the United Nations reform

5. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to continue to press for the establishment of membership criteria for the purposes of elections to the UNHRC; calls, pending such a reform, for EU Member States in the UNHRC to apply those criteria when determining their support for candidate countries;
6. Points to the need for the EU to speak with one voice in addressing human rights issues, but also to the fact that it is important for each EU Member State to voice the EU position, in order to give it more weight;
7. Strongly believes that by establishing the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations member states have created an important new structure to support fragile societies recovering from the devastation of war;
8. Calls on the Council to support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, highlighting any gaps that threaten to undermine peace;
9. Welcomes the resumption of the activities of the Working Group on the Revitalisation of the General Assembly, tasked with identifying ways of enhancing the assembly's role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency;
10. Calls on Member States to find a more cohesive position on the reform of the UN Security Council;
11. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council and, for information, to the Commission.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	24.6.2008
Result of final vote	+: 57 -: 3 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Roberta Alma Anastase, Sir Robert Atkins, Christopher Beazley, Bastiaan Belder, André Brie, Elmar Brok, Colm Burke, Giorgos Dimitrakopoulos, Michael Gahler, Georgios Georgiou, Maciej Marian Giertych, Ana Maria Gomes, Alfred Gomolka, Klaus Hänsch, Jana Hybášková, Anna Ibrisagic, Ioannis Kasoulides, Metin Kazak, Maria Eleni Koppa, Helmut Kuhne, Vytautas Landsbergis, Johannes Lebech, Francisco José Millán Mon, Pasqualina Napoletano, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Raimon Obiols i Germà, Justas Vincas Paleckis, Ioan Mircea Paşcu, Tobias Pflüger, João de Deus Pinheiro, Samuli Pohjamo, Michel Rocard, Libor Rouček, Christian Rovsing, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, György Schöpflin, Marek Siwiec, Hannes Swoboda, István Szent-Iványi, Charles Tannock, Ari Vatanen, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Luis Yañez-Barnuevo García, Zbigniew Zaleski, Josef Zieleniec
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Giulietto Chiesa, Andrew Duff, Árpád Duka-Zólyomi, Carlo Fatuzzo, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Evgeni Kirilov, Jaromír Kohlíček, Graf Alexander Lambsdorff, Jo Leinen, Nickolay Mladenov, Rihards Pīks, Aloyzas Sakalas, Antolín Sánchez Presedo, Inger Segelström
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Lambert van Nistelrooij