

The future of multilateralism Crisis or opportunity?

SUMMARY

Multilateralism lies at the core of the EU's identity and of its engagement with the world. Both the 2003 European Security Strategy and the 2016 Global Strategy emphasised the importance of a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations (UN) at its core, and made its promotion part of the EU's strategic goals.

Yet, in spite of widespread acknowledgement of the achievements of the multilateral international order established after the Second World War, and in particular of the attainment of long-lasting peace, multilateral institutions and the liberal international order in which they are embedded have recently been the subject of severe criticism. The rise of populist nationalism has been interpreted, among other things, as a crisis in support for the multilateral order. Some of the causes of this crisis are related to the emergence of new actors in the global scene, the expansive nature of multilateral institutions, the widening gap between publics and international institutions and the decline of American power. The election of Donald Trump, who had repeatedly questioned the value of multilateral organisations such as the UN, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), has led to even greater preoccupation about the future of global governance. In this scenario, several scholars suggest that the EU and the G20 should be proactive in safeguarding multilateralism, while acknowledging and promoting the necessary reforms to the architecture of global governance.



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Background: challenges to international cooperation

The post-war world has been [characterised](#) by an array of global and regional institutions, established to manage economic, political, and security relations. With the end of the Cold War, several of these institutions extended into the 'more fully global multilateral system of governance' which exists to this day. It is widely acknowledged that the most notable and laudable [achievement](#) of this system has been the preservation of peace among the great powers and the provision of a degree of stability that has prevented major nuclear security crises.

In spite of the numerous achievements of international institutions, the rise of populism and nationalism, Brexit and the election of Donald Trump in the United States (USA) has brought to the fore questions about the appetite of states to uphold the existing multilateral order. Populist movements have risen on the back of ideas of reclaiming national powers, and are based on the dislike of limits on sovereignty and of powerful institutions, such as the EU, the WTO, NATO and others. Brexit will be the first ever departure of a state from the European Union – a multilateral entity *par excellence*. Meanwhile, the new US administration has explicitly expressed preference for bilateralism over multilateralism in trade, while questioning several existing multilateral arrangements in climate, development, humanitarian, trade and security policy and proposing to reduce US funding for several international institutions.

Against this backdrop, the EU, traditionally a champion of multilateralism by example and by conviction, faces the challenge of '[leading the way with multilateralism](#)' but also of pragmatically assessing the successes and failures of multilateral institutions in their current form, in order to help shape the way forward.

Multilateralism: concept and practice

The most basic [definition](#) of multilateralism is 'three or more actors engaging in voluntary and (essentially) institutionalised international cooperation governed by norms and principles, with rules that apply (by and large) equally to all states'. As a foreign policy practice it is [used to](#) refer to 'seeking cooperative approaches to international problems'. In recent years, the term [global governance](#) has become increasingly popular to describe 'the complex of multilateral institutions established to manage global relations'.

The definition and practice of multilateralism has been at the core of the research of renowned scholars of international relations, leading to some generally accepted characteristics of the concept and of the principles that define it. The latter – which also help distinguish it from other forms of international relations such as bilateralism and imperialism – include:

- that cooperation is based on agreed generalised **principles of conduct**;
- that costs and benefits of actions taken are **indivisible** among members (e. g. peace);
- the idea that members of a multilateral arrangement expect 'a rough equivalence of benefits in the aggregate and over time', also known as **diffuse reciprocity**.

Multilateral cooperation was relatively rare until the 19th century, and even then the first multilateral agreements signed did not generate formal organisations. The League of Nations, set up in 1919, can be considered one of the earliest forms of formal multilateral organisation and a precursor of post-war international organisations. Following the end of WWII, multilateral cooperation increased significantly. This has been largely [attributed](#) to the role of the USA as an emerging hegemonic power, but also to multilateralism being

seen as a potential antidote to the protectionism of the 1920s and 1930s. The high point of multilateralism [came in the early](#) 1990s and onwards. Prospects for meaningful global economic cooperation improved following the end of the Cold War, with the world no longer divided into two opposing ideological blocs. The 2000s witnessed rapid advances in interdependence spurred by globalisation, and with them the demand for more multilateral solutions in a growing number of policy areas.

Multilateralism lies at the core of the [liberal world order](#) of the post-WWII period, which is characterised by a vision of an open trading system, global organisation in which the powers cooperate to maintain peace, and the growth of international institutions.

Liberal internationalism is [defined](#) as the cluster of ideas derived from the belief that international progress is possible towards increasing levels of harmonious cooperation between political communities. Liberal internationalist theories address how best to organise and reform the international system. They regard violence as the policy of last resort, advocate diplomacy and [multilateralism](#) as the most appropriate strategies for states to pursue, and tend to champion supranational political structures and international organisations. (Source: [Britannica](#))

The EU: an example and proponent of multilateralism?

It has been [argued](#) that the concept of multilateralism comes closer than any other single concept to expressing what the EU stands for in world politics. The EU itself is an example of multilateral cooperation as a way towards peace; in the [words](#) of former European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, 'The European experience of wars produced by great power rivalries led namely after the tragedy of World War II to the creation of an institutional multilateral order in Western Europe'. As a foreign policy actor which is also a multilateral entity, the EU aims to promote consensual solutions at a global level by exporting its own example. This is captured by Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union, which sets out that 'The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world', and that the EU shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations, in order to – among other things – 'promote an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance'.

From the European Security Strategy to the Global Strategy: multilateralism as a cornerstone of the EU's external relations

In its first ever comprehensive European Security Strategy (ESS), entitled [A secure Europe in a better world](#) from 2003, the EU made 'strengthening the United Nations, equipping it to fulfil its responsibilities and to act effectively' a European priority, and placed the advocacy of 'effective multilateralism' at the centre of its strategic goals. The ESS prioritised multilateralism within the context of a new – at the time – and broader concept of security which went beyond the confrontation of military threats, spilling over into policy areas such as trade, development, justice and home affairs, environment and health. In so doing, it made multilateralism a focal point of the entirety of the EU's foreign policy. The ESS followed a 2003 Commission [communication](#) emphasising the need for the EU to continue supporting multilateralism in light of significant shifts in the international environment. These included the emergence of new actors – notably emerging powers and non-governmental actors – and the reshuffling of the distribution of power towards a more multipolar world.

The ESS adopted 'an international order based on effective multilateralism' as one of its three strategic objectives. The use of the word 'effective' has been the subject of debate

among analysts but it [essentially](#) amounted to support for legally binding commitments agreed upon by the largest number of nations possible through strong multilateral institutions. The ESS specifically stated: 'We want international organisations, regimes and treaties to be effective in confronting threats to international peace and security, and must therefore be ready to act when their rules are broken'. It referred explicitly to widening membership of existing multilateral organisations such as the WTO and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); to strengthening NATO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); to supporting new (at the time) multilateral organisations such as the ICC and regional organisations in Europe (OSCE, Council of Europe) and abroad (ASEAN, Mercosur and others). It also provided for the use of strategic partnerships with key actors as a tool towards effective multilateralism.

In the decade that followed the ESS, the EU made significant steps towards the strategy's objectives. Progress in the field of promotion of multilateralism received ambiguous evaluations. The 2008 [Report on the Implementation](#) of the European Security Strategy – Providing Security in a Changing World re-emphasised that 'at a global level, Europe must lead a renewal of the multilateral order', and stressed the importance of partnerships, since 'we have a unique moment to renew multilateralism, working with the United States and with our partners around the world'.

Analyses vary on the explanation of why effective multilateralism was not pursued with the vigour suggested in the ESS. At the time, an analysis by the [Clingendael Institute](#) argued that, while in the field of classic security the EU had been partly successful in promoting the multilateral approach, in other fields such as environment, health, food and others, support of the EU for effective multilateralism had, for the most part, been fragmented and weak, to a large extent because of the absence of a strong single voice and the failure to acknowledge the relevance of emerging powers. [Others](#) suggested that the ESS failed to specify on *which* policy areas the Union should focus, leaving its multilateral agenda too generic and devoid of priorities.

Yet, in 2014 a policy review by the European Commission (Directorate-General for Research and Innovation) entitled [A global actor in search of a strategy: European Union foreign policy between multilateralism and bilateralism](#) concluded that given the state of uncertainty of global politics, the Union needed to design a more comprehensive strategy that 'sketches out a vision of the role the EU can play in the global governance of the 21st century'. This strategy would be [presented](#) by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) two years later, in the form of the Global Strategy.

Multilateralism in the Global Strategy

The elaboration of the European Union [Global Strategy](#) (EUGS) was an [opportunity](#) for the EU to adapt its stance on multilateralism to the evolving strategic environment. Two key challenges [existed](#) with regard to the approach to multilateralism. The first challenge was to set out clear priorities for the EU's multilateral action to be pursued collectively by the Member States; and the second to determine the form of multilateralism that would best suit the promotion of the priorities concerned. Even before the strategy was presented experts envisaged that – unlike in 2003 – the EU's approach to multilateralism would have to be more flexible, giving room to other forms of multilateralism such as ad hoc coalitions, 'minilateral' formats, strategic partnerships and transnational networks, to the detriment of formal institutions.

The EUGS focuses on foreign – rather than just security – policy, thus covering a diverse set of policy areas (foreign, security, trade, development, energy, and climate). The document reiterates the EU's dedication to the promotion of 'a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core', but emphasises that 'the format to deliver effective global governance may vary from case to case' citing policy areas ranging from cybersecurity (where states, international organisations, industry, civil society and technical experts are actors to consider); maritime policy (UN, UN specialised agencies, NATO, strategic partners, and ASEAN); to humanitarian, development and climate policy (UN, G20, new donors, civil society and the private sector). Where multilateral processes already exist it envisions strengthening them, and at the same time expanding fledgling international regimes in areas such as disarmament and international criminal law. A 2016 publication by the [Egmont Institute](#) argues that the EUGS's message on global governance differs from the ESS in several respects:

- The EUGS leaves much more room for manoeuvre in how an effective global governance system is achieved.
- It departs from the ESS's overwhelming emphasis on the United States, NATO and a handful of other regional organisations, instead including most notably China in recognition of Beijing's increasingly central role in global commercial, climate and intellectual property issues among others.
- It acknowledges that the EU is best-suited to act as a 'coordinator' of a plethora of multilateral processes, even though universal institutions remain the EU's preferred approach.
- It acknowledges rule-making in a bottom-up manner as acceptable – notably in the area of trade. Thus, it views bi- or plurilateral arrangements as instruments (at times) paving the way towards broader multilateral frameworks.¹
- In addition to seeking to consolidate and expand multilateral mechanisms in areas where they already exist, the EUGS sets out the EU's ambition to promote international rules and regimes in so far unmapped areas.

The EU in multilateral organisations

Apart from promoting multilateralism as the preferred form of global governance, the EU [actively participates](#) in a number of multilateral institutions with observer or even member status. It is an observer in many UN programmes (e.g. UNDP, Unicef) and specialised agencies (e.g. the International Labour Organization (ILO), Unesco) and has been an [enhanced observer](#) in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) since 2011. As an observer with enhanced status, the EU has no vote but is party to more than 50 UN multilateral agreements and conventions as the only non-state participant. It has obtained a special 'full participant' status in a number of important UN conferences. It is a member with full speaking and voting rights in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and in the World Trade Organization (WTO).² The EU is a member of the G20, represented at both finance minister level (European Commission, the Council Presidency and the European Central Bank) and at head of state or government level (Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission, depending on the issue under discussion). The coordination of EU Member States' participation in multilateral organisations is provided for under [Article 34](#) of the Treaty on European Union (see box).

The European Parliament

The European Parliament has been a strong advocate of multilateralism and of the EU's role in shaping global governance. In its resolution of 11 May 2011 on the [EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations](#) it noted that the EU's mechanisms for building consensus and taking concerted action make it a model for a rules-based international order. It considered that for the EU to aspire to be an effective global actor and to safeguard its position, it is essential that it have the ability to shape multilateral cooperation and lead collective action in addressing international challenges, namely those arising from the responsibility to protect and the need to enhance human security as a means of achieving global security. It called for improved and more preventive EU multilateral action in humanitarian crises. It also expressed the belief that non-state actors should be involved in multilateral policy-making. The resolution made specific proposals for the EU's participation in several international organisations (see Annex).

Article 34 (ex Article 19) TEU

1. Member States shall coordinate their action in international organisations and at international conferences. They shall uphold the Union's positions in such forums. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy shall organise this coordination. In international organisations and at international conferences where not all the Member States participate, those which do take part shall uphold the Union's positions.

2. In accordance with Article 24(3), Member States represented in international organisations or international conferences where not all the Member States participate shall keep the other Member States and the High Representative informed of any matter of common interest. Member States which are also members of the United Nations Security Council will concert and keep the other Member States and the High Representative fully informed. Member States which are members of the Security Council will, in the execution of their functions, defend the positions and the interests of the Union, without prejudice to their responsibilities under the provisions of the United Nations Charter. [...]

The crisis of multilateralism

The election of Donald Trump, Brexit and the rise of nationalist populism have led to a proliferation of analyses on the crisis of multilateralism and of the liberal order. Yet, debates on the 'crisis of multilateralism' are not new. [Criticisms](#) regarding the functioning of multilateral institutions have abounded, particularly since the advent of the 21st century and the rapid changes it has brought – including in the global balance of economic power, in geopolitics and in technology. But even towards the end of the 1990s, attitudes towards multilateralism became more sceptical, largely as a consequence of a crisis in the collective security system, a central cause of which was the failure of the United Nations, the 'intended centrepiece of multilateralism' to guarantee a global system of collective security and to deal with a number of conflicts and threats that emerged with.

The current [crisis](#) of multilateralism has many faces: fewer multilateral treaties are being signed and ratified; some of the existing treaties are poorly implemented, and states increasingly reject the oversight of treaty obligations and monitoring of compliance by multilateral organisations. Some of the causes of this situation are increased polarisation and fragmentation in world politics; lack of effectiveness, but also of transparency, representativeness and democratic accountability of many multilateral organisations. The phenomenon has also been [attributed](#) to the growing intensity and complexity of economic and security interdependence; the rise of new actors in the international arena

and the changing position of the USA in the global system. [Consensus](#) has become hard to reach within the existing multilateral structures.

At the same time, multilateral institutions have [become](#) 'disconnected from publics in the very countries that created them'. This phenomenon is aggravated among groups that are perceived to have been negatively affected by globalisation, such as workers in the traditional manufacturing sectors in developed countries. Populist parties advocating nationalist and xenophobic views often [draw](#) their political support from such disaffected groups.

[Concerns](#) about the future of multilateralism have been reinforced by early indications that the Trump administration would decrease – financially³ and normatively – US support for multilateral arrangements in areas such as trade, climate, security and aid. In the [Trump worldview](#), bilateral deal-making among great powers is preferred, while regional and multilateral organisations are seen as potential sources of constraint for the USA.⁴ Rising trade protectionism is only one facet of these tendencies and pre-dates the Trump administration: in a 2016 [report](#), the WTO noted that between mid-October 2015 and May 2016, G20 economies had introduced new protectionist measures at the fastest pace seen since the since the 2008 financial crisis.

In part, the negative attitude to international organisations is linked to '[multilateral overreach](#)', referring to the natural tendency of institutions, their leaders and bureaucracies to expand their authority in order to facilitate international cooperation. In so doing, they give a sense of limiting sovereignty, a narrative that has been used to reinforce those sceptical towards liberal internationalism.

Another facet of the 'crisis' is the rise of emerging powers, notably the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and primarily China, which has led to their demand to renegotiate the existing global governance arrangements and enhance their role in them. At the same time, [doubts](#) have been raised about whether the USA, for a long time the leader of the alliance that established the existing multilateral institutions, has the capacity and the will to continue championing that system based on liberal internationalism. By and large, experts [agree](#) that the USA may no longer be in the position to play a hegemonic role thus creating a leadership vacuum.

Some [scholars](#) have argued that the crisis of multilateralism is just another facet of its success: multilateral institutions are being used by actors to challenge the existing state of multilateralism by proposing new multilateral organisations. They refer to cases where 'states, and sometimes also non-state actors, are dissatisfied with an existing institution, find pathways to intra-institutional reform blocked, and decide that it is worthwhile either to shift their focus to other institutions or to create a new one' as counter-multilateralism. In this sense, international institutions are not obsolete but in need of reform and adaptation to the new strategic realities. The problems that have come about as a result of the increased economic and security interdependence of the past decades call for new bargains, new coalitions and new forms of international cooperation.

The way forward

It is evident from the above that the crisis of multilateralism is more about a renewal of the multilateral system rather than its end. As highlighted by the US think-tank [CSIS](#) there is continued relevance of and need for multilateral institutions, to help states do together what they cannot or will not do alone. But, understanding the strengths, weaknesses, and

uses of multilateral action is critical for engaging in multilateral actions successfully. The observation can be expanded to multilateral action beyond the field of security.

G. John Ikenberry [puts forward](#) several points to be addressed. One of them is the necessity to redistribute authority and generate collective leadership. The need for shared and more expanded leadership was first addressed with the shift from the G8 to the G20, but more needs to be done. A second is flexibility and informality, with new governance structures being increasingly less formal. Growing emphasis on regionalism is also highlighted in his work as the right approach to address the underlying local sources of problems. But he also emphasises the need to maintain openness and the focus on rules, as two characteristics that have made the existing multilateral organisations desirable. Desirability is also directly linked to reinvigorating popular support for the multilateral order. To this end, it is [proposed](#) elsewhere that 'global integration should be accompanied by a set of domestic policies that will allow all economic and social classes to reap the benefits of globalisation in a way that is highly visible to voters'.

Policy-makers and experts in a number of fora and publications have emphasised the need to work towards a more 'resilient multilateralism'. Børge Brende, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, outlined [nine priorities](#) in order to accomplish that, including:

- Acknowledging multilateralism's current structural weaknesses, while at the same time building and capitalising on its strength and victories over recent decades.
- Ensuring that citizens understand and appreciate the fact that giving away power to multilateral agencies enhances their own power.
- Aiming for a more globally inclusive multilateralism, stimulating dialogue on questions of ownership with emerging powers that are currently under-represented in global governance institutions.
- Adapting to the new geopolitical order.
- Avoiding overstressing the mandates and functions of multilateral institutions if there is insufficient consensus among governments to move ahead, and using informal forums when more appropriate (flexible multilateralism).
- Emphasising consensual (and fact-based) knowledge production about the problems at hand, and acknowledging consensual knowledge production as a key deliverable of multilateral institutions (e.g. the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC).
- Being open to opportunities for reform of organisations.

The G20

More recently, the German presidency of the G20 has launched a process of reflection on the [role of the G20](#) in fostering multilateralism. It has been posited by some [experts](#) that due to its origin, structure and membership, the G20 may be an ideal forum to take on the task of reshaping the multilateral order. The focus of a new multilateral bargain would be:

- Rethinking the goals of international cooperation.
- Being as inclusive as possible in this process of rethinking.
- Ensuring that international rules have sufficient policy space within them to allow countries to take domestic measures that distribute the gains of globalisation more evenly.

- Communicating to all stakeholders the details and explanations of measures taken, and the benefits they bring to different constituencies as well as how to offset related costs.

Outlook for the EU: stakeholder views

Faced with the centrifugal forces of populism and euroscepticism, the EU [needs](#) common answers to the economic and social problems that threaten the cohesion of the Union, as well as new partners for multilateral cooperation. Most analyses emphasise that, in the scenario outlined above, the EU needs to project leadership in the renewal of the commitment to multilateralism.

The director of the Brussels based think-tank Bruegel [argues](#) that Europe needs to 'prepare its strategic response in case the US openly defies the multilateral order and slides into protectionism', and identifies four aspects to this strategy. First, the EU should collaborate with partners around the world in defence of the WTO and other multilateral agreements such as the Paris climate accord. Second, the EU should accelerate work on deeper economic relations with China and other global partners such as Japan, Singapore and the Mercosur bloc. It should also mould its bilateral deals in such a way that it is possible to integrate them into a more multilateral framework. Third, the EU's own trade governance needs to be reformed and internal imbalances addressed, to increase the EU's external credibility. And fourth, Europe's social model should be strengthened in order to 'ward off the protectionist temptation'.

The HR/VP has been very vocal in promoting cooperation for multilateralism in her recent visits to G20 powers such as China and India, and in previous trips to Latin America. During her visit to China she [stated](#) that: 'The European Union and China share the view of a global order based on multilateralism and on the UN system: our cooperation has never been so important, in a moment when multilateral global governance is put in question from many sides'. Following her meetings in India, the EU and India [expressed](#) their common interest and commitment to strengthen their cooperation on the world stage, both bilaterally and in multilateral fora, on common priorities such as multilateralism, climate change, sustainable development, free and fair trade, security and defence – notably on maritime security – and counter-terrorism. On 9 May in her address to the UN Security Council, Federica Mogherini [highlighted](#) the importance of the multilateral system, stating that 'The new global order will be multilateral, or it will not be'. She urged other countries to keep investing in UN agencies as 'they are as important to global peace and security as defence spending – or even more' and to stay committed to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

A final point to be mentioned is that the aforementioned 2014 [foreign policy review](#) of the Commission emphasises that the EU needs to further develop its foreign policy capacities and strategies regarding the G20. This requires improving existing coordination mechanisms and developing a clear vision of what role the EU wants the G20 to play in the global governance of the 21st century.

By all accounts, expanding partnerships is identified as the way forward. The [White Paper on the Future of Europe](#) (2017) underlines: 'While the world has never been smaller or better connected, the return of isolationism has cast doubts over the future of international trade and multilateralism. Europe's prosperity and ability to uphold our values on the world stage will continue to depend on its **openness** and strong links with its **partners**'.

Main references

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Endnotes

¹ Note that this can also be said of the G20 or the E3/EU+3 negotiations with Iran and is thus applicable beyond trade policy.

² If the EU exercises its right to vote in these forums, the Member States cannot then exercise their right to vote.

³ The [budget](#) proposed by President Trump for 2018 eliminates the Global Climate Change Initiative, ceasing payments to the United Nations (UN) climate change programmes. It also reduces funding to the UN and affiliated agencies, including UN peacekeeping and other international organisations, as well as funding for multilateral development banks, including the World Bank.

⁴ The attitude of the US towards multilateralism has always had a particularly strong effect on the state of the liberal order. For example, In the 1990s the withdrawal or abrogation of the US from a number of multilateral treaties (ICC, Kyoto protocol, ABM Treaty) under the George W. Bush administration led to wider scepticism about the effectiveness of multilateralism.

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Annex – EP proposals on EU role in specific multilateral institutions

Multilateral institution	European Parliament position (2011)
UN System	Reinforcement of the UN's civilian instruments and strict compliance with, and application of international law by all states, groups of states and multilateral partners. Seek solutions to discrepancy whereby the EU in several UN programmes is a mere observer. Enhance global governance and seek solutions to improve coordination between G -formation and UN system.
United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)	Ensure the necessary arrangements for the EU's effective participation in the work of the UNGA are put in place, to make full use of all the powers conferred on it by its status as a regional-integration organisation. Promote a change in the structure of UNGA membership, enhancing the status of regional integration organisations (RIOs) with an advanced level of integration making them enhanced observers.
United Nations Security Council (UNSC)	An EU seat in an enlarged UNSC. Need to establish cooperation mechanisms aimed at ensuring that EU Member States that sit on the UNSC defend common EU positions therein. EU UNSC members should keep other EU Member States informed of their positions and activities. Need for reform to achieve greater clarification on the UNSC's competences in relation to other bodies and a review of its working methods.
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	A single view should be presented when contributing to international economic and financial governance.
World Bank (WB)	EU to be granted observer status on the WB Executive Board, reform politically obsolete groupings of countries by grouping EU Member States together under the same constituency.
Bank for International Settlements (BIS)	The ECB to be the only representative of the euro area on the BIS board, the European Commission to be the only representative on the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision.
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	Establish a framework for integrated cooperation including permanent structures for cooperation. Arrangements allowing the EU to have recourse to NATO assets and capabilities need to be enhanced.
Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)	Jointly develop with the OSCE Permanent Council a mechanism aimed at enhancing cooperation, coordination and consultation. The VP/HR to coordinate the position of EU Member States on OSCE matters. Need for a European defence policy to emerge.
Council of Europe (CoE)	EU to better coordinate its work with the CoE in the areas of law, democracy and human rights. EU to attend, with voting rights on behalf of the Union, meetings of the CoE Committee of Ministers monitoring the execution of judgments given by the ECtHR. EU's right to be represented in the Steering Committee for Human Rights, the right to nominate a judge to the ECtHR and the right for the EP to participate in the CoE Parliamentary Assembly when the latter elects judges. EU to accede to the Committee on the Prevention of Torture (CPT), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the European Commission on the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ).
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	Upgrade the EU's current observer status in the OECD to that of full member.
World Trade Organization (WTO)	WTO actions to be consistent and mutually supportive with actions of other international organisations, EU policies and international law. To consider the issue of better accommodating non-trade concerns within the scope of WTO rules.
G7/G8/G20	EU coordination before G7 and G8 meetings, with the European Parliament closely involved. Full coordination and alignment of messages among the five European countries and the EU representative sitting at the G20 table to ensure effective participation at G20 ministerials. EU should fully participate in G7/G8 process.

Source: European Parliament resolution of 11 May 2011 on [EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations](#).