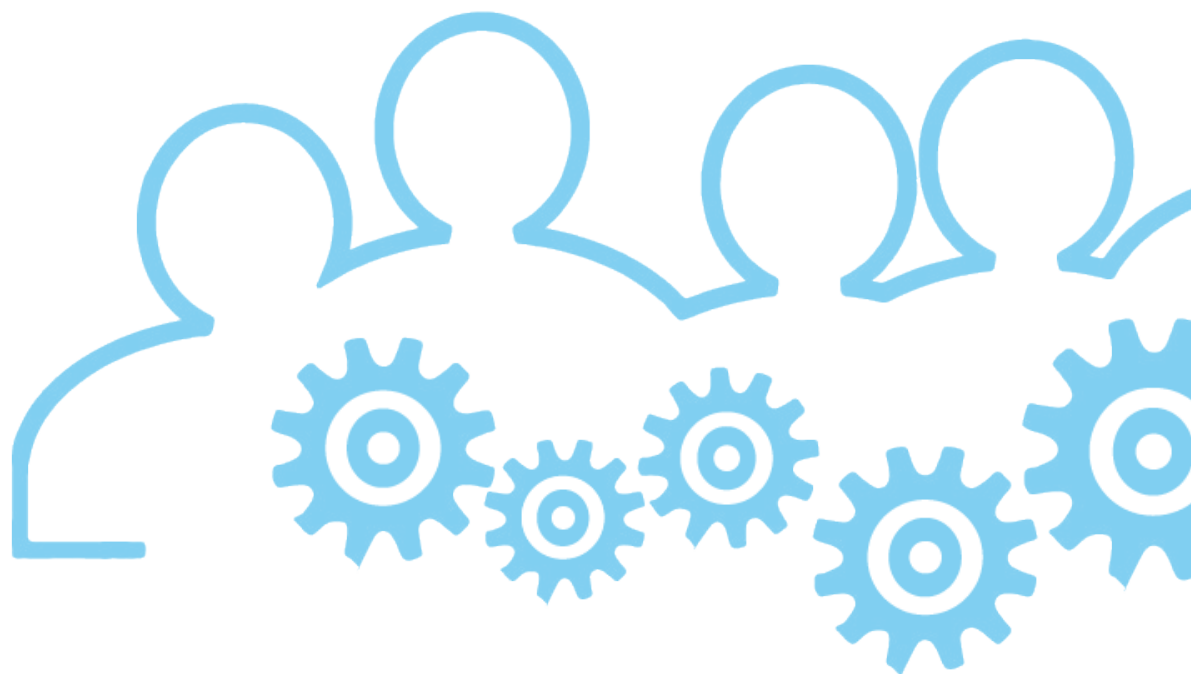


The future of multilateralism: at risk but more necessary than ever

The role of the EU and other non-state actors in
the reform of a 75-year-old system

DIPLOCAT DIGITAL TALK - 25 February 2021



Report written by Pol Bargués, Research Fellow at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs), who took part in the digital talk and would like to thank Oriol José Ochoa for the comments and feedback.

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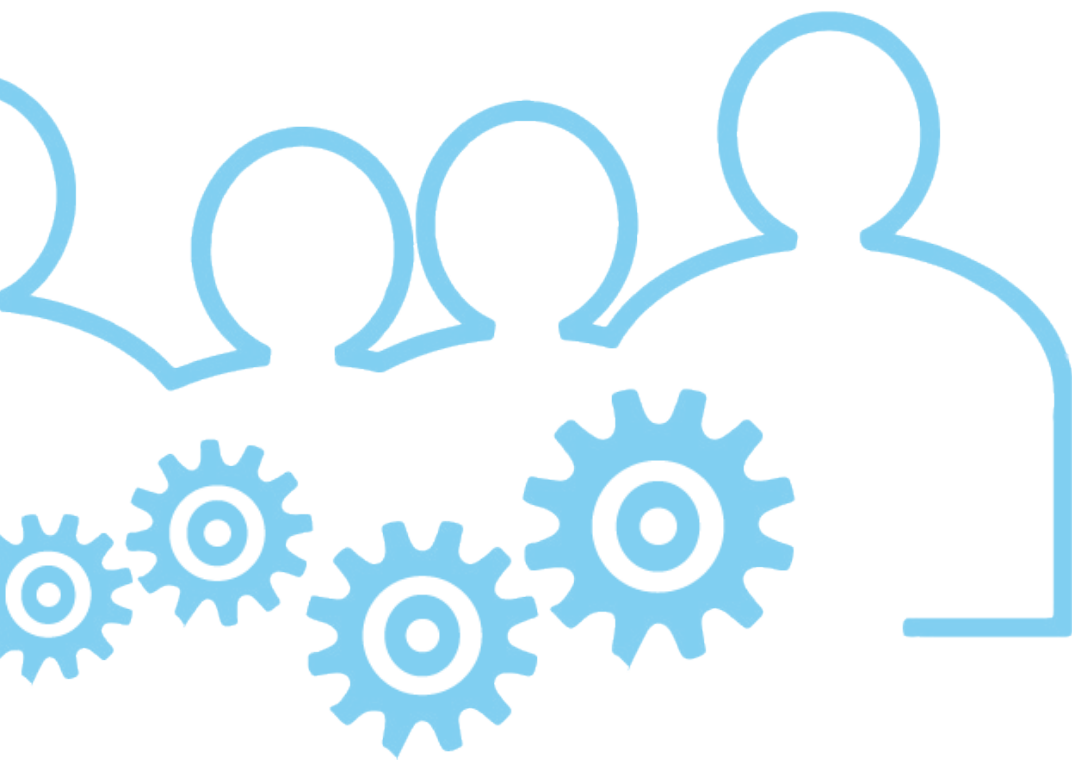
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1. Introduction

DIPLOCAT, in collaboration with the Delegation of the Government of Catalonia to the United States of America, organized a debate on “The future of multilateralism” on 25 February 2021. It was part of the second DIPLOCAT Talks series, whose motto was “The world seen from a decentralized perspective”.

Laura Foraster, DIPLOCAT’s Secretary General, opens the session, while Miquel Royo, Director General for Global Affairs at the Catalan Government, acts as moderator. The three panellists are: Pol Bargués, research fellow at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs); Vassilis Ntousas, international relations policy advisor at the Foundation for European Progressive Studies and academic member of the British Chatham House; and Maria Àngels Oliva, deputy head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

One of DIPLOCAT’s central aims is to cultivate multilateralist values and foster international cooperation. As Laura Forester puts it in the opening words of the session: “DIPLOCAT seeks to build bridges between Catalonia and the rest of the world through various tools, including international dialogue, to contribute to global debates and share knowledge and exchange good practices with international actors.” Forester argues that the quest for multilateral responses and broad consensus is key to deal with contemporary complex crises such as the current Covid-19 pandemic and climate change, as well as to promote human rights, global and regional defence and security, or the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Plan.

Introducing the conversation, Royo claims that the crisis of multilateralism is not new. Multilateralism is complex, it is a vast topic that would require additional hours to merely scratch its surface. In his view, the key question is not whether the current UN-led system needs to be reformed, as most people would concur. Rather, the puzzle is: How will it be reformed? What will reforms imply? Who will lead such reforms, and for what purpose? These questions are raised to trigger the conversation.

2. The past: 75 years of United Nations

2020 marked the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (UN), the organization that laid the foundations of the international system after the end of World War II. Royo asks the speakers to review the UN’s history and assess whether the current multilateral system is ripe to address today’s challenges: “Is a reform necessary?”

Ntousas starts his intervention by affirming the need to reform the current multilateral system: “It will not survive if it does not transform”. Crises of multilateralism are not uncommon. He reminds that the League of Nations, created in 1919 in the Paris Peace Conference after World War I, fails to bring about collective security and prevent war among great powers. What is important is to unravel the nature of the current crisis of multilateralism, as it is now when it is needed most. According to Ntousas, it is a three-fold crisis.

First, the multilateral system lacks legitimacy. On the one hand, there is an output problem of legitimacy, as multilateralism was built to get outcomes states could not get unilaterally. Yet negotiation processes and agreements do not usually guarantee a common outcome or one that can satisfy all its participants. On the other hand, there is also an input problem because of the lack of transparency of most multilateral processes, which still reflect post-World War II power dynamics. Thus, developing countries and emerging great powers denounce a lack of representation in what they consider an asymmetric distribution of power.

Second, Ntousas believes that the multilateral system’s machinery (its structures and mechanisms) is not fit for purpose anymore. There is, for instance, a limited involvement of non-state actors in multilateral processes. Nation states dominate multilateral processes and structures over regional and supranational organizations or sub-state entities (provinces or cities). The perception is, as Ntousas sums it up, that “the system is antiquated; it is inconsistent with current times”.

Finally, he acknowledges the risk of great power competition. His point is that the multilateral system is contested not only by traditional “challengers”, but also by the champions of the current Western-led liberal order. The most obvious example is former United States President Donald Trump. However, Ntousas thinks that the US disengagement from global commitments and cooperation did not start with Trump; he has merely accelerated the trend due to his “personal, idiosyncratic nature” and preference for bilateral agreements. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic is further showing how uncooperative the multilateral system has become: it has fast-tracked Washington isolationism, the strategic competition between Washington and Beijing, as well as their normative divide.

Ntousas concludes that “we find ourselves in a moment of acute crisis”. The only silver lining he finds is that the current crisis is so blatantly evident that a consensus is stronger than ever on the need for comprehensive reform and renewal. Yet, he thinks great powers are unwilling to commit, as change necessarily implies compromises and making hard choices. The proverb, he adds, captures this well: “Everybody wants a change, but nobody wants to change”.

Bargués agrees with Ntousas: “It is unlikely that the UN could get a comprehensive reform”. He draws a parallel between the history of the UN and the year of its 75th anniversary: a year that started with great expectations but ended in a global drama.

In its history, according to Bargués, the UN has had two glorious moments: its birth in 1945, out of the ashes of World War II, and the post-Cold War period era of the 1990s. The first was due to the role it had in reconstructing a destroyed world after the defeat of the Axis powers. The UN was founded to protect human rights, uphold international law, maintain international peace and security, and brought optimism to gloomy days. The second great moment was the 1990s, due to the end of an era marked by the fear of nuclear mutual assured destruction. The UN pushed for democracy, free-market and liberal societies. Furthermore, new strides were made in climate change and gender issues, such as introducing the Kyoto protocol in 1997 or the Woman Peace and Security Agenda in 2000. In both memorable moments, Bargués argues, the UN and multilateralism achieved such milestones because of two premises: the fact that there was a clear leadership (the war victors) and there was little contestation of the new order (those who had lost the war had little legitimacy to speak).

Nowadays, the situation is different. We populate a new multipolar world. There is massive uncertainty because there is no shared vision anymore. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres acknowledged that “we are in a time of need, states cannot solve the crisis on their own, we must cooperate and the UN must be active”. The need for reform is rarely discussed, but Bargués thinks that it is not possible without ‘victors’. As he puts it: “The compromise and commitment that Vassilis [Tsousas] was talking about are not possible if there are no winners or losers in today’s international relations.”



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Oliva offers an economic perspective on multilateralism, building on her experience in working for international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Her main point is that the

current international financial system does not need to reform, as it is still apt to deal with today's challenges.

The multilateral economic system was set up in Bretton-Woods in 1944 with the creation of the IMF and the World Bank Group. Oliva poses that these institutions (with the addition of the World Trade Organization since 1995) are relevant and legitimate due to three central pillars: (1) the values they endorse, (2) their role in an increasingly interconnected world, and (3) the fact that they serve a global agenda.

According to Oliva, these institutions are based on consensual decision-making and cooperation – two central values for multilateralism. These institutions are governed by a board of governors. They are fairly representative: the IMF board is represented by 190 members (the last member to join was Andorra – in October 2020) and pursues financial stability. The World Bank has 189 member countries and assists developing countries. The World Trade Organization has 164 members, representing 98% of the world trade. They are all concerned with growth, jobs, financial stability and cooperation.

What is even more decisive, Oliva continues, is that their role is still valid in an increasingly interconnected world, where borders are diffused, and financial institutions operate across borders. These institutions' role is to increase the number of jobs, stimulate the global economy's continuous growth, and ensure financial stability for trading partners.

Therefore, Oliva concludes: the existing multilateral framework is still very valid, and it is evolving. An example is the 2010 reforms in the IMF, when it was agreed that emerging market countries would have a more significant say in how the institution is run. Contrary to widespread critiques of the current multilateral system, Oliva thinks that the system does not need to change but to constantly adjust to new realities (as it does already). It is essential for these institutions to continue building capacity and updating their mechanisms to open to new advances in e-economy, gender equality, cybersecurity, or the challenges after Covid-19.

3. The present: crises and how to make multilateralism work

Royo introduces a second round of questions to speak about the present of multilateralism. He poses the following questions to the panellists: What are the main normative challenges in global governance? Are global rules able to constrain the actions of states? What role do different actors (from international organizations to states to sub-national agents) play in addressing global crises such as Covid-19?

According to Oliva, the current multilateral framework is well defined and established. It does not require further expansion or transformation, as "more does not mean better". What it is essential in her opinion, however, is that multilateral organizations have the right tools to deliver and implement their mandates. The challenge is that members work and comply with the commitments undertaken. The fulfilment of obligations and best practices will benefit the whole international system.

Oliva develops three principles to consolidate the multilateral system:



Negotiations and collaborative agreements are needed to reach beneficial outcomes in the face of externalities. While states recognize the benefits of cooperation, more efforts are required by the international community to incentivize agreements and ensure enforceability. What should be avoided is that states benefit from free-riding and understand cooperation as a simple exercise of "checking boxes" without real obligations or compromises.



We need to ensure bottom-up approaches, as there are no one size fits all solutions. Local governments usually have better understandings of realities on the ground; sub-national entities are usually more knowledgeable of their communities' economic needs and requirements. At the same time, states or international organizations can see the "big picture". Both levels are important; efforts should focus on harmonisation of top-down and bottom-up strategies.



There is a need to maintain the multilateral system's efficiency – such as building robust domestic institutions, monetary instruments, a healthy banking sector – to recover our living standards of the "pre-Covid era" in the face of new crises and shocks.

The next speaker is Ntousas, and he boldly claims: "There is no such thing as the multilateral system". He argues that the system has no monolithic structure – one that has the same reach and composition everywhere. Instead, it is an uneven system with many levels of governances and many differences, not only geographic but also in the number and nature of actors participating or abusing the system. The central point he wants to express is that the system needs to be flexible to accommodate different perspectives, rather than based on the current rigid, inter-governmental formulas.

There are tensions in the system, Ntousas explains. Those who wish to reform the system demand an upgrade and evolution of the system. However, those who benefit from the system are more reluctant to apply these reforms. There are important players interested in maintaining the status quo because reforms contain risks and imply making concessions.

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These tensions, the differences in perceptions and expectations, can be seen in new policy domains – from migration to cyberspace – that have not been regulated by multilateral governance. The dilemma in these policy domains is that there are huge normative disagreements between actors, their perspectives are very different, and yet the common rules are not clearly defined. In other words, as he put it, since "the multilateral fabric remains thin" in these policy domains, it is impossible to solve global problems.

The answer to this dilemma is not to enhance the traditional inter-governmental multilateral system, according to Ntousas. The answer should not be, for example, to develop a WTO equivalent that could regulate the cyberspace or develop another inter-governmental forum where states can negotiate. Instead, the ultimate objective should be to turn cyberspace into a field where norms are discussed and advanced on the basis of multi-stakeholder governance models (different than the current state negotiation models). Developing multi-stakeholder governance institutions comes with the challenge of adapting models to the needs of different areas, which require different solutions and arrangements. Ntousas uses the EU as an example of this complexity, where innovative formulas and old ones coexist. In terms of trade, the EU is sovereign and has exclusive competences. So, the EU not only speaks with one voice but with one mouth. However, in cyberspace, the EU does not have the same level of coherence; and member states drive the discussion.

Multilateralism as the collective coming together to respond to crisis and conflicts requires inventiveness and flexibility to avoid that it is a mere 'box-ticking' dominated by states, said Ntousas (paraphrasing Oliva). He concludes with a borrowed metaphor: "the mechanisms underpinning multilateralism in the twenty-first century will be less than cathedrals built in stone but rather flexible as tents".

Finally, Bargués is asked to focus on the differences between the Trump Administration of 2016-2020 and the current Biden Administration to assess the present of multilateralism. In a counter-intuitive

statement, he said that both administrations are not very different when it comes to foreign policy. By revising the last four US administrations, Bargués constructs a narrative of gradual disillusionment with the need to export liberal values that has led to isolationism.

Bargués starts with the Clinton Administration, which took the country's reins after the Western "victory" in the Cold War. In that period (1993-2001), Clinton felt the need to expand democracy and export liberal systems of rule. He also intervened abroad, for example, to stop the Balkan Wars. President Bush (2000-2008) continued the trend of expansionism. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Bush sought to defend America's interests overseas and intervened in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to Bargués, by the mid of the 2000s, all these wars of democratization were seen as "imperialist and neo-colonial". They were seen as morally wrong and economically costly. And then American foreign policy changed.

Obama's presidency (2008-2016) represents the end of a foreign policy of expansion and intervention abroad. Obama began with the promise of ending the war in Iraq (it officially ended in 2011) and retreating the troops from Afghanistan (he reduced them substantially). He also reduced enormously the number of prisoners in Guantanamo. All these actions were not only of choice but particularly of necessity: the crisis of 2008 had struck deep into the heart of the US, and an increasingly contested world prompted Obama to be less far-reaching and less interventionist.

The Trump Administration (2016-2020) continued with this trend and accelerated the troop retreat in Afghanistan (and ended the peace talks with the Taliban) and Syria. Trump went a step further with the notion of retreat: he did not only remove boots from the ground but also disengaged from the international multilateral agreements. He withdrew from the Paris Accord, the Human Rights Council, and the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPA).

According to Bargués, there is a key difference between Obama and Trump: Trump's disengagements and insolent manners have contributed to polarizing international relations. He was controversial – for instance, when claiming that the coronavirus was a virus from China or when he denied climate change. He acted as if China and Russia were major strategic competitors. He accelerated a trade war with them or picked sides in Venezuela by supporting the Opposition's leader Juan Guaidó.

Biden (2020-Present) is seeking to rebuild all these alliances and partnerships broken by Trump. For instance, one of his first acts in office was to sign up the US to Covax, the initiative to distribute vaccines to developing states, and has made steps to return to the Paris Agreement. However, the point made by Bargués is that Biden cannot recuperate a foreign policy of expansion and intervention. He cannot export democracy abroad, as Clinton or Bush dreamt of. Times are not ripe for another US moral crusade.

4. The future of multilateralism: the EU, other non-state actors and flexible partnerships

Before opening the floor to the audience, Royo prompts the speakers to speculate about the future of multilateralism: What is the role of the EU? What role should non-state actors play in the revitalisation of multilateralism?

Bargués foresees how difficult the future of multilateralism is, as perceptions of complexity and contestation have risen in international relations. As an example, he refers to the developments of EU foreign policy. He recalls the webinar celebrating the 10th anniversary of the EU’s External Action Service (EEAS) in late 2020, which reunited former High-Representatives (HR/VPs) Javier Solana, Federica Mogherini and the current HR/VPs, Josep Borrell. In the webinar, Solana said: “Back in the 2000s, we had less capacity but more influence. Today, we have more capacity but less influence”. What Solana meant, Bargués explains, was that when he was High Representative, the EU had less capacity, as it was formed by fewer countries and had less workforce. However, its influence was more significant, partially due to the lack of opposition and contestation regionally and globally.

Today, the EU foreign policy is more integrated, more coherent, and there is greater cooperation among member states. However, the EU’s capacity to shape international affairs has withered. The EU foreign policy is more defensive, pragmatic and has realised that it cannot transform its neighbours according to its image and likeness. According to Bargués, Solana boasted that, in 2008, as he forced the Russian Federation and Georgia to peace talks in just two weeks. Today, the EU has been unable to stop the conflict in Ukraine, and relations with Russia have deteriorated.



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In sum, for Bargués, the key point is not that Borrell is less capable than Solana, but that the world is more complicated for the EU. The EU is adapting to a world where there is greater contestation and competition.

Oliva takes the floor to refer to the EU as a vital, influential actor in the current order and a successful, tangible experience of multilateralism. Why has the EU become an example for others? According to Oliva, this success comes from the fact that the EU puts forward a sustainable and inclusive multilateralism. The EU is also a champion of capacity-building and helps other countries to build and reform institutions. These are efforts to integrate the economies of developing countries and benefit from multilateral agreements.

Another important concept for consolidating multilateralism is building trust. Policies cannot be imposed from the top-down by international institutions like the EU or other authorities but must be contextualised and be inclusive of non-state actors. It is important that different stakeholders from civil society, universities and worker associations participate and contribute.

Finally, Ntousas sets his sights on the future of the EU. According to him, and building upon the example about Solana’s nostalgia of a more decisive EU, as set by Bargués, Ntousas explains that compromises were easier to achieve in the 2000s. The EU was a lot smaller than now (14 to 27), and its members were more homogenous. Agreements were easier to make. Ntousas argues that the EU is the most prominent leader of multilateralism because “it is a multilateral union in itself”. The EU has had the deepest and longest experience as a multilateral actor which has addressed many crises by cooperating and uniting further. The EU has also learnt in the process of integrating (that is, multilateralism as a method, a learning process of cooperation).

Although the EU is less integrated and has less capacity than other great powers such as the US, China or Russia, it is unique and has significant advantages. For example, it can become a more agile partner that is supportive of multilateralism; it is open to dialogue with a wide range of actors, from collaborators to competitors. This aptitude stems from its history and experience, as it has had to negotiate and find compromises between multiple stakeholders. For Ntousas, the direction is clear:

the EU has to become even more agile in approaching partnerships and relations with others. The goal is to move from partnerships to a flexible model of “partnering”.

This model is sustained by two important factors:

- First, there is a need to cooperate with great powers and emerging powers, even with states that are not like-minded. In a complex and interconnected world with common challenges, all partnerships are valuable. The challenge is enormous: will the EU and the US be able to cooperate with China on climate change or with Russia on arms control while, at the same time, continue to criticise their human rights violations or attacks on democratic norms and values? There is a need to find common interests with emerging countries (Brazil, India...) and explore *ad hoc* coalitions for global change. This will boost the EU's confidence, as it will be promoting its values in less favourable environments.
- Second, the EU must also work with non-state actors (civil society, the private sector, subnational units), as global problems such as climate change or cyber-space are becoming less polycentric. Partnerships must be more creative and include these actors to reimagine multilateralism with new energies and purposes.

In short, Ntousas emphasizes the need to spend more time thinking about how to engage with sub-state and non-state actors in the international system. Diplomacy should never stop. Formal and informal multilateral processes must be creatively pursued

5. Questions by the audience: the South and the shadow of unilateralism

In the final part of the debate, the participants are encouraged by Royo to answer questions posed by the audience willing to know more about the panellists' positions on a wide range of issues, such as the South's role in global institutions and the risks of unilateral adventures.

Bargués acknowledges a rapidly changing paradigm and believes that the South is “already acting and speaking”. The question, he says, is not what can “we” do to help “them”, or how can “we” give them a voice, but what are “they” saying and doing? A clear example of Southern countries which are no longer passive or lagging behind is the African Union's efficacy in dealing with the current pandemic. The EU and the African Union cannot maintain a vertical relationship of donor and recipient anymore. Indeed, in the many dialogues that these two Unions hold to cooperate over security, peace and climate change, relations are increasingly horizontal.

Furthermore, Bargués stresses that international initiatives such as China's “Road and Belt” strategy and Russia's efforts to open the Northern Sea Route to trade demonstrate how it is no longer the West that leads multilateral efforts. In sum, multilateralism also finds its expressions outside the West. International relations are decentering the EU and the US, depriving them of a central position.

Oliva agrees that the South is making steady progress. There is enormous capacity, and countries are owning the reforms of their institutions. However, she adds that there are periods or instances or areas where progress has stalled. The picture is mixed, and she thinks that more efforts are necessary to implement reforms. Overall, she is confident that countries in the Global South have much to add to multilateral institutions.

Following up on this question, Ntousas agrees that the Global South has spoken and acted for a long time now (notice, for example, the BRICS). The responsibility of Western powers like the EU is to enable

a proper conversation not only in formal settings, such as the EU and AU dialogues, but beyond. The EU needs to accept that this dialogue may imply losing some privileges. For example, the securitization of migration might stop, or trade relations may change. Ntousas suggests that this reality of an emerging Global South with rights and demands needs to be face-up by the EU more honestly.

The audience's following question expresses a preoccupation with strong leaders of great powers such as Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump or Xi Jinping and their preferences for unilateralism. Is there an alternative to multilateralism? Is it doomed to fail?

The three participants stress that multilateralism is the best (and only) way to deal with global problems. According to Bargués, and drawing parallelisms to DIPLOCAT's leitmotiv, "multilateralism is about connecting, projecting and empowering". It is about projecting an international dialogue and developing horizontal partnerships between different stakeholders. The problem of multilateralism is that the more actors are included, the more difficult is to operationalise multilateral responses. Diversity needs to be acknowledged to enhance multilateralism, yet diversity makes it more difficult to make it work.



The problem of multilateralism is that the more actors are included, the more difficult is to operationalise multilateral responses. Diversity needs to be acknowledged to enhance multilateralism, yet diversity makes it more difficult to make it work.

Similarly, Oliva suggests that multilateral solutions are never perfect because multilateralism should be seen as a process where reforms and changes are always needed. What is certain, Oliva continues, is that unilateralism is not an option since it is a competitive, a lose-lose solution. Countries depend on each other, and the world is dynamic, so multilateralism as a process is the only option. The aim is to make this process more balanced and inclusive of different perspectives while promoting growth for all.

Ntousas concludes by suggesting that while game-breaking changes in the multilateral system are not likely, due to the blockages imposed by great powers, small, positive changes are ongoing. In the US, the replacement from Trump to Biden is one example. Also, the Covid-19 pandemic has shown how close we have been to the precipice. The pandemic is a piece of alarming evidence that change must come.

Ntousas argues that states have learnt from historical wrongs. With the benefit of hindsight, we know that the lack of cooperation led to the collapse of the League of Nations and great power politics have led to the paralysis of the UN Security Council. At the same time, we also know that we cannot compare the current multilateral system with the one after the Cold War, where euphoria brought forward big leaps in central themes, such as Responsibility to Protect and the Climate Change accords. For Ntousas, it would be wrong to compare the current status with that very high point (1990s). Crises have always been embedded in the history of the system. In times of peril, these analyses of the past are important to assess the present, predict and act upon the future.

Annex. Participants

> POL BARGUÉS

RESEARCH FELLOW AT CIDOB (BARCELONA CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS)

Pol Bargués earned his PhD from the University of Westminster in 2014. He is currently a research fellow at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs). His work focuses on debates on international intervention, peacebuilding and resilience. More specifically, he has examined the evolution of EU external action and has specialized in the post-conflict governance processes of Bosnia and Kosovo. He is author of *Deferring Peace in International Statebuilding: Difference, Resilience and Critique* (Routledge 2018) and co-author of *Mapping and Politics in a Digital Age* (Routledge, 2019). He has published in numerous academic journals. He is co-editor of *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* and *Routledge Studies in Intervention and Statebuilding*.

> LAURA FORESTER

SECRETARY GENERAL OF DIPLOCAT

Laura Foraster is the Secretary General of DIPLOCAT. She holds a degree in Economics and Business Administration at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), a degree in Humanities at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) and an MA in European Studies at the KU Leuven. She also has specific education in Public Diplomacy and in Election Observation Missions. Prior to her current position as Secretary General of DIPLOCAT, she was Executive Director of the entity until its temporary closure in April 2018. Foraster has been Chief of Cabinet of the Minister for Innovation, Universities and Enterprise and of the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs of the Government of Catalonia during two consecutive legislative terms, where she was responsible for the management of the Minister's Cabinet, the political assistance to the Minister and for European Union and international issues. Her previous professional experience includes Parliamentary Assistant to Catalan Members of the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg, following the Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Foreign and Security Policy Committee and the Constitutional Affairs Committee. In Brussels, she also worked for the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Catalan Government Delegation in the EU.

> VASSILIS NTOUSAS

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS POLICY ADVISOR AT THE FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVE STUDIES AND ACADEMIC MEMBER OF THE BRITISH CHATHAM HOUSE

Vassilis Ntousas is Senior International Relations Policy Advisor at the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) in Brussels and an Academy Associate

at Chatham House in London. His research interests lie in European foreign policy and the EU's global engagement. Previously, he held the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Academy fellowship at Chatham House, where his research focused on the role of the EU in renewing the multilateral system. From 2015-2019, he led the international research and activity programme of FEPS, covering the world's major regions. He is the author of several policy papers and regularly comments on global affairs for international media outlets. Vassilis holds an MSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics and a BA in International Relations and Politics from the University of Sheffield.

> **MARIA ÀNGELS OLIVA I ARMENGOL**

DEPUTY HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF)

Maria Àngels Oliva i Armengol has been working at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) since 2005. She is Deputy Division Chief at the Technical Assistance Strategy Division of the Monetary Capital Markets Department at the IMF. In her 16 years at the IMF, she has worked on many program countries, including Greece, Iraq, Maldives, Pakistan, and Egypt. She led several capacity development missions on debt management and capital markets issues and three Financial Sector Assessments (known as FSAPs) to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania, and Jamaica. He was the Deputy Mission chief to the Mexico FSAP and the Germany FSAP, now ongoing. Oliva joined the Fund from the European Central Bank, where she focused on G-20 relations and Asia. She also worked on competitiveness at the World Economic Forum and in academia in Paris. She holds a Ph.D. from Universitat Pompeu Fabra (1997) and an MSc from Oxford University on Mathematical Finance (2005). She co-authored the textbook International Trade, published by Oxford University Press, and co-edited the ECB book Regional Economic Integration in a Global Framework.

> **MIQUEL ROYO VIDAL**

DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS AT THE CATALAN GOVERNMENT

Miquel Royo Vidal is the Director-General for Global Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institutional Relations and Transparency of the Government of Catalonia. From June to November 2018, Royo was an adviser to the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs until his appointment as Deputy Delegate of the Delegation of the Government of Catalonia to the European Union, a position he held until April 2020, when he assumed his current responsibilities as Director-General in the Ministry.

Previously, he has worked in the European Parliament from 2016 to 2018, and prior to that, he worked in the private sector for multinational companies. Royo holds a degree in International Relations from the University of Birmingham and a Master's degree in European Studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

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- Government of Catalonia
- Barcelona City Council
- Tarragona City Council
- Girona City Council
- Lleida City Council
- Vielha e Mijaran City Council
- Barcelona Provincial Council
- Tarragona Provincial Council
- Girona Provincial Council
- Lleida Provincial Council
- Conselh Generau d'Aran
- Catalan Association of Municipalities and Counties
- Federation of Municipalities of Catalonia

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- General Council of the Official Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Catalonia
- Entrepreneurs association Foment del Treball Nacional
- Association of Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises of Catalonia (PIMEC)
- Confederation of Cooperatives of Catalonia
- Multi-Sector Business Association (AMEC)
- Private Foundation of Entrepreneurs (FemCAT)

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- The Group of Entities of the Voluntary Sector of Catalonia
- Trade union Unió General de Treballadors de Catalunya (UGT)
- Trade union Comissions Obreres de Catalunya (CCOO)
- Football Club Barcelona

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- University of Barcelona (UB)
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- Technical University of Catalonia (UPC)
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- University of Lleida (UdL)
- University of Girona (UdG)
- Rovira i Virgili University (URV)
- Ramon Llull University (URL)
- Open University of Catalonia (UOC)
- University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC)
- International University of Catalonia (UIC)
- Abat Oliba CEU University (UAO CEU)
- Barcelona Institute of International Studies (IBEI)
- EADA Business School
- Barcelona Graduate School of Economics (Barcelona GSE)