

CAMPAIGN FOR A UN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
5th International Meeting, Brussels, 16/17 October 2013

CONFERENCE REPORT

The fifth international conference on a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly held in the European Parliament in Brussels on 16th and 17th October called on the United Nations and the international community to make democratic participation a key element of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In a final declaration, participants from around thirty countries unanimously expressed concern that "no adequate measures have been taken to address the democratic deficit of global governance in general and of the United Nations in particular." The conference suggested that "a global democratic body of elected representatives" should be established "to bring global governance in the pursuit of post-2015 development goals" closer to the world's citizens.



Official group photo (Image: European Parliament)

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I. Conference proceedings

16 October 2013 morning, Campaign Session I at Goethe-Institut

Welcome, opening, and introduction with Jo Leinen, MEP (S&D, Germany), Co-Chair, CEUNPA Parliamentary Advisory Group, Elmar Brok, MEP (EPP, Germany), Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the European Parliament, Gabriela Michetti, MP (Argentina), via video, Andrew Duff, MEP (ALDE, U.K.), President, Union of European Federalists, and Andreas Bummel (Germany), CEUNPA Secretary-General.

International overview report presented by Mr. Bummel.

Individual reports and interventions from Juan Behrend, Member, Global Greens Coordination (Argentina), Friedrich Brandi, Committee for a Democratic UN (Germany), Roberta Carbone, UEF Italy, Gregory Engels, Pirate Parties International (Germany), Daniel Jositsch, MP (Switzerland), Joan Marc Simon, CEUNPA coordinator for Spain, Fergus Watt, World Federalist Movement-Canada, as well as Riche Andris, Vice-President of the Senate of Haiti, Mohamed Aly Awad Aly, former Senator (Egypt), Peter Davidse, World Federalist Movement Netherlands, Christophe Hategekimana, CEUNPA coordinator for Rwanda, and Murumba Werunga, clerk emeritus, Pan-African Parliament (Kenya).

16 October 2013 afternoon, sessions at the European Parliament

Panel debate moderated by Daniela Vincenti, Editor-in-Chief, EurActiv (Belgium), with Mr. Leinen, Graham Watson, MEP (ALDE, U.K.), Isabella Lövin, MEP (Greens, Sweden), introduced by Mr. Bummel and commented by Andrew Strauss, Widener University School of Law (United States).

Statement by Antonio Vigilante, Director of the UN/UNDP Office in Brussels.

Consultation with the UN's Independent Expert on the Promotion of an Equitable and Democratic International Order, Alfred de Zayas, Geneva School of Diplomacy (Switzerland) moderated by Mr. Leinen with statements by Mr. de Zayas, Gerald Häfner, MEP (Greens, Germany), Chair, Democracy International, and Hanno Schedler, Society for Threatened Peoples Intl (Germany).

Conclusions of the day presented by Mr. Simon.

Reception with interventions from Mr. Leinen and Anni Podimata, Vice-President of the European Parliament (Greece).

16 October 2013 morning, Campaign Session II at Goethe-Institut

Discussion of outcome document, goals and strategy, roadmap and general debate moderated by Mr. Watt with introductions by Mr. Bummel.

Adoption of outcome document.

16 October 2013 afternoon, Place du Luxembourg

Public gathering in support of the Global Week of Action for a World Parliament.

II. Summary report

Conference hosted in the European Parliament

The conference was hosted by the Members of the European Parliament **Elmar Brok**, **Jo Leinen**, **Isabella Lövin**, and **Graham Watson** from the four largest political groups European People's Party EPP, Socialists and Democrats S&D, the Greens, and the liberal ALDE group respectively.

At the opening of the conference, **Elmar Brok** who serves as chairman of the European Parliament's Commission on Foreign Affairs stated that a consultative UN Parliamentary Assembly would "allow world civil society to be directly associated in the global decision-making process." The President of the Union of European Federalists and Member of the European Parliament **Andrew Duff** stressed the longstanding support of the European Federalists of the proposal of a UN Parliamentary Assembly.

Jo Leinen who is a co-chair of the advisory board of the international campaign for a UN Parliamentary Assembly emphasized that until now no formal body exists that would give citizen-elected representatives a say in global governance. At best they had an observer status. "This is not acceptable," said Mr Leinen. "In a democratic system, the representatives of the citizens are not observers of what the governments do. They should provide oversight and hold the government executives accountable."

Welcoming the participants, the campaign's Secretary-General **Andreas Bummel** extended greetings from members of parliament from Argentina, Canada, Chile, Germany, India, and Norway, as well as from other campaign supporters who weren't able to participate. It was noted with regret that many registered participants weren't able to secure entry visas on time.

At a panel discussion **Isabella Lövin** used the example of the global fishery policy to show that the system of international governance is dysfunctional. "It's still governed by 16th century principles," she said with reference to the principle of the freedom of the seas and the doctrine of national sovereignty. It was as if individuals would be allowed to follow only such rules that please them, she compared the international legal system to a domestic order.

Graham Watson pointed out that "there will be times when national interests and global interests collide. A UN Parliamentary Assembly could act as an arbiter and ensure that the voice of the world's citizens is heard."

Andrew Strauss said that a global parliament eventually could address equity issues between larger, more powerful nations and smaller ones by enforcing norms and not allowing the more powerful countries to selectively choose which international norms to obey.

In a message issued on the occasion of the conference, the President of the European Parliament, **Martin Schulz**, emphasized the longstanding support for the proposal by the European Parliament. In addition, he declared that "The European Parliament may serve as a model for how a UN Parliamentary Assembly could develop over time. What once began as an advisory body composed of national parliamentarians is a directly elected legislature today."

Consultation with the UN's Independent Expert

A similar position was taken by the UN's Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order, **Alfred de Zayas**, who was participating as a special guest. In a statement delivered at a special consultation, he confirmed that "Participation is a hallmark of

democratic governance" and that "civil society is entitled to more space." He said that the establishment of a World Parliamentary Assembly was "a promising avenue" to achieve this and could be modeled according to the example of the European Parliament.

Mr de Zayas pointed out that his upcoming report to the UN General Assembly includes the recommendation that it "may consider convening a conference to discuss promising initiatives such as the creation of a World Parliamentary Assembly."

In a comment following the statement by Mr de Zayas, the Member of the European Parliament and chairperson of Democracy International, **Gerald Häfner**, said that "We cannot leave the world to decision-making that is in the interest of big money or big powers – but not in the interest of the world's citizens. A UN Parliamentary Assembly is a first step to establish global democracy."

Hanno Schedler of the Society for Threatened Peoples used the example of slavery in Mauritania to illustrate why a UN Parliamentary Assembly is necessary: "A UN Parliamentary Assembly would increase the likelihood that the powerless can come together and publicly criticize oppression, racism, slavery, environmental damage, poverty and most of all a lack of education and participation. It would enable them to blow the whistle and make governments and international institutions more accountable."

On behalf of the campaign for a UN Parliamentary Assembly **Andreas Bummel** expressed appreciation of Mr. de Zaya's work and stressed that the recommendation to the UN Human Rights Council to commission its Advisory Committee with a study on a World Parliamentary Assembly as well as the proposal that the UN General Assembly convenes a conference on the issue constitute important steps forward. Mr. Bummel assured the Independent Expert of the campaign's support.

The final declaration adopted by the conference welcomes "the decision of the UN's Human Rights Council to mandate an Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order," and encourages the Independent Expert "to keep considering the question of a UNPA and in particular to examine possible processes towards its creation."

Deliberation on outcome document, goals, strategy and roadmap

The last session deliberated on the draft outcome document, the campaign's strategy and goals, as well as a draft roadmap. In the discussion Mr. Bummel, pointed out that the outcome document primarily was an affirmation of existing campaign policy. He emphasized three new elements in the document: That it puts the proposal for a UN Parliamentary Assembly in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, that it highlights the possibility of having a UN Parliamentary Assembly act as a "network of networks" and finally that the document says that "innovative forms of civic participation" in a UNPA through models of electronic democracy could be considered.

The proposed amendment (1) in paragraph 7 that a UNPA should also be open for participation by UN observer states met with consensus. The proposed amendment (2) on "bioregions" was discussed controversially and thus could not be included. Mr. Leinen suggested friendly amendments to paragraph 12 (adding the words "the activities of") and paragraph 14 (adding the words "to influence") which did not meet any objections. The slightly revised outcome document was accepted unanimously.

The general debate mainly focused on the issue of financing campaign activities which was identified as the most important practical challenge. Regarding the campaign's draft roadmap it was noted that

2015 potentially constitutes an important milestone. It was suggested that outreach to the academic community and to universities could be a distinctive element in the draft roadmap, too.

The draft roadmap envisions that a UNPA could be established at the UN's 75th anniversary in 2020 and be operational by 2023.

Following the meeting, the UN's Independent Expert Mr. de Zayas issued a press release welcoming the declaration adopted by the conference.

Week of Action for a World Parliament

The conference was also a kick-off event for the first Global Week of Action for a World Parliament that took place from 17-24 October. At the end of the conference participants gathered in front of the European Parliament at Place du Luxembourg in Brussels and displayed the week's slogan, "World Parliament Now!"

III. Conclusions of the first day

As a rapporteur Mr. Simon summarized the conclusions of the first day as follows:

- The suggested UNPA and the IPU are complementary bodies. The IPU does a great job in promoting parliamentarism but they are different in the fact that whereas the IPU is happy being an observer at the UN, a UNPA is supposed to be a formal body with distinctive rights and functions.
- MEP Elmar Brok will lead a delegation of the EP to the UN in a couple of weeks and he will meet the Secretary-General and present the UNPA.
- The campaign is growing in quality and quantity. Reports in the morning from the Global Greens, Daniel Jositsch from Switzerland or Gregory Engels from the Pirate parties show how more organisations and individuals are getting interested in the work for a UNPA. At the same time in places such as Canada or Germany the campaign gets more and more support. Another sign of the vitality of the campaign is that is a main promoter of the Global Week of Action for a World Parliament which will run from 17-24 October 2013.
- Cyber-democracy. Many speakers raised the point of further exploring citizen participation via online channels both as a way to improve policy-making and citizen involvement. This is an issue where the campaign for a UNPA should look into proposals.
- Democracy or inequality, procedure or content first? Whereas some speakers from the Global North such as Gerald Häffner claimed that democracy is the core issue of our times and how globalising economy without globalising policy is destroying national democracy, interventions from the Global South - Haiti, Egypt, Kenya - focused more on the issue of economic inequality and how with current rent disparities it is difficult to have democracy at the national or international level. In this sense the debate between putting procedure or content first seems closed in the north but not in the south.
- Finally and most importantly, Mr de Zayas explained how with his mandate from the Human Right Council he will be presenting a report to the UN General Assembly on October 28 in which he will present the case for a UNPA. This is a window of opportunity that should not be missed by the CEUNPA and it is great that inspiration is being drawn from people of the campaign such as Joe Schwartzberg or Andreas Bummel. We should all follow this development with attention.

IV. Campaign summary report

As the campaign's Secretary General, Mr. Bummel highlighted the following points in the international overview report:

- On the campaign: There is a Steering Committee composed of the key NGOs in the campaign, a Parliamentary Advisory Group composed of MPs who played a key role, the main tasks of which is to decide on international meetings and to guide the Secretariat on important political questions, if need be. Overall the campaign is an informal network that serves to bring together all who support the UNPA proposal; the work of the campaign thereby is guided by the policy that is decided on at its international conferences.
- The campaign ensures a constant visibility of the UNPA proposal and whenever it is taken up around the world, the campaign Secretariat takes care that this becomes known, reports about it and gives feedback. Coverage is provided on the website's news section in four languages and the new campaign blog.
- As a result of the campaign's work in the past five years, it is now no longer possible to talk about democratizing the UN and global governance seriously without taking the proposal of a UNPA into account.
- The campaign is currently supported by 372 non-governmental organizations from 70 countries, among them 22 international networks, and individuals from 153 countries.
- The individual supporters include 861 members of parliament from 105 countries, including the United States, and 338 former parliamentarians from 49 countries as well as many hundreds of distinguished personalities from politics, science, civil society and cultural life. The sitting MPs represent estimated 138 million people.
- There are official coordinators and representatives in Argentina, Canada, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Germany, India, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Rwanda, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, Uganda, United States and Uruguay. The coordinators are all volunteers. The campaign, including its International Secretariat, currently operates on a *pro bono* basis. There is no paid staff.

Relevant news and activities that Mr. Bummel mentioned included:

- In the last months, the Secretariat was primarily concentrated on organizing the 5th International Meeting on a UNPA.
- In September the parliamentary conference on desertification in Windhoek attended by 65 legislators supported a UN Parliamentary Assembly in its final declaration;
- At the Human Rights Council, the UN's Independent Expert Mr. de Zayas recommended a study on a UN Parliamentary Assembly;
- In June the German parliament's Subcommittee on the United Nations invited Mr. Bummel and considered the question of a UN Parliamentary Assembly. This will be followed up after the German elections in September;
- In May, Mr. Bummel attended a consultation convened by the UN's Independent Expert Mr. de Zayas in Geneva and suggested that a UNPA should be part of the Post-2105 Development Agenda;
- In April, consultations took place in Dakar, Senegal, including with the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly and cabinet member Youssou N'Dour. The National Assembly of Senegal has confirmed its readiness to host an international campaign meeting;
- In March, a Global Manifesto on Democracy and Sustainability was published by the UK-based Foundation for Democracy and Sustainability that was endorsed, among others, by the

International Trade Union Confederation. It includes a distinct part on global democracy and an endorsement of the UNPA campaign;

- This year's Human Development Report included a feature article on the proposal of a world parliament authored by the campaign's co-chair Jo Leinen;
- In January, the East African Legislative Assembly, the parliamentary body of the EAC, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, adopted a resolution in support of a UNPA;
- Last year, the Committee for a Democratic U.N. published a study authored by Joseph Schwartzberg titled “Creating a World Parliamentary Assembly” with models for the apportionment of seats in subsequent evolutionary phases;
- Also last year, former Argentinian MP and CEUNPA co-chair Fernando Iglesias initiated a “Manifesto for Global Democracy” that was endorsed by a few dozen intellectuals, calling for “rapid implementation of forms of democratic global governance” and “a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly as the embryo of a future world parliament”.

V. Documents and resources

Campaign's public conference report

English: <http://en.unpacampaign.org/news/722.php>

German: <http://de.unpacampaign.org/news/724.php>

Spanish: <http://es.unpacampaign.org/news/723.php>

Final outcome document: Declaration of Brussels

English: <http://www.unpacampaign.org/documents/en/BrusselsDeclaration.pdf>

German: <http://www.unpacampaign.org/documents/de/bruessel.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.unpacampaign.org/documents/es/bruselas.pdf>

Campaign's strategy and goals

<http://www.unpacampaign.org/documents/en/goalsandstrategy.pdf>

Draft roadmap

<http://www.unpacampaign.org/documents/en/roadmap.pdf>

Statement by Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament

<http://blog.unpacampaign.org/?p=1484>

Statement by Elmar Brok, Chair of the European Parliament's Commission on Foreign Affairs

<http://blog.unpacampaign.org/?p=1500>

Statement by the UN's Independent Expert Alfred de Zayas

http://www.unpacampaign.org/documents/en/2013UNPA_zayas.pdf

Flickr photo set of the conference

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/unpacampaign/sets/72157636858849616/>

Coverage by EurActiv

<http://www.euractiv.com/eu-elections-2014/meps-push-un-parliament-news-531301>

Coverage by Inter-Press Service

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/10/democratic-participation-should-be-key-element-in-post-2015-agenda/>

VI. List of speakers and participants

1. Mohamed Aly Awad Aly, Egypt, Egyptian Green Party
2. Riche Andris, Haiti, Vice-President of the Senate
3. Kitty Arendse, Netherlands
4. Chris Baruti Likoyi, DR Congo, Recherches et Documentation Juridiques Africaines a.s.b.l
5. Juan Behrend, Argentina/Belgium, Global Greens Coordination
6. Håkan Berg, Sweden
7. Jean-Francis Billion, France, UEF-France
8. Friedrich Brandi, Germany, Committee for a Democratic U.N.
9. Elmar Brok, Germany, Member of the European Parliament
10. Andreas Bummel, Germany, Secretary-General, Campaign for a UN Parliamentary Assembly
11. Roberta Carbone, Italy, UEF/JEF
12. Didier Coeurnelle, Belgium, Helas
13. Andrea Cofelice, Italy, University of Padova - Human rights centre
14. Didier Colmont, France
15. Pier Virgilio, Dastoli, Italy, European Movement Italy
16. Peter Davidse, Netherlands, WFBN (World Federalist Movement Netherlands)
17. André de Crombrughe, Belgium, APNU - UN Association in Belgium
18. Alfred Maurice de Zayas, Switzerland, UN's Independent Expert on the Promotion of an Equitable and Democratic International Order
19. Yvan Dheur, Belgium, Belgian associations for United Nations (APNU and VVN)
20. Natalie Djurkovic, Germany
21. Andrew Duff, United Kingdom, Member of the European Parliament; President, UEF
22. Mathias Eberlen, Germany, European Parliament
23. Gregory Engels, Germany, Pirate Parties International (PPI)
24. Michele Fiorillo, Italy, UEF Italy; Partito Democratico; Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane
25. Gordon Glass, United Kingdom, 2020 Vision
26. Ann Glass, United Kingdom, 2020 Vision
27. Johann Göttel, Austria, Europahaus Burgenland
28. Gerald Häfner, Germany, Member of the European Parliament
29. Denis Christophe Hategekimana, Rwanda, UNPA Campaign Rwanda
30. Bjorn Hultin, Belgium, Intercity Consulting
31. Daniel Jositsch, Switzerland, Member of the Swiss Parliament
32. Kseniya Khovanova, France, Council of Europe
33. H. Cem Kocer, Turkey, Centre Européen de Recherches Internationales et Stratégiques
34. Dodji Kpaleté, Togo, Avenir-Togo
35. Thomas Le Mignan, France, BioDeploy
36. Jo Leinen, Germany, Member of the European Parliament
37. Yorghos Leventis, Cyprus, International Security Forum
38. Anne-Marie Lizin, Belgium, Honorary Speaker of the Belgian Senate
39. Ferran Lloveras, Spain, apGDM.org
40. Isabella Lövin, Sweden, Member of the European Parliament
41. Floris Methorst, Netherlands, WFBN (World Federalist Movement Netherlands)
42. Christian Müller, Switzerland, Weltföderalisten Schweiz
43. Alfred Ngaffi, Belgium, GOGovernance
44. Sean O'Curneen, Ireland, EU Committee of the Regions
45. Louise Pardee, United States, GlobalSolutions.org
46. Quentin Pauluis, Belgium, ECOLO-Les Verts
47. Anni Podimata, Greece, Member of the European Parliament
48. Isabelle Ragonesi, Malta, University of Malta
49. Jean Rossiaud, Switzerland, Forum for a new World Governance
50. Paul Rübiger, Austria, European Parliament

51. Daniel Schaubacher, Belgium, European Bahai Business Forum
52. Hanno Schedler, Germany, Society for Threatened Peoples
53. Iris G. Schmidt, Germany
54. Gert Schmidt, Germany
55. Martin Schwab, United States, 3x3 Global Drills™
56. Joseph Schwartzberg, United States, GlobalSolutions.org
57. Guilherme Serôdio, Portugal, ACTION - World Community for Food Reserves
58. Mahmoud (Shahriar) Sharei, United States Democratic World Federalists
59. Peter Simon, Germany, MEP
60. Joan Marc Simon, Spain, Campaign for a UNPA-Spain
61. Marjolijn Snippe, Netherlands, WFBN (World Federalist Movement Netherlands)
62. Mark Stevenson, United Kingdom, Profile Books
63. Evianne Stok, Netherlands, WFBN (World Federalist Movement Netherlands)
64. Andrew Strauss, United States, Widener University School of Law
65. Rasmus Tenbergen, Germany, World Parliament Experiment
66. Benoît Timmermans, Belgium, Université Libre de Bruxelles
67. Dick Toornstra, Netherlands, European Parliament
68. Marco van Hulten, Netherlands, WFBN (World Federalist Movement Netherlands)
69. Martin Verity, United Kingdom
70. Antonio Vigilante, UN/UNDP Representative in Brussels
71. Sir Graham Watson, United Kingdom, Member of the European Parliament
72. Fergus Watt, Canada, World Federalist Movement - Canada
73. Murumba Werunga, Kenya, Legit Consults Africa
74. Anna Wetlinska, Switzerland, Weltföderalisten Schweiz
75. Tom Zapletal, Czech Republic