THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE FUTURE OF WORLD GOVERNANCE

While the world is in the grip of a dramatic military escalation, the United Nations Assembly (UNGA) approved on 22 September '*by consensus*' - after a long negotiation facilitated by Germany and Namibia - the '*Pact for the Future*' together with the '*Global Digital Compact*' and the '*Declaration for Future Generations*' (LINK) at the conclusion of the Summit, inspired in 2021 by Secretary-General Guterres, in which one hundred and fifty leaders and more than four thousand representatives of organisations from all over the world participated.

The approval came about thanks to the unity of the group of African countries and despite the vote against by Russia, Belarus, Nicaragua, North Korea, Argentina, Syria and Iran along with the abstention of China, Algeria, Bolivia and Thailand thus sanctioning a clear split between the ten members of the new BRICS group and the isolation of the countries hostile to the 'Pact' within the G20.

With fifty-six non-binding proposals for 'actions' divided into five major themes (peace and security; sustainable development, climate, finance for development; digital cooperation; youth and future generations; fundamental rights and gender balance), the 'Pact' and the two attached documents take up and relaunch part of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the Assembly nine years ago (LINK) in the framework of the '2030 Agenda' whose deadline is approaching in a global mess and with dramatic incompleteness and significant delays.

Compared to the 2030 Agenda, the 'Pact', together with the two complementary texts, includes issues that have been discussed without results for years

- the issue of multilateral governance with particular reference to the role of the Security Council, its representativeness, its effectiveness and relations with the Assembly;
- the less than willing commitment on the reduction of nuclear weapons together with the disuse of lethal war technologies;
- the idea of the reform of the international financial architecture starting with the IMF and the World Bank together with the role of the WTO;
- the issue of national public debts and a minimum level of global taxation;
- the use of new digital technologies for all;
- the participation of young people in decision-making within the framework of the United Nations.

It would seem to be the beginning of a new 'multilateralism' to replace the disorder of a growing conflictual multipolarism with a process where the future - still indefinite in terms of timing and without the indication of adequate instruments to make it concrete - should prelude the passage from a governance based on the absolute sovereignty of States (moreover, reaffirmed by governments in the most sensitive parts of the 'Pact') to a governance based on a tendentially shared sovereignty.
It would make binding certain decisions initially linked to environmental matters (the decision-making process in the 'Conferences of the Parties' or COPs), the financial dimension in international organisations and security in regional cooperation (Europe, Middle East, Asia, Africa).

The result of a compromise - which had caused Antonio Guterres' disappointment in the final days before its approval - the "Pact" was on the one hand largely ignored by the international press, but was instead judged by insiders and many participants as the basis "*for the governance of future world balance*".

On the major issues that affect the functioning of the United Nations, starting with the reform of the Security Council, the process will be long and fraught with obstacles if we take into account the divisions between the countries that support the Pact, the Russian-Chinese hostility with their allies and the veto right of the permanent members that paralyses all decisions.

For our part, we would like to draw attention to some worrying silences and launch a proposal at the level of the European Union as it prepares to set its priorities for the 2024-2029 legislature.

The first deafening silence concerns the issue of democracy - or rather, the decline of democracy in the world and the growth of authoritarianism - as an essential condition for achieving a new world governance.

These include the defence of the freedom of the press, which is not even mentioned in the Digital Compact, the independence of the judiciary and the principles of representative democracy in electoral processes, the fight against disinformation and external interference, violations of political rights and forms of repression of representative civil society organisations.

The absence of instruments for the creation of a true international public space to go beyond the UN system of recognition of non-governmental organisations is part of this picture.

The second silence concerns the topic of **ethical finance** as a tool for the realisation of sustainable development goals that require a strong public-private partnership as defined by the seventeenth SDG.

The subject of finance concerns the reform of international organisations, which implicitly evokes the alternative between the solution of a global currency free from any relationship with an issuing State entity and entrusted to the control of the IMF, suitably renewed and strengthened, or the constitution of an international 'basket currency' following a path similar to that which led from the EMS to the Euro, leaving open the question of the reform of the Special Drawing Rights established in 1969 to identify an alternative international liquidity instrument to the dollar.

The third silence concerns the commitment to keep the rudder straight - or to consider the Paris climate agreements as the compass - for the **realisation of all the goals of the 2030 Agenda** in the terms and timeframe agreed almost ten years ago and about which doubts and hostility are being raised today, as is happening in the American presidential campaign also by Kamala Harris or in the current demolition action in the European Union on the issues of deforestation and 'clean' transports by those who want to reform decisions already taken or anticipate their revision.

The fourth deafening silence concerns **migration policies** - the causes and effects of which are closely linked to the issues of peace, security, sustainable development, young people and future generations - increasingly subjected to a vast securitarian action of national closures that undermine international solidarity, fundamental rights and the principles of free movement in blatant contradiction with the demographic crisis and the ageing of populations in developed countries, but also with the substantial drop in irregular arrivals in 2024 (minus 39% in the European Union alone).

The 'Pact' ignores another United Nations Pact and that is the Pact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Policies endorsed by 162 Member States by the United Nations in Marrakech on 10 December 2018 as a follow-up to the 2016 New York Declaration on Migrants and Refugees and then formally adopted by 152 members of the United Nations Assembly in New York on 19 December 2018 (LINK).

There were votes against from Donald Trump's United States, Viktor Orban's Hungary, Israel, Poland and the Czech Republic and abstentions from Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, Italy, Latvia, Libya, Lichtenstein, Romania, Switzerland and Singapore but hailed by Angela Merkel's Germany as a *'clear success for multilateralism to ensure humane conditions for migrants'* and Emmanuel Macron's France who hailed *'the*

consecration of international cooperation as the only possible way to manage migration flows'.

Since the 'Pact for the Future' and the two complementary documents - despite these silences - have had the consensus of the entire European Union, **the European institutions should give an immediate and concrete signal** by considering them politically binding for future European foreign policy and for its relations with the United Nations, and knowing that the Lisbon Treaty (Art. 34.1 TEU) explicitly states that '*Member States shall coordinate their actions within international organisations'*.

The European States that are members of the Security Council (currently France as a permanent member and Malta, from 2025 to 2026 France, Denmark and Greece) can '*ask the High Representative to speak on behalf of the European Union'* (Art. 34.2 TEU) as was the case on 26 September with Josep Borrell's intervention on the situation in Lebanon (LINK).

The Pact with its documents covers many areas of European policies and thus the competences of various Commissioners and parliamentary committees by involving civil society organisations in the implementation and monitoring actions.

We propose to the European Parliament to create an 'intergroup on the Pact for the future, the Global Digital Compact and Future Generations' Declaration' as a space for open, transparent and regular dialogue between MEPs and representative associations starting with youth organisations.

Rome 1st October, 2024