

RICONOSCIMENTO DELL' ONU ALLA DELEGAZIONE DELL'UNIONE EUROPEA

Bruxelles, 3 maggio 2011 - L'Assemblea generale dell'Onu - riconoscendo l'importanza della cooperazione tra le Nazioni Unite e gli organismi regionali - ha votato oggi con 180 voti favorevoli, nessuno contrario e 2 astenuti (Siria e Zimbabwe) una risoluzione con la quale concede alla delegazione dell'Unione Europea il diritto di intervento e di replica e la abilita a presentare proposte ed emendamenti verbali. Si riporta in merito la comunicazione del Dipartimento Pubblica Informazione delle Nazioni Unite.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN RECORDED VOTE, ADOPTS RESOLUTION GRANTING EUROPEAN UNION

RIGHT OF REPLY, ABILITY TO PRESENT ORAL AMENDMENTS

Recognizing the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as its benefits to the world body, the General Assembly today adopted a set of modalities granting the delegation of the European Union the right to make interventions, as well as the right of reply and the ability to present oral proposals and amendments.

By the terms of the resolution — adopted as orally revised by a recorded vote of 180 in favour to none against, with 2 abstentions (Syria, Zimbabwe) — the European Union and its member States could be inscribed on the list of speakers among representatives of major groups and be invited to participate in the Assembly's general debate, in accordance with the order of precedence and the level of representation.

Also by the text, representatives of the European Union would be ensured seating among the observers without the right to vote, co-sponsor resolutions or decisions, nor put forward candidates. Its communications relating to the Assembly's sessions and work, as well as to international meetings convened under its auspices and United Nations conferences, would now be circulated directly and without intermediary as documents of such gatherings. The European Union would be able to present oral proposals and amendments, which, however, would be put to a vote only at the request of a Member State. The bloc would have the ability to exercise the right of reply, restricted to one intervention per item.

In another action, the Assembly rejected — by a recorded vote of 6 in favour (Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe) to 142 against, with 20 abstentions — a “counter” amendment to the text regarding the right of reply.

Presenting the oral amendment, Zimbabwe’s representative expressed concern that, while the Assembly was an intergovernmental body whose membership was limited to Member States, the text as a whole threatened to undermine the Organization, however stealthily, by creating a new category of observer.

Hungary’s representative, submitting the draft resolution on behalf of the European Union and reading out a number of oral revisions, said it was the product of extensive consultations among a broad spectrum of Member States, held following the Assembly’s vote on 14 September 2010 to defer consideration of the original text outlining the bloc’s expanded rights.

“In no way do they increase the Union’s capacity for action,” he said, stressing that those rights were fully respectful of the position of intergovernmental organizations. The resolution’s purpose, he assured other delegations, was to allow the bloc’s representative to intervene on behalf of its member States alongside representatives of other major groups.

As he would throughout the lively debate surrounding the resolution’s adoption, he affirmed that the United Nations was and should remain an organization of States, while the European Union would remain an observer in the General Assembly. Moreover, the assurances granted to the regional body would not affect negatively the ability of any State to address the United Nations, he said.

Pointing out that earlier references to the Lisbon Treaty had been removed — thereby placing the focus squarely on the United Nations — he said the resolution explicitly recognized the possibility that the Assembly might decide, on an individual basis, to adopt modalities for the participation of representatives from other regional organizations.

Speaking before the vote, a number of delegates from regional groups welcomed the many improvements to the text, saying they would support the now-acceptable resolution. Many of them — including the representatives of the Bahamas (on behalf of the Caribbean Community), Nigeria (on behalf of the African Union), and Sudan (on behalf of the Arab Group) — said they considered the text to be a precedent, with one delegate voicing the expectation that the European Union would support requests for similar rights by other regional groups.

Nauru’s representative, who ultimately did not vote, said she saw “serious risks” that the resolution would change the nature of the United Nations to the detriment of small States that did not enjoy the political and economic influence of large developed countries. Nauru did not share the view of the European Union, supported by the Office of Legal Affairs, that the draft raised no legal issues and was consistent with the United Nations Charter and Rules of Procedure.

Describing the privileges granted to the Holy See as a non-Member State and Palestine as a non-member entity as “distinguishable”, she said the European Union, as an intergovernmental organization, was a completely different type of observer and legal entity from the other two. Granting another observer the right of reply could be interpreted as rewriting the Rules of Procedure, she emphasized, adding that Nauru did not consider that a prudent way for the Assembly to conduct its business.

Among her other concerns was the resolution's potential to undermine the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations and its possible impact on the Charter's safeguards under Article 2, on the sovereign equality of all Member States. Nauru feared that by contemplating the conferring of additional rights on other regional organizations enjoying observer status, the text would also set a precedent, she added. In a similar vein, Malaysia's representative, speaking after the vote, agreed that "change is brewing" regarding the chances of other regional groups to gain observer status.

However, the representative of the Bahamas outlined the Caribbean Community's interpretation of the resolution, noting in particular the restrictions placed on the European Union's new status. The "full and exhaustive list of rights" afforded the bloc and did not grant it a path to full United Nations membership, she stressed.

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, spoke after the adoption, thanking delegations for their extraordinary efforts to get the resolution into the "best possible shape". With its adoption, she added, "what you will hear is a clearer voice from the European Union."

The Assembly Secretary reported before the vote that under operative paragraph 2 of the resolution, additional financial requirements amounting to \$10,000 would be required for the installation of the necessary delegate units, including sound engineering work. Although no provision had been made for such alterations in the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, the Secretariat would seek to identify where funds could be redeployed.