

"Rescuing Public Health: How (only) a new multilateralism can take us out of the global crisis"

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In April 2020, UN Secretary-General drew the Security Council's attention to the threat to international peace and security posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, stressing how this emergency has all the credentials to degenerate into a humanitarian crisis that could undo the efforts made until now to protect human rights and in support of peace processes¹. Likewise, many fear that the social tensions caused by the pandemic might give the way to those political movements that seek to find solutions by presenting the universality of human rights as an obstacle to the protection of national interest². As a consequence, while for many the pandemic had to be seen as an exogenous shock which - because of its transnational nature - could have triggered cooperation, for other policymakers it has become the perfect excuse to resort to more isolationism³.

The chance offered by the pandemic to reform the international multilateral system is significantly fragile and complex. It will be a delicate operation because, to restore multilateral cooperation, it will first be necessary to restore trust, and then to build on solid foundations, such as the faith of the populations in the core values underlying its existence⁴.

Which are, nowadays, the concrete possible paths for international cooperation after COVID-19? Will Biden's US be able to restore its image as a responsible stakeholder in multilateralism, or is it more realistic to aim for a pattern of cooperation which moves from the "one-country leadership" logic, to a more sustainable and inclusive multilateral system?⁵. Which are, in this context, the possible scenarios for the European Union? What could be the role of the G20 and of Italy in

¹ Un News (2020). *COVID-19 threatening global peace and security, UN chief warns*. Retrieved 10 May 2021, from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061502>

² Bieber, F. (2020). *Global Nationalism in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic*. *Nationalities Papers*, 1-13. doi: 10.1017/nps.2020.35 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/nationalities-papers/article/global-nationalism-in-times-of-the-covid19-pandemic/3A7F44AFDD6AC117AE05160F95738ED4>

³ R., Bown, C., Fried, J., González, A., Sapir, A., & Watanabe, T. (2021). *Getting America back in the game: A multilateral perspective*. Retrieved 8 May 2021, from <https://www.bruegel.org/2021/01/getting-america-back-in-the-game-a-multilateral-perspective/>

⁴ R., Bown, C., Fried, J., González, A., Sapir, A., & Watanabe, T. (2021). *Getting America back in the game: A multilateral perspective*. Retrieved 8 May 2021, from <https://www.bruegel.org/2021/01/getting-america-back-in-the-game-a-multilateral-perspective/>

⁵ Grunstein, J. (2021). *The Five C's of Biden's Foreign Policy*. Retrieved 14 May 2021, from <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29589/with-biden-s-foreign-policy-u-s-is-back-in-the-diplomacy-game>; Sachs, J. (2020). *COVID-19 and Multilateralism*. *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, (16), 30-39. Retrieved May 13, 2021, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48573747>

particular, as the President of this year's Summit? Will the international community be able to make health a pillar for the maintenance of international security and peace, recognizing it as "*a bridge to peace*"?⁶.

⁶Garber, R. (2002). *Health as a Bridge for Peace: Theory, Practice and Prognosis — Reflections of a Practitioner*. *Journal Of Peacebuilding & Development*, Retrieved 12 May 2021, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/215548100_Health_as_a_Bridge_for_Peace_Theory_Practice_and_Prognosis_-_Reflections_of_a_Practitioner