

Building a world community



## Update: UN Parliamentary Assembly Campaign by Andreas Bummel

Over 1,500 current and former members of parliament and numerous UN experts support the proposal for a UN Parliamentary Assembly.

On July 4 the European Parliament (EP) voted to accept a report from its Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) that provides a set of recommendations to the Council of the EU for the upcoming 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly. The AFET report included a paragraph indicating that: "[the European Parliament calls on the Council...] to advocate the establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) within the UN system in order to increase the democratic character, the democratic accountability and the transparency of global governance and to allow for better citizen participation in the activities of the UN and in particular to contribute to the successful implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals;"

This marks the strongest pro-UNPA language expressed by the EP since 2011.

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A new book on the history, relevance, and implementation of the idea of a world parliament, titled "A World Parliament: Governance and Democracy in the 21st Century" and authored by MEP Jo Leinen and UNPA Campaign Coordinator Andreas Bummel, was presented at the European Parliament and at an event hosted by the UN Correspondents Association at UN headquarters in New York. Another book launch will take place at the 2018 WFM Congress in the Hague.

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In a written answer to a question put forward in the Dáil Éireann, the lower house of the Irish legislature, by the independent member Thomas Broughan, the deputy head of government of Ireland and Minister on Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, stated that he has "noted proposals for the establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly" and that "Ireland remains open-minded on the concept of such an assembly."

Coveney explained that "as a steadfast supporter of the UN, Ireland continues to advocate for reform of the UN's structures and systems to best equip the organisation to respond to the many and interlinked global challenges of the twenty-first century. Ireland is committed, in this context, to consider proposals seeking to improve the effectiveness of the UN and the contribution it can make to the peace, stability and development of all nations."

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In March 2018 the UN's first Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order, Alfred de Zayas, presented his seventh and final report to the UN Human Rights Council.

In the document, the expert surveys his previous reports to the Council and the UN General Assembly and highlights numerous recommendations on issues such as strengthening democracy, the right of self-determination, the social responsibility of business corporations, bilateral investment treaties, free trade agreements, military expenditure, tax evasion, reform of the United Nations system and the obligations of intergovernmental organizations.

Relative to a reform of the United Nations, a proposal that was raised again in the final report is the creation of a World Parliamentary Assembly, a topic that was also addressed in his 2013 and 2016 reports. "The idea is to address democracy deficits by giving expression to global public opinion and including citizens in global decision-making through elected officials," the report explains.

In 2013, Mr. de Zayas recommended that the UN General Assembly consider "a conference to discuss promising initiatives such as the creation of a World Parliamentary Assembly and a World Court of Human Rights." He said at the time that in order for global decision-making to be genuinely representative, the establishment of a parliamentary assembly was "imperative."

Prof. de Zayas's replacement as UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order is Mr. Livingstone Sewanyana from Uganda.