Subscribe Past Issues Translate ▼ RSS 🔊 View this email in your browser Special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council ECOSOC/UN since 2018 MEDNARODNI INŠTITUT ZA BLIŽNJEVZHODNE IN BALKANSKE ŠTUDIJE International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies (IFIMES)[1] from Ljubljana, Slovenia, regularly analyses developments in the Middle East, Balkans and around the world. Guido Lanfranchi, is an international affairs specialist based in Den Haag, Netherlands. In his text entitled "Political will is needed to foster multilateralism in Europe - Dr. Franz Fischler says" he is summarizing the speech of Dr. Franz Fischler, currently the President of the European Forum Alpbach, former Austria's Federal Minister for Agriculture and Forestry (1989-1994) and former European Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries (1995-2004). • Guido Lanfranchi Political will is needed to foster multilateralism in Europe – Dr. Franz Fischler says On July 1st 2020, a large number of international affairs specialists gathered in Vienna, Austria, for the conference "From Victory Day to Corona Disarray: 75 Years of Europe's Collective Security and Human Rights System". The conference, jointly organized by four different entities (the International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies IFIMES, Media Platform Modern Diplomacy, International Scientific Journal European Perspectives, and Action Platform Culture for Peace) with the support of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, was aimed at discussing the future of Europe in the wake of its old and new challenges. The conference gathered over twenty high ranking speakers from Canada to Australia and audience physically in the venue while many others attended online - from Chile to Far East. The day was filled by three panels focusing on the legacy of WWII, Nuremberg Trials, the European Human Rights Charter and their relevance in the 21st century; on the importance of culture for peace and culture of peace - culture, science, arts, sports - as a way to reinforce a collective identity in Europe; on the importance of accelerating on universalism and pan-European Multilateralism while integrating further the Euro-MED within Europe, or as the Romano Prodi's EU Commission coined it back in 2000s -"from Morocco to Russia – everything but the institutions". The event itself was probably the largest physical gathering past the early spring lock down to this very day in this part of Europe. No wonder that it marked a launch of the political rethink and recalibration named - Vienna Process. Among the speakers for the conference's third panel - which focused on universal and pan-European multilateralism - there was Dr. Franz Fischler, a well-known figure due to his previous postings as Austria's Federal Minister for Agriculture and Forestry (1989-1994) and as European Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries (1995-2004), besides being currently President of the famous European Forum Alpbach. Photo IFIMES: Bakhatyar Aljaf (left), Dr Franz Fischler and Dr Zijad Bećirović Dr. Fischler started his keynote speech by highlighting how the Covid-19 pandemic has the potential to fundamentally change Europe - and even the whole world. In doing so, he referred to the paradoxes outlined by Bulgarian intellectual Ivan Krastev in the wake of the pandemic. Contrasting pushes towards re-nationalization and globalization, the partial interruption of democracy but the decreasing appetite for authoritarian government, the mixed response of the European Union to the crisis - in short, a series of conflicting trends are making the future of Europe, as well as that of the whole world, very much uncertain. It was against this backdrop that Dr. Fischler addressed the central question of the panel: What is fundamentally going to happen in Europe in the times ahead? The former EU Commissioner clarified from the very beginning that those who wish a further deepening of the current multilateral system should not be blinded by excessive optimism. An alternative to the current system does exist - clearly symbolized by the combination of nationalism and populism that we can see in many countries, but also by the problems faced by multilateralism in many fields, most notably trade. This trend is evident in the case of the European Union too - Dr. Fischler warned. He highlighted that policy tools aimed at stimulating convergence across European countries, such as for instance the EU's cohesion policies, are becoming increasingly weak, and inequality within the EU is currently on the rise. As a result, traditional goals such as the "ever closer Europe" and the "United States of Europe" do not even seem to be on the agenda anymore. What can then be done to deepen the EU's integration process and strengthen Europe's multilateral system? Towards the end of his speech, Dr. Fischler outlined a few entry points for reform and further cooperation. His suggestions revolved around increasing cooperation on a number of specific issues, ranging from high-tech research to the development of a common European passport. He also proposed that European countries should strengthen their common diplomatic initiatives, including by speaking with a single voice in international institutions, as well as increasing the EU's soft power. On top of that, deeper institutional and political modifications might be needed for the EU, Dr. Fischler hinted – citing as examples the relaxation of the unanimity voting procedure on some foreign policy issues, as well as an intensification of the EU's enlargement process. Closing his highly absorbing speech, Dr. Fischler – champion of multilateralism, and guru of the current EU CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) made clear which ingredient is, in his opinion, the cornerstone for reviving multilateralism in Europe: "All I would like to say is that there are possibilities out there. The question is, as always in these times: is there enough political will?" **About the author:** Guido Lanfranchi is an international affairs professional based in Den Haag, Netherlands. He studied at the Leiden University and Sciences Po Paris, and got with the Council of the European Union in Brussels. His research focuses on the EU, the Middle East and Africa. 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says) Link (ENG): https://www.ifimes.org/en/9881 Bjelorusija između imperijalizma EU i okupacije Rusije) России) izbori u Crnoj Gori 2020: Kraj ere Mila Đukanovića) Steže se obruč oko Mila Đukanovića) Corneliu Pivariu: What will the future look like?) Wagnerizacija Bjelorusije) 2020: Pokušaj ponavljanja historije) Balkans: Attempt at repeating history) Morocco) Peace) v=QJHxZFaWfgM&t=10s Culture of Peace – culture, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfz1l26XS20&t=56s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p2mzY2jyYw future) IFIMES potpisao MoU sa IACA) MoU with IACA) Course) order)

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Azzeddine Farhane: Ongoing Reforms for Prosperity and a brighter future for • Link (ENG): https://www.ifimes.org/en/9873 (Research ● Anastasiia Pachina: Vienna Process 2020: From Culture for Peace to Culture of • Video - Vienna Process: Common Future - One EuropeDiplomatic Academy Vienna, 01 July 2020 https://www.youtube.com/watch? • Video: 01 First panel Vienna International Conference 2020: The WWII legacy - Nurnberg and Tokyo trials as a direct inspiration for the Universal and European Human Rights Charter, Antifascism as the European confidence building block, mutual trust and good neighbourly relations https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvIGydZDj6g&t=7092s • Video: 02 Second panel Vienna Conf. 2020: From Culture for Peace to science, • Video: 03 Third panel Vienna Conference 2020: Future to Europe: Is there any alternative to universal and pan-European Multilateralism?; revisiting and recalibrating the Euro-MED and cross-continental affairs • Link (ENG): https://www.ifimes.org/en/9872 (Research/Speech - Dr. Manfred Nowak: Legacy of antifascism for the common pan-European • Link (BSH): https://www.ifimes.org/ba/9869 (Saopćenje za javnost: • Link (ENG): https://www.ifimes.org/en/9870 (Press release: IFIMES signs • Link (ENG): https://www.ifimes.org/en/9868 (Research - Antonio Occhiuto&Giorgio Cafiero: Turkey and the UAE's Dangerous Collision • Link (ENG): https://www.ifimes.org/en/9867 (Research - Michael D. 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Barbero: Hezbollah takes control of Lebanon's judiciary in assault on rule of law) • Link (BSH): https://www.ifimes.org/ba/9866 (Analiza - Michael D. Barbero: Hezbollah preuzima nadzor nad libanonskim pravosuđem napadom na pravnu državu) • Link (ENG): https://www.ifimes.org/en/9847 (Research ● Donald Johnston: Of multilateralism and future to Europe Recalibration) • Link (ENG): https://www.europeanperspectives.org/en International scientific journal "European Perspectives" (ENG): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=645V9eryiel&t=5s (IFIMES presentation film) IFIMES – International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies, based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, has Special Consultative status at ECOSOC/UN, New York, since 2018. 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