

# Love your Neighbour

International organizations have failed to ensure peace and security in the world. Regional cooperation will not.

By Lila Roldán Vázquez

Ukraine has for decades fought for its dream of independence and democracy. But this dream has been brutally attacked by an imperialist Russia. Unfortunately, there was no available mechanism to prevent or stop President Vladimir Putin, even though he had repeatedly announced his intent in words and actions, such as Russia's war in Georgia in 2008, its takeover of Crimea and Donbas or his misconceptions of history and Ukraine's statehood.

Russia's war has strengthened the Western alliance, which reacted swiftly and firmly against the aggression. But it has also shifted more power to China and to regional powers like India and Türkiye. And it has led to a certain isolation of the West from the rest of the world, which does not completely share its view of Russia or the idea that democracy is almost exclusively a Western value.

The so-called Global South, a non-homogeneous group of countries, that do not necessarily share common interests – has emerged with force. While most of the countries in the Global South condemn Russia's invasion, they do not adhere to Western sanctions. Instead, they prioritize their political

and economic interests. Even if they support Ukraine's territorial integrity and share the values of democracy, some also have strong economic or security ties with Beijing or Moscow. Others, such as the Latin American countries, adhere only to sanctions adopted by international or regional organizations, or just prefer to be independent from any given power pole.

## → United in failure

Amidst that power shift, international organizations – which we trusted to build a world of peace and security, and to protect less powerful states against colonialism, economic exploitation or the horrors of war – have failed to deliver.

The romantic vision we had of the United Nations has been damaged, as it has shown very poor results regarding international security, the environment or universal health. The UN Security Council has been unable to prevent, stop or solve any conflict in the last decades, with each of its decisions at the mercy of a veto from one of its permanent members. The World Health Organization did very little to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Agreements on measures to moderate the effects of climate change are hard to reach and we are very far from reaching the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030.

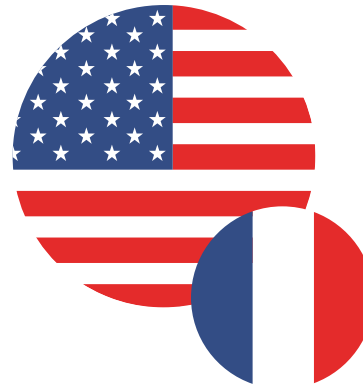
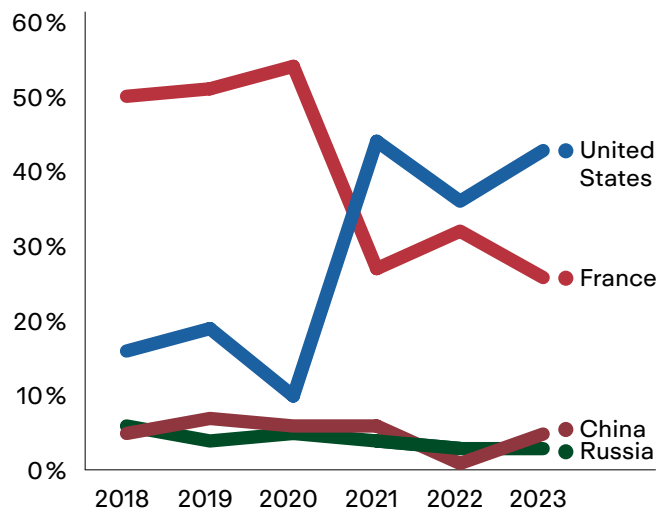
The result is that countries tend to associate with their neighbours or with partners sharing common interests or resources. As countries cannot rely on international institutions, they tend to find effective answers to their problems elsewhere. Thus, regional integration has become essential for social and economic development, as well as to



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## Close partnership with the United States

Which country is currently the most important partner for Germany?



German respondents, 2023: don't know 14 %, no answer 4 %

improve competitiveness. Today, countries holding approximately 7,2 billion of the world's 8 billion people are in regional or bi-regional agreements focused on commercial and financial purposes; on political cooperation, security and defence matters; or on social development.

The European Union, the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) are just a few of the vibrant cooperation mechanisms that have evolved in every region of the world. For their part, mechanisms like the G20+ or the G7, notwithstanding the relatively small number of their members, have set international parameters for the world economy.

Argentina and Germany are members of regional integration mechanisms that are essential for their development and for political concertation. They are founding and major members of MERCOSUR and the EU respectively. Both countries strategically chose regional integration to overcome security concerns and to foster economic growth and trade in their respective regions. The fact that this integration initially focused on commercial and economic cooperation should not overshadow the paramount political objective that inspired them: ensuring peace, security and progress for their countries.

Besides that, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights are main pillars of their respective regional integration mechanisms. This is of the utmost importance in a world severely threatened by great power competition and the risks of escalation.

### → Time for the EU-MERCOSUR agreement

Therefore, Europe and Latin America should join their efforts to promote peace and security. Political concertation between them is already envisaged in the political and cooperation pillars of the EU-MERCOSUR Interregional Association Agreement, which should be ratified as soon as possible.

Argentina and Germany, as major actors in their respective regions, should promote and reinforce regional security arrangements and guarantees, as well as actively promote European-Latin American cooperation in matters such as socio-economic development, the peaceful settlement of conflicts and concerted actions against international crime.

Regional and inter-regional mechanisms will serve to ease conflicts and contribute to the universal goal of peace and security. In parallel, international organizations need to be properly reformed, if they want to be effective in dealing with global challenges. ↩