



International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace: Making Sense of April 24

In an increasingly interconnected yet fragmented world, the value of international cooperation and peaceful dialogue is stronger than ever. Each year, April 24 is recognized as the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace and serves as an opportunity to reaffirm international cooperation, respect for international law, and the understanding that peace is achieved via dialogue and diplomacy.

What is Multilateralism?

At its core, multilateralism is a system where multiple countries work together on issues with mutual concern. It embraces inclusiveness, mutual respect, and shared problem solving. Multilateralism is a fundamentally different approach when compared to unilateralism, which is when a country takes a unilateral position based exclusively on its own country interest.

Multilateralism is a part of the UN's work and more broadly, the work of regional organizations like the EU and international treaties and frameworks that include climate, disarmament, etc. Multilateralism allows countries, regardless of size, to share concerns, negotiate, build upon best practices, and work collectively for the common good.

The International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

The International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace was established by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution A/RES/73/127 on April 24 in 2018. April 24 was selected to highlight the role of diplomacy and multilateral institutions to prevent conflict, support peace, and address transnational issues such as climate change, pandemics and nuclear proliferation.

The resolution encourages all UN Member States, UN observers and civil society to promote the values of diplomacy and multilateralism, encourage awareness, understanding and respect for the role of international institutions, collaborate to promote peace and to conserve the Earth.



Why it is Important Today

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, fighting in Gaza, and other conflicts have helped to test the limits of diplomacy. In the face of global challenges like climate change, pandemics, migration, and growing economic inequality, international and cross-border cooperation will be of paramount importance since no single country can adequately solve these global dilemmas.

One such way of cooperation is through multilateralism. Rather than using coercion or violence, multilateralism relies on negotiation and consensus to address global challenges. Global challenges like climate change, international poverty and inequality, and population displacement have been collective efforts using multinational cooperation. The multilateral model underpins the global response on climate change through the Paris Agreement, is the driving and unifying voice behind the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and is the basic framework in which global humanitarian aid operates.

However, there is also another layer to multilateral diplomacy. Multilateralism provides smaller and less powerful nations with room to engage in global cooperations through genuine participation. Among such cooperation, the voices of developing nations are made louder and decisions made will be taken with respect to their opinions.

What is diplomacy?

Diplomacy is the art of negotiation, dialogue, and compromise between two or more states. Diplomacy is what allows for the negotiation of cease-fires, and the signing of peace accords, and de-escalation of tensions. It is important today to recognise not just the formal ministers of foreign affairs and accredited diplomats but the considerable number of diplomats that work quietly and diligently behind the scenes to prevent conflicts and build bridges between cultures and ideologies.

In an increasingly complex, digital, and fast-paced world, diplomacy has also evolved to consider that digital diplomacy, public diplomacy, and grassroots peacebuilding initiatives are part of a modern toolbox to foster trust and understanding among peoples.



What You Can Do

While the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace primarily occurs at the institutional level, there is still plenty for the individual to do:

- Learn about global governance and the importance of international cooperation, and spread your knowledge to others.
- Support organizations dedicated to peace, human rights and multilateral diplomacy.
- Advocate for global solidarity on action on climate, support for refugees and global health issues.
- Take part in intercultural dialogue, whether that be online or in person, to share understanding and tolerance.
- A Future Built on Cooperation

As the world faces ever-complex and interconnected challenges, the concepts highlighted on April 24 are no means kind wishes, they are requirements. The International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace is about strengthening international institutions, reinvesting in multilateral dialogue, and committing to resolve our disputes not with force, but with cooperation.

When we commemorate this day, we observe that peace has a chance when nations work collectively not against one another. Multilateralism might not be a perfect system, but it is humanity's best hope for a more just, peaceful world.

Text prepared by Andro Kvijinadze

Volunteer of European Solidarity Corps in Croatia

(organization: PRONI Centre, office Vukovar)