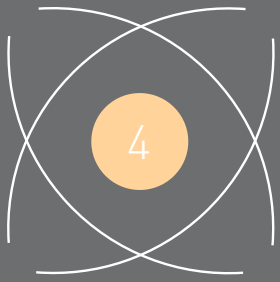

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Rua Vitorino Nemésio, 5
1750-306 Lisboa
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Email: ipris@ipris.org

Editor
Paulo Gorjão

Assistant Editors
Diogo Noivo
Laura Tereno
Pedro Seabra
Vasco Martins

Design
Teresa Cardoso Bastos

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Europress

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Aims and scope

The *Portuguese Journal of International Affairs* is a refereed journal specializing in the politics, foreign policies and security-related issues of Portugal and its wider geostrategic area.

The aims of the *Portuguese Journal of International Affairs* are twofold: to bring readers outstanding general scholarship and provide an outlet for scholars working on the international relations of Portugal and its wider geostrategic area. The journal will be circulated to all foreign embassies in Portugal as well as to all Portuguese embassies abroad, hundreds of libraries, universities and think tanks around the world.

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Submissions will be dealt with promptly, and the editors will communicate a first decision to contributors within six weeks of submission. Detailed notes follow:

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   Articles in journals: Paulo Gorjão, "Japan's Foreign Policy and East Timor, 1975–2002" (*Asian Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 5, September/October 2002), pp. 754-771.
   Articles in newspapers: Paulo Gorjão, "UN needs coherent strategy to exit from East Timor" (*Jakarta Post*, 19 May 2004), p. 25.
5. Diagrams and tables should be avoided, or kept to a minimum.

All for one, as long as there is not one for Europe

JOSÉ AMARAL*
Head of United Nations Unit, Department of International Political Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Portugal
SARA MARTINS*
Director, Department of International Political Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Portugal
RUI MACIEIRA*
Deputy Director General for Foreign Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Portugal

The successful Portuguese candidature for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations (UN) Security Council in 2011-2012 has already been analyzed from different angles. This article explores two specific aspects that were important in the recent campaign and which may become even more so in future campaigns: 1) the growing importance of allies in a context of increasingly long and complex campaigns; 2) a European Union (EU) caught in the contradiction of its growing and very public ambitions of foreign policy coherence, strengthened by the Treaty of Lisbon, and the no less public spectacle of member states campaigning against one another around the world. Both aspects risk, in fact, a self-reinforcing dynamic: as more EU members decide to run against one another, the more other members take sides and act as allies to their preferred candidate in the rest of the world; as the perception of a hopelessly divided Europe grows in the rest of the world, the less guilt any European country will feel about running against another EU partner; and the more split Europe is, the more important it is for each EU candidate to find allies.

The quest for a quiet slot

It is interesting to examine the major factors that originally determined the choice of the 2011-2012 term for Portugal's candidature to the Security Council.

In late 1999, Portugal had just ended a successful term serving on the Council (1997-1998), but its election, in 1996, had been fiercely disputed (Portugal, Sweden and Australia ran for two slots; Australia lost). By selecting 2011-2012, Portugal chose a biennium that was still totally empty. Being the first to launch the candidature, with a significant time lag until the actual election, was meant to maximize the probability of a clean slate at a time when people were still aware both of our success in a recent disputed election and of our good mandate on the Security Council. The fact that we would hold the Presidency of the EU for the first half of 2000 was also meant to help secure some early support from partners.

Being the first candidate has the advantage of allowing an early exchange of support with other UN member's candidatures. Exchange of support is a classic instrument for obtaining votes; although a few countries still maintain a facade of not engaging in it, in reality almost all engage in this practice. A country that enters a race late will face difficulties in gathering this kind of support, since many potential exchangeable votes would already have been committed.

Additionally, small and medium EU members are acutely aware of the fact that many UN members resent the EU's alleged overrepresentation in the Security Council. This accusation is compounded by the allegation of non-EU members of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG), particularly the CANZ[1] that the EU tries to monopolize the WEOG slots. Both accusations are not true[2] but sound convincing and, in any case, Europe-bashing is always popular in New York. Being the first therefore also contributes to debunking the accusation of too many Europeans, both within the WEOG and in the wider membership.

For all these reasons, small and medium EU members are being tempted to put forward candidatures earlier and earlier: currently, the 2025-2026 term already has Denmark and Greece running for its two slots, and Austria has now put forward its candidature for one of the slots in the 2027-2028 term.

The hope for a new era of clean slates in the WEOG increased slightly in the early 2000s, as first Germany and Spain (term 2003-2004) and then Denmark and Greece (2005-2006 term) managed to be endorsed by the group. Australia withdrew in 2006 just before the elections, allowing Belgium and Italy in the end to sail through for the 2007-2008 term.

But it was not to last, as late in 2006 Germany broke the clean slate in which Portugal and Canada had comfortably sat since Ottawa joined the race with Portugal in 2001.

Despite its carefully chosen term, Portugal's hope of a clean slate election did not materialize, and from 2007 onwards what had been a quiet operation changed dramatically, as the three competitors started a complex campaign until the election.

Increasingly longer and more difficult campaigns

A country now looking for a totally empty term would need to submit an application for 2029-2030, almost 18 years before the voting. Portugal officially launched its candidature early in 2000, 10 years before voting.

As we have seen, small and medium countries need to be particularly careful in looking for an empty biennium, to maximize their chances of being elected.

The paradox is that the further in advance a candidature is submitted, the longer the necessary campaign will be. Longer campaigns present greater challenges for small and medium countries, since they have fewer human and material resources at their disposal.

A very long lag between launching and actual voting means that several political cycles may take place, both in the UN electorate in general and in one's competitors. Changes in government pose particular challenges. A change in government is one of the very few (somehow) respectable ways for a country to change its given support. A candidate therefore needs to be particularly aware of changes in government all over the world, both in its own supporters (risk) and non-supporters (opportunity).

But changes in the government of one's competitors also need to be carefully evaluated. Indeed, it is not just foreign policy options and alignments that may change, but also internal policies relevant to the way others see that country (for instance in energy or migration).

These factors tend to benefit big countries. They are better prepared to sustain long term campaigns, based on their superior financial capabilities and vast diplomatic network, which may guarantee first hand information on changes in government and their options all over the world.

Fortunately for small and medium sized countries, there are other trends that counteract these big countries' advantages. As (at least some) big countries try to muster their way into the Security Council with increased frequency, there is an "underdog" factor that benefits small and medium countries.

Smaller countries are also more accustomed to seeking alliances, which they see as an enabling instrument of their external assertiveness, rather than proof of weakness.

Bigger countries also tend to be remarkably competitive with each other. Smaller countries can often count on a measure of support from one or another big country unhappy with overly visible fellow big countries.

If one combines all these factors and adds existing European fault lines,[3] the result is an increased, and increasing, role for allies in these long campaigns.

Allies campaigning and the importance of multilateralism

As the campaign moved forward and became more complex after Germany joined the race in 2007, the role of allies became a major factor.

Allies had already played a certain role in the previous campaign up to 1996, both for and against us.[4] But in subsequent years we noticed an increased demand from several countries (European and non-European) for our active support in several elections, not just for the Security Council. We were also approached by third-party countries seeking our support for their preferred candidates. On the other hand, once the election became disputed in 2006, several of our supporters immediately approached us offering their help.

We believe that this is a self-reinforcing trend. As countries go into the field for their chosen candidates, an election becomes, up to a point, their own election. The more

they see other states going onto the field for their own candidates, the more they see themselves as real competitors with them. Nobody wants to lose an election, even if by proxy.

The battle is fought not only for individual candidate countries but, more and more, for groups. International groupings are increasing in number and diversity: they can be regional (Africa, Caribbean, Asia, etc.); they can be of a wider political nature (Non Aligned); they can be focused on shared political/cultural/religious issues (the Arab League, the OIC); they can address specific concerns (like the Small Island States); or they can be the reflexion of an ever-increasing number of regional and thematic organizations. Some aim specifically to find common positions on elections, while others have nothing to do with elections, yet their common stance on certain policy issues can be relevant to the voting decision of its members. Membership to such groups often overlaps, though the centre of gravity is different, as are the key players in each of them.

At this point, no single country can be a part of all these groups, not even the bigger powers. Allies are therefore fundamental: only through allies can one make a reasonable evaluation of the overall interests of the membership as a whole (and we must always bear in mind that a country is elected to serve the membership as a whole, not its own agenda...).

It is our conviction that we benefited more than our competitors from the "ally factor" and that we are comparatively well placed in this diverse international environment.

Portugal is directly present in a remarkable number of global, thematic, regional and sub-regional organizations and institutions: not only the United Nations and its Agencies, but also the European Union, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Ibero-American Conference, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organizations of American States (as a permanent observer), the Community of Democracies (CoD), the Mediterranean Union, the Cooperation Process in the Western Mediterranean ("Dialogue 5+5"), the Mediterranean Forum and many others.

Portugal's presence in the diversified mechanisms of international cooperation on all continents set its candidature apart. It demonstrated to other UN members that the Portuguese mandate in the United Nations Security Council would have the capacity to bring different cultures and regions closer, promoting consensual and balanced decisions in accordance with the United Nations Charter. It also showed that Portugal is a deciding partner in some of the most important organizations in the world.

Portugal meets and works with very diverse countries in these very different formats, identifying common ground and potential allies.

Just as important as belonging to international organizations is how committed a country is to them. A priority of Portuguese foreign policy has long been to play a significant role

and have a high profile in all the international organizations and institutions it integrates. Over the last two years alone, Portugal held the Chairmanship of the Ibero-American Summit, of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries and of the Community of Democracies. In 2009 we organized the CoD Ministerial Conference in July, and hosted the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government in December. In November 2010 we hosted the NATO Summit. At the beginning of October we organized, in cooperation with the UN Secretariat, a Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries in Lisbon. All these events were very visible proof of our strong commitment to the multilateral system.

However, countries campaign for each other not only because they work well together in international organizations, but also because, in some cases, they maintain privileged bilateral relations.

This is clearly the case of the members of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries. The role played by CPLP countries (Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Timor Leste, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe) was fundamental in our election, as they had a spillover effect on the different continents (Africa, South America and Asia) and in the regional groupings and international organizations to which they belong. But on virtually every continent there were a few countries with which our shared values in international organizations, combined with strong bilateral relations, meant very strong and effective allies.

Multiplying the multiplier, or joint ownership

We have already seen how and why Portugal was able to get so many countries from virtually every corner of the world to campaign on its behalf. But the question is not only one of mobilizing as many friends as possible; it is also one of maximizing their predisposition to assist, and how their action can be most effective. This was a very important element of our campaign: how to multiply the multiplier.

For an ally's support in third-party countries to be really effective, there has to be real substance to the démarche. It is not enough for country A to go to country B, saying "please vote for C, for we have a really close bilateral relation and we vote along the same lines in New York".

To be most effective, allies need to feel that they almost co-own the campaign and its message. Accordingly, we involved some of our allies in the formulation of our campaign, associating them with many of our promotional activities in Lisbon, New York and other capitals. Some allies were extremely helpful in preparing visits by our Special Envoys to different parts of the world, or our attendance at meetings of regional and sub-regional organizations, almost as if they were taking care of one of their own envoys. They also

served as a mobilizing factor in favor of our candidature in New York, helping to create a winning mood among the real electorate, for the Permanent Representatives in New York are the ones who cast the – secret – vote.

A note of caution though: overenthusiastic allies can sometimes be a problem, as some believe they are more popular than they really are in some regions and/or with neighbors. Also, some allies who see themselves as global players could make diplomatic démarches in virtually every corner of the world. This may not be appropriate in many countries and may even create confusion, as countries that are already strong supporters of a candidature might think they are being doubted.

The reasons behind Portugal's election were varied and complex, but the "ally factor" was very important. Portugal was elected in part because it benefited from it more than its competitors. Canada and Germany were very strong candidates, much stronger than Portugal on *hard power*. Still, Portugal managed to get elected because it had involved more countries in its campaign and because they were much more intimately associated with its ideas and objectives. This is a lesson in *soft power* and international cooperation. Nothing more appropriate for an election to the United Nations Security Council.

Divided Europe

It was not the first time that two candidates from the European Union have fought against each other for a seat on the Security Council. In fact, the last time Portugal was elected, in 1996, it ran against Sweden and Australia also for two seats. Yet, the campaign for the 2011-2012 term marked the first time that this has happened since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

The WEOG has a particularly poor record of coming up with agreed slates for its members, specially in some of the most political – and visible – bodies: the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. Almost all other regional groups are better at this.

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and its institutional changes to reinforce the EU's role as a major international player, a more coherent and unified EU external policy is expected. The fact that European Union member states keep wasting resources and investing political capital in electoral fights for the main UN peace and security body may therefore be questioned.

It could be argued that this scenario is not only contradictory to the stated purpose of an enhanced European Union among the EU members, but also harmful to the external image of coherence and consistency of its foreign policy that the EU wants to convey. This was clear throughout our campaign, during which we were faced many times with the difficult question: why are two European Union countries running against each other?

The fact that electoral campaigns for the Security Council have become increasingly long, competitive and visible has also added to the "harmful effect" for the EU. Even if outright negative campaigns have generally been avoided, the truth is that European Union member states highlight what sets them apart from other EU member states instead of what brings them together – and this when the European Union is trying, as much as possible, to speak as one voice on the UN Security Council.

This is why we believe that a rotation agreement among EU member states running for the UN Security Council should quickly be reached.

Rotation agreements

Rotation agreements are agreements negotiated among member states to ensure undisputed elections for mandates in a given international body while granting acceptable representation for every eligible member state.

They have become a classic instrument in the United Nations and are usually negotiated within the different five UN regional groups (WEOG, African Group, Asian Group, Eastern European Group, and GRULAC – Latin American Group) enabling each group to present a "clean slate", (i.e. the same number of candidates as seats available) for elections to the main UN bodies (which usually have a regional distribution of seats, i.e. a number of seats for each regional group).

An EU rotation agreement for the UN Security Council faces several difficulties:

- First, the official position that EU member states do not coordinate candidatures, as those are a national competence; this is a political argument rather than a legal one. In fact, over the years,[5] several countries in the European Union have tried to come up with solutions for rotation schemes. Discussions on the subject have generally been blocked by larger states.

- Second, the fact that non-permanent seats on the UN Security Council are allocated to regional groups and the 27 EU member states are now divided among three different regional groups: WEOG, Eastern European Group, and Asian Group (Cyprus). This means that it is virtually impossible to have consensus among the 27, but pleads for an agreement at least among the WEOG, which congregates the biggest number of EU member states (16) and where the political will seems to be in place also from the side of the non-EU member states.

- Third, the need to accommodate the interests of non-EU members of the WEOG. This would probably involve some tough negotiations but would not be insurmountable. In fact, for decades there has been a very successful WEOG rotation agreement for the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), theoretically the second most important UN

body.

- Finally, and probably the most difficult of all, the conciliation of the opposing interests of some European Union member states regarding the Security Council reform.

The implications of and for the reform of the UN Security Council

There is only one EU country – Germany – which is a declared candidate for permanent membership on the Security Council. Other member states feel threatened in their international weight and projection by this possibility, making it especially difficult to reach an EU common position on this issue. The implications of strengthening the EU political integration for the (relevance of) permanent seats for the United Kingdom and France in the long term also play a role.

Nevertheless, the different positions of EU member states are well known. They have been aligned among the supporters of the G4 model and the supporters of the evolving "United for Consensus" model. The centre of gravity of the discussion nowadays seems to have moved to the possibility of an interim solution, which would work as a "trial period" for candidates to a permanent seat. Those who have the most urgent need for reform through this option do not seem specially interested in promoting rotation agreements among the WEOG, for fear this would undermine the rationale for a reform of the Security Council (or at least for another European to be (permanently) part of an enlarged Council).

But if those efforts were to fail, the rotation agreement may well be the best chance to still affirm some regular (and relatively more significant) presence on the Security Council, without running the risk of compromising their chances in the long term by eventually being defeated.

Germany's relatively poor results in the October 2010 elections – if compared to India and South Africa, the other candidates who are on the list for "future permanent seats" – has shown the danger of risking competitive election for WEOG seats. It was a warning sign that should not be ignored.

For the time being, both processes – attempts at negotiating a rotation agreement in the WEOG and pushing for an interim solution on Security Council reform – can run in parallel. It is also expected that the negotiation of the rotation agreement will be a very difficult one, with Germany trying to stand out from the rest of the pack to reinforce its claim as front-runner for permanent membership. Italy, Spain and Canada would try to avoid that result, and medium to small countries will fight for fair representation.

But for Portugal – and for the EU as a whole – it seems to be worth investing significant energy in getting a rotation agreement. And our recent election by impressive numbers

has just strengthened our chances of securing a good deal.

Conclusions

Europe has been seen as hopelessly divided on the question of the elections to the single most important multilateral organ for Peace and Security: the UN Security Council. This undermines its attempts to speak with one voice in the world, and casts a shadow over its nascent foreign policy institutions resulting from the Lisbon Treaty.

Portugal has shown that small and medium countries can be elected "against the odds", i.e. against the big ones.

As bigger countries try to show their weight by being present in the Security Council as often as they can, smaller countries will continue to fight to be there, so that the Security Council will not be folded into a Peace and Security G20.

To this end, allies will become increasingly important, and we have seen how many small and medium countries are extremely adept at mobilizing allies and creating coalitions.

A rotation agreement for the EU as such will be impossible, as it would mean rearranging the European participation in UN regional groups, risking an end result much worse both for the 27 and for the WEOG as a whole.

Nevertheless, a rotation agreement within the WEOG, building on the successful precedent of the ECOSOC agreement, should not be impossible – provided big countries do not get too greedy and very small countries remain realistic.

* The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the position of the government of Portugal.

(Endnotes)

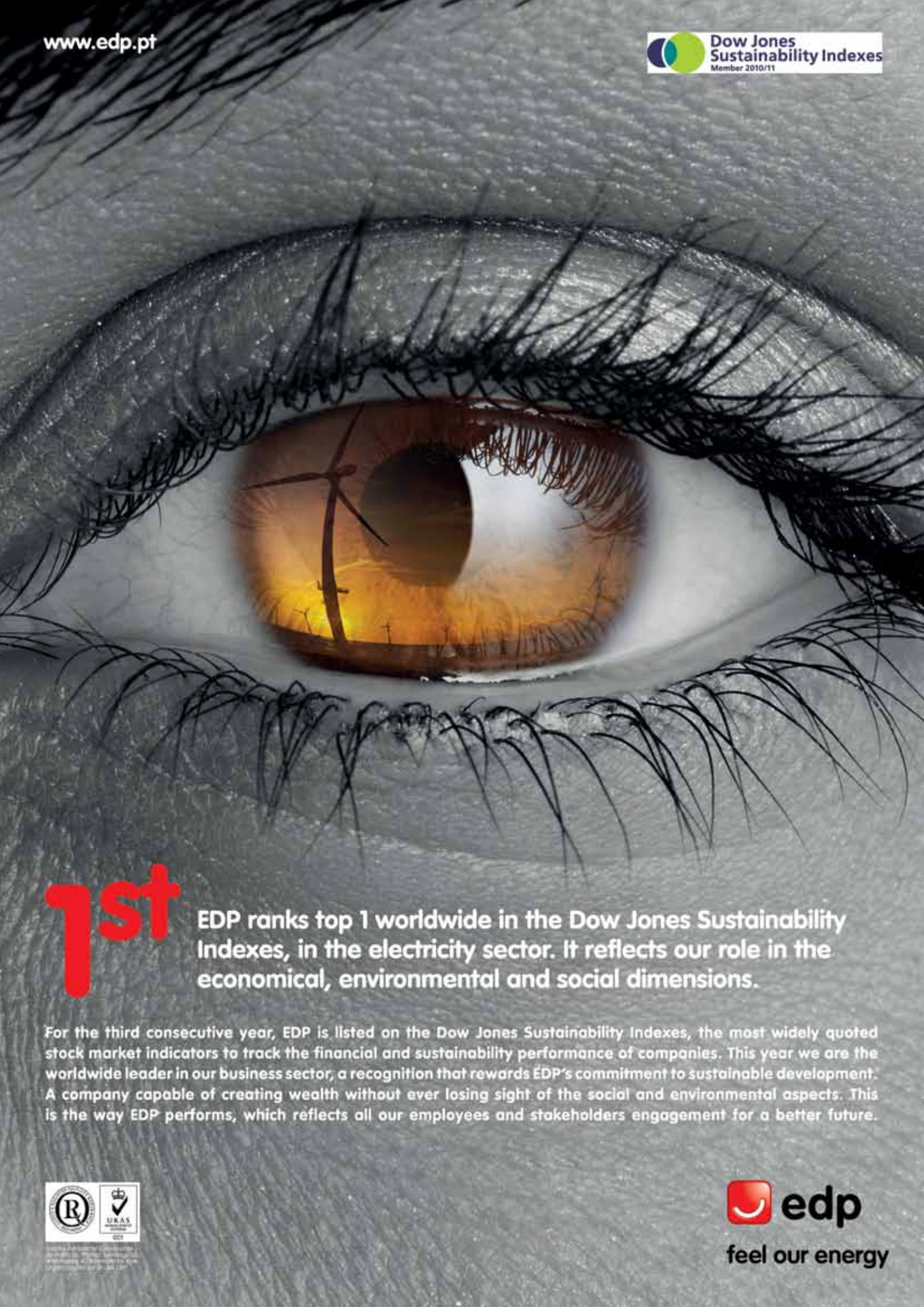
1 Canada, Australia, New Zealand.

2 The latter is particularly off the mark: EU members make up 16 of the 29 WEOG, i.e. around 55%. But for Security Council elections the three permanent members of the group (two European, the other American) must of course be excluded. This brings the EU weight to 62%. If one excludes the four Western Group micro States (Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino), which have never been in the Security Council and show no realistic expectation of being there, the EU weight goes up to 73%. Since 1999 there were 12 elected WEOG members of the Council, of which nine were EU (75%, not too much above 73%) and three were not EU (25%). Had Australia not withdrawn in 2006 and been elected against either Belgium or Italy, the score would have been 2/3-1/3, i.e. the CANZ would have been overrepresented.

3 Europeans themselves are quite divided, and not only about some of the central issues in New York. They carry the baggage of their historic relationships and of more recent divisions in important internal EU business. The rest of the world is also very much aware of the still unabridged differences between European countries. They know how limited the EU common positions are on some of the most sensitive issues on the Security Council's agenda. And naturally they take sides.

4 At the time some (big) countries actively campaigned in favour of one of our competitors and against us.

5 From the time the European Union had 12, to 15 to the current 27 members.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