



A Dialogue with Kurt Mosgaard: The Danish UN Association, and the Need for Cooperation at the Global Stage

MARCUS ARAÚJO DE AMORIM STEFFENSEN – HUMAN SECURITY STUDENT, AARHUS UNIVERSITY INTERN AT AARCON

In a world increasingly marked by diverse challenges such as climate change, violent conflict and growing inequality, the United Nations (UN) stands as a key contributor to global solutions. Kurt Mosgaard, a board member of the Danish UN Association, passionately advocates for greater support and participation in the United Nations. In a recent interview, he shared his insights on the UN's role, challenges, and the importance of fostering international cooperation.

The Danish UN Association

The Danish UN Association is an organisation that works closely with governmental and non-governmental actors, with the aim of promoting the missions and values of the UN. Its membership base is diverse, blending 300 individuals, political parties, companies and organisations, with a central secretariat located in Copenhagen. Governance is entrusted to a 15-member board, and they are responsible for overseeing the association's strategic direction and decision-making.

Operating at the local level, distinct representative groups exercise autonomy through their local boards, actively coordinating grassroots activities. Currently, Mosgaard is operating in Viborg, setting up a conference in collaboration with the municipality. This conference will showcase regional efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other relevant activities relating to the UN's mission. Notably, while Aarhus presently lacks a permanent representation, past collaborations with the municipality reflect the association's openness to future partnerships and engagement in the city.



Kurt Mosgaard.

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For decades since the end of the Cold War, we have seen the United States of America (US) stand out as the clear global hegemon. Yet, many postulate that this picture may have changed, namely with the rise of China as a potential head-to-head competitor with the US, and the rise of regional powers such as India, Iran and Saudi Arabia. With an increasingly even distributed balance of power, we are seeing more of these emerging states push their own agendas, despite being at odds with those of other states. According to Mosgaard, this situation has only become more dire. Currently, we see this clearly in the UN Security Council (UNSC) and its inability to stop the Russian-Ukrainian War. However, as Mosgaard also points out, even if cooperation seems harder to foster, its importance is in turn becoming more and more apparent. Climate change and war, among others, are issues that

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transcend borders and impact all nations. The UN, with its diverse membership, can be seen as the best platform for nations to collaborate in finding common solutions to these pressing issues.

And while major setbacks like the war in Ukraine often take the front stage in the media, it is important to appreciate the incredible progress that the UN has achieved in other important areas. Mosgaard highlights the progress made toward achieving the SDGs. The world is gradually improving in areas such as poverty reduction, education, and healthcare. Yet, ongoing conflicts in regions like Ukraine and Palestine overshadow this progress.

According to Mosgaard, one of the mentalities that must currently be challenged, is the isolationist “America first!” or “Denmark first!” rhetoric. Smaller states such as Denmark, profit tremendously from acting within a cooperative and supportive international community, as these states are provided a platform to speak as equals to other states, regardless of size and power. Denmark is therefore able to express its interests without having to resort to formal means of power, which it lacks compared to its larger neighbours. For the larger countries, an organisation such as the UN is also incredibly beneficial, as it establishes a forum to tackle global issues more efficiently. Additionally, it is also an environment for states to leverage their soft power, by promoting ideas and acquiring legitimacy through international law.

In Denmark, the Danish UN Association actively promotes the importance of the UN within the country. It engages with various stakeholders, including political parties and EU parliamentarians, to influence foreign policy and emphasise the UN as a crucial tool for addressing global issues. These efforts often go unnoticed, but they are crucial in promoting cooperation worldwide.

What does the future hold for the Danish UN Association?

Mosgaard avidly envisions growth for the Danish UN Association: “We should not be 300 members; we should be several thousand!”. As the UN’s ideals resonate with many Danes, there is a lot of ample room for expansion. Most political parties, the parliament, and municipalities in Denmark already endorse the UN Association. The next step now is to expand beyond Copenhagen, and to organise activities and collaborations across the whole

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country. In that regard, there is great reason for optimism. Denmark currently seeks to become a temporary member of the UN Security Council for the 2025-2026 period, which will bring significant media attention to the UN and the Danish UN Association, and hopefully new members too.

In conclusion, the Danish UN Association, represented by dedicated individuals like Mosgaard, plays a crucial role in promoting the UN's ideals, emphasising the importance of international cooperation. As the world faces increasingly complex challenges, the UN remains a beacon of hope for collective solutions and a brighter future.



About the author

Marcus Steffensen is a master's degree student in the Human Security program at Aarhus University, with a background in International Relations & Organizations. He is currently a full-time intern at Aarcon, and member of the editorial board.

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