Annual report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy and ESDP

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own initiative report by Helmut **KUHNE** (PES, DE) on the implementation of the European Security Strategy (ESS) and ESDP, above all looking into the effects of the **Treaty of Lisbon** and welcoming the fact that this will introduce major innovations in the field of ESDP. However, MEPs ask the Member States to investigate the possibilities of bringing under permanent structured cooperation, as envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty, existing multinational forces such as Eurocorps, Eurofor, etc., as well as all relevant forces and structures for ESDP operations.

Assessing and complementing the ESS: MEPs invite the High Representative to assess in a White Paper the progress made, and any shortcomings, in the implementation of the ESS since 2003, including aspects related to the fight against terrorism, the protection of critical infrastructure or even the management of unresolved regional disputes such as those in Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh. This analysis should also include humanitarian and security challenges on the African continent or even the consequences of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Overall, the High Representative is called upon to make proposals for improving and complementing the ESS (such as the definition of common European security interests and criteria for the launching of ESDP missions) and to define new targets for civilian and military capabilities of ESDP.

Civilian crisis management and civil protection: MEPs call on the Commission to examine the possibilities for the establishment of a specialised unit within the European External Action Service, with a view to ensuring a more coherent approach to civilian crisis management based on better coordination of internal EU instruments as well as cooperation between the EU and external organisations and non-governmental organisations. They call on the Council to put forward concrete proposals designed to avoid any repetition of the shambles in Afghanistan. On the issue of conflict management, MEPs consider it important to strengthen the conflict resolution civil capacity and therefore urge the creation of an **EU Civil Peace Corps** for crisis management and conflict prevention.

The security dimension of development policy: MEPs call on the Member States to continue working towards the goal of an international ban on cluster munitions as well as towards the conclusion of the ongoing negotiations on strengthening the global ban on landmines, on uranium weapons and global control of conventional arms transfers. In this light, MEPs find “embarrassing” the uncontrolled arms exports from certain EU Member States. In fact, weapons may be transferred through the EU via those Member States with less strict export controls to third countries. It is therefore important for all Member States to apply the highest standards in terms of arms export controls. MEPs recall that the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports will celebrate its tenth anniversary in 2008, but it is not yet legally binding…

Concerned about the ongoing proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), MEPs call on the Member States and the EU to agree on binding provisions to control SALW. They call on the Council to include in the mandate of ESDP operations the destruction or safe storage of decommissioned arms as well as measures to avoid their illegal transfer.

Furthermore, MEPs call for the creation of an integrated civil-military "**Human Security Response Force** ", composed of about 15 000 personnel, of whom at least one third would be civilian specialists (such as police officers, human rights monitors and development and humanitarian specialists). This Force,

building on already existing ESDP structures, could be drawn from troops and civilian capabilities already made available by Member States and could take inspiration from the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty.

Iran's nuclear programme: while stressing the leading diplomatic role played by the EU with regard to the Iranian nuclear programme, MEPs reaffirm that this programme remains a source of serious concern to the EU and the international community. They therefore call on the US to join the EU-3 (France, Germany and the UK) in direct negotiations with Iran, since the US is in a position to offer additional incentives such as security guarantees.

MEPs also reviewed the capabilities of ESDP and made the following points:

- **ESDP: technical capabilities** (transport, communication and intelligence): while welcoming the British and Franco-German proposals that information about the availability of helicopters for EU missions or transport helicopters be shared, MEPs recall that one of the principal obstacles to modernising and transforming European forces is not the level of defence expenditure but rather the **lack of cooperation**, the absence of a clear division of labour, and **the fragmentation in arms production and procurement**, which increase the risk of non-interoperability between armies. This cooperation must therefore be strengthened and Parliament should be better informed of current initiatives;
- **ESDP: military capabilities**: MEPs are aware of the fact that force generation is primarily a question of political will and joint assessment. They therefore call on the Council to examine the Battle Group concept so as to create a more extensive catalogue of available capabilities and to be in a position to swiftly generate a force adequate to a mission’s circumstances. They call, in particular, for the creation within the EU Operations Centre of a **permanent planning and operational capability** to conduct ESDP military operations. In this context, MEPs propose to place Eurocorps as a standing force under EU command and invite all Member States to contribute to it. Furthermore, these European forces must improve their interoperability, particularly through ad hoc training (MEPs call, in particular, for a military 'Erasmus' programme);
- **ESDP: financial capabilities**: MEPs call on the Council and the Commission to develop proposals enabling flexible procurement procedures appropriate for ESDP civilian missions. They regret the unnecessary complexity of the arrangements laid down in Article 28 of the EU Treaty with regard to the rapid financing of ESDP activities (which are outside the EU budget) and, in the longer term, call for the Athena mechanism to be transferred to the CFSP budget. More generally, MEPs call for a mid-term review under the Financial Perspective 2007-2013 of the use of EU external instruments (the CFSP budget, the Instrument for Stability, the Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument) across the range of EU crisis-management (military and civilian) actions.

ESDP and parliamentary scrutiny: MEPs call for the establishment, in collaboration with the European Parliament, of a mechanism of confidential information on emerging crises or international security events. They stress that Parliament should continue to adopt a recommendation or resolution prior to the launch of any ESDP operation and ask the Council to include a reference to the recommendation or resolution adopted by Parliament in the Joint Action authorising an ESDP operation, thus demonstrating that the Council is seeking additional democratic legitimacy.

Lastly, MEPs regard the European Union and NATO as mutually reinforcing, and urge close cooperation between them.