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

2008/2003(INI) - 05/06/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 500 votes to 106, with 36 abstentions, a resolution on the European Security Strategy (ESS) and ESDP.

The own initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Helmut **KUHNE** (PES, DE) on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

In its resolution, the Parliament considers that the Treaty of Lisbon will introduce major innovations in the field of ESDP. At the same time, the Parliament calls for overall strengthening of ESDP and of Parliament' s democratic scrutiny over its developments.

Assessing and complementing the ESS: the Parliament invites 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 in Central Asia . It considers that this White Paper should be the basis for a wider political debate conducted in public, mainly because the ESS defines the Union's fundamental values and objectives. A future assessment of the ESS has to be carried out with **greater democratic accountability** and therefore made in close consultation with all EU institutions including the European Parliament and national parliaments.

Overall, the High Representative is called upon to include proposals for improving 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. The High Representative must also tackle the issue of the "caveats" to protect the safety of the various Member States' forces deployed on the ground.

Direct security dialogue with the new US administration and Canada: in an amendment proposed by the socialists and adopted in plenary, the Parliament highlights that NATO is the transatlantic forum in which security concerns are to be addressed by most of the EU Member States, the United States and Canada. It encourages the Council and the High Representative to take initiatives for a direct security dialogue with the incoming US administration and the Canadian government in fields where the EU has competences. The plenary also proposes that such a dialogue should concentrate on concrete issues such as increasing the credibility of Western values in the fight against terrorism and stabilisation and reconstruction.

Civilian crisis management and civil protection: the Parliament calls 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. On the issue of conflict management, the Parliament considers it important to strengthen the conflict resolution civil capacity and therefore urges the creation of an **EU Civil Peace Corps** for crisis management and conflict prevention.

Security dimension of development policy: the Parliament calls 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 context, the Parliament finds “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. The Parliament also emphasises the military nuclear issue and recalls that the 40th anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) must be seen as an opportunity for the EU to promote the need for **nuclear disarmament**. This includes the need for the "recognised" nuclear weapons powers to put forward disarmament initiatives, to make **Europe a nuclear-weapon-free zone**, and to conclude a global convention banning nuclear weapons. Having reaffirmed its concern about the ongoing proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), the Parliament also calls on the Member States, the Council and the Commission to get governments to agree on binding provisions to control SALW.

Nevertheless, the Plenary took a different stance to its Committee on Foreign Affairs and rejected the idea of an integrated civil-military "Human Security Response Force", composed of about 15 000 personnel and drawn from troops and civilian capabilities already made available by Member States.

Role of the EU in the debate on Iran’s nuclear programme: while stressing the leading diplomatic role played by the EU with regard to the Iranian nuclear programme, the Parliament reaffirms that this programme remains a source of serious concern to the EU and the international community. It reiterates its support for the UN Security Council's Resolution 1803 (2008) as well as the offer made to Iran by the EU3 (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) and by the United States, Russia and China concerning the peaceful use of nuclear energy, political and economic cooperation, energy partnership, agriculture, environment and infrastructure, civil aviation, and development cooperation in the fields of economic, social and humanitarian aid.

The Parliament then reviewed the capabilities of ESDP:

- **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, the Parliament recalls 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**: the Parliament is aware of the fact that force generation is primarily a question of political will and joint assessment. It therefore calls 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. It calls, in particular, for the creation, within the EU Operations Centre, of a **permanent planning and operational capability** in orderto conduct ESDP military operations. The Parliament proposes placing Eurocorps as a standing force under EU command and invites all Member States to contribute to it. Furthermore, these European forces must improve their interoperability, particularly through ad hoc training (the Parliament calls, in particular, for a military 'Erasmus' programme);
- **ESDP: financial capabilities**: the Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to develop proposals enabling flexible procurement procedures appropriate for ESDP civilian missions. It regrets 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, calls for the Athena mechanism to be transferred to the CFSP budget. More generally, the Parliament calls 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: the Parliament calls for the establishment, in collaboration with the European Parliament, of a mechanism of confidential information on emerging crises or international security events. It stresses that the Parliament should continue to adopt a recommendation or resolution prior to the launch of any ESDP operation and asks the Council to include a reference to the recommendation or resolution adopted by Parliament in the Joint Action authorising an ESDP operation, thus giving the Council additional democratic legitimacy.

EU-NATO relations: lastly, the Parliament believes that the European Union and NATO should cooperate closely, given that these structures are mutually reinforcing. In an amendment adopted in plenary, it indicates that the US plan to establish an anti-missile system in Europe at this time may hamper international disarmament efforts. It expresses its concerns about Russia's suspension of implementation of its obligations in terms of Conventional Armed Forces. Both issues affect the security of all European countries and should not therefore be the subject of purely bilateral discussions between the US and individual European countries. The plenary therefore calls on the Council and the Member States to establish, together with NATO, a framework designed to include as many European countries as possible in the debate and to clearly evaluate estimated future nuclear threats, the danger of a new arms race in Europe and to propose an adequate multilateral response to them.