European Security Strategy and ESDP

2008/2202(INI) - 21/01/2009

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own initiative report by Karl **von WOGAU** (EPP-ED, DE) on the European Security Strategy (ESS) and ESDP, calling on the European Union to develop its strategic autonomy through a strong and effective foreign, security and defence policy. MEPs stress the need to strengthen multilateralism and reiterate their view that the United Nations must be reformed.

In order to combat the dangers to which the EU is exposed, MEPs call for the use of both civilian and military assets and capabilities and the **pooling of efforts and capabilities at the EU level**. MEPs therefore call for an integrated European Armed Force, equipped with common weapon systems and closely scrutinised by the European Parliament and the parliaments of EU Member States.

Overall, MEPs consider that the European Union should play a more decisive role in boosting the legitimacy, transparency and effectiveness of the institutions of global governance. They also stress the need for full and timely implementation of the ESS.

Moreover, MEPs reiterate the principle of women's equal participation in all matters and decisions concerning peace and security and once again call for the systematic use of sexual violence against women in conflict situations to be categorised as a war crime and a crime against humanity.

European security interests: noting that, all too often, thinking in the Member States remains confined within the framework of national security interests, MEPs urge Member States to widen their thinking in order to **make the EU a more important actor on the international scene**, providing for more effective European security arrangements. In addition to the challenges identified in the ESS as adopted in 2003, the security interests of the Union include the protection of its citizens and its interests inside the EU as well as abroad, the security of its neighbourhood and the protection of its external borders and critical infrastructure, as well as the improvement of its cyber security, the security of energy supply and sea lanes, the protection of its space assets and protection against the consequences of climate change.

European security ambitions: MEPs consider that the **European Union** must define more clearly its ambitions concerning its role in the world and that it **should not try to become a superpower like the United States** but that it should instead guarantee its security and security in its neighbourhood. It must give priority to crisis prevention.

Developing Europe's security strategy: MEPs congratulate the French EU Presidency and welcome the High Representative's report on the implementation of the ESS, which includes many recommendations from Parliament’s previous reports on the ESS and the ESDP. They welcome, in particular, the Council’s commitment to the idea that, by 2010, Europe should be capable of deploying **60 000 men in 60 days** for a major operation. Among the other operations envisaged, it is also provided that the following should be implemented: (i) two major stabilisation and reconstruction operations, with a suitable civilian component, supported by a maximum of 10 000 men; (ii) two rapid response operations of limited duration; (iii) an emergency operation for the evacuation of European nationals; (iv) a maritime or air surveillance /interdiction mission; (v) a civilian-military humanitarian assistance operation lasting up to 90 days; (vi) around a dozen ESDP civilian missions (including inter alia police, rule of law, civil administration, civil protection, etc). In this context, MEPs regret that the Council has not drawn up a White Paper as requested by the Parliament and that several other demands made by the Parliament have not been taken into account, namely the definition of common European security interests; the definition of criteria for the launching of ESDP missions; or tackling the issue of national caveats.

Regarding the ESS, MEPs suggest that it should be **reviewed every five years** at the beginning of a new EU legislative period. Although they welcome innovative aspects of the revision, expanding the range of threats to cover climate change, energy security, arms trade and cyber security, MEPs regret that it does not include the current global financial crisis. Moreover, they deem it unacceptable that there was only limited parliamentary debate and no public debate before the adoption of the report proposing revision of the ESS.

Relationship with Russia: MEPs stress that, due to its geopolitical position, military power, political weight, energy wealth and economic potential, Russia is of strategic importance for Europe. Moreover, they consider that both the EU and NATO should pursue a frank and realistic dialogue with Russia covering such matters as regional security, energy, missile defence, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, limitation of armed forces and space policy.

Building Europe's capabilities: MEPs recall that, since its creation, 22 missions have been carried out within the framework of the ESDP, including 16 civilian missions, which they welcome. They call on the Member States to redouble their efforts to make available qualified personnel for civilian ESDP missions. MEPs regret the slow level of progress in the area of civil capabilities and conflict prevention and therefore call on the EU to endeavour to **make a force of 60 000 soldiers permanently available**. They reiterate their proposal that the Eurocorps should be the core of this force, if necessary reinforced by additional maritime and air capacities. Furthermore, MEPs recall that the EU Member States together spend more than EUR 200 billion per year on defence (which is more than half the defence expenditure of the United States). They remain deeply concerned about the lack of efficiency and coordination in the utilisation of those funds and therefore urge that greater efforts be made to eliminate unnecessary duplication between Member States. All efforts must be made to **exploit synergies and enhance interoperability between armed forces and security forces** with a view to focusing the efforts of Member States on common capabilities which can be used for both defence and security purposes.

The need for new structures: MEPs are of the opinion that the EU's capacity for autonomous foreign and security policy action should be improved through goal-oriented enhancement of its analysis, planning and leadership and intelligence capacities. In this context, they call for the setting-up of an EU Operational Headquarters and the creation of a **Council of Defence Ministers**. They call, in particular, for an increase in Community funding for security research and the creation of joint research programmes involving the Commission and the European Defence Agency (EDA).

The need for a new spirit: lastly, MEPs call for the European Security and Defence College to be strengthened. They call, in particular, for further initiatives concerning common training and common standards for personnel who are to be deployed and to work together in civilian and military operations, increased interaction between the armed forces and civilian personnel of EU Member States, coordination of crisis-related training, exchange programmes among armed forces in Europe and the opening-up of armies to citizens of other EU Member States. They support, in particular, the Eurofighter programme, which will serve as the backbone of the fighter capability of five European air forces in the coming decades.