Annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in 2008

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The European Parliament adopted by 592 votes to 66, with 11 abstentions a resolutionon the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 2008, presented to the European Parliament in application of Part II, Section G, paragraph 43 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006.

Divided into several parts, the resolution begins by calling on the Vice-President/High Representative (VP /HR) and her services to **develop a coherent EU foreign policy strategy** based on the objectives and principles established in Article 21 TEU. Such a strategy should clearly identify the common security interests of the EU and thereby serve as a reference framework for policy-making as well as for the formulation, financing, implementation and monitoring of the EU's external action. Parliament wants its relevant bodies to be fully associated with this endeavour and believes that the concepts of Human Security, and Responsibility to Protect should become two of its guiding principles.

The Council's 2008 annual report on the CFSP: noting the improvements to the 2008 report, Parliament stresses that the scope of the report should not be limited simply to a description of CFSP activities but should provide the opportunity to establish a dialogue with the European Parliament aimed at developing a more strategic approach to the CFSP. It recommends that the annual CFSP report be turned into a yearly report discussing the implementation of the EU's foreign policy strategy, evaluating its effectiveness and outlining its future direction, with more references to the budgetary needs and financial impact of external actions in such reporting. It reiterates that in order to enhance the democratic legitimacy of the CFSP, Parliament's competent bodies should be more **widely consulted**.

Implications of the Treaty of Lisbon: Parliament welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which provides the EU with tools for the further enhancement of its role and visibility on the international scene, and also welcomes the role to be played by the Vice-President/High Representative in chairing the Foreign Affairs Council. It expects these new functions to consolidate inter-institutional contacts and foster a more stable dialogue between the institutions. It invites the Vice-President/High Representative to increase her appearances in Parliament. It is of the view that the merging of the inter-governmental and Community pillars and functions into **one single post of the Vice-President/High Representative**, who is subject to a collective vote of consent by the European Parliament, can increase the **democratic legitimacyof CFSP** activities provided a continuous strategic dialogue is established on an equal footing between Parliament, the Council and the Commission at all levels. Parliament notes that, in accordance with the Treaty, the President of the European Council will "at his level and in that capacity, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy". However, this must be done without prejudicing the powers of the Vice-President/High Representative, and in full acknowledgment of the key role played by the European Commission, not only in establishing and maintaining the *acquis communautaire* in terms of external relations, but also in ensuring the external representation of the Union, with the exception of the CFSP.

More budget for the CFSP and greater transparency: Parliament underlines that sufficient funds need to be allocated in the EU budget and regrets that the relevant budget continues to be under-funded. It looks

forward to being fully involved in the procedures for granting rapid access to appropriations in the Union budget for urgent financing of CFSP initiatives. It reiterates its concerns about the lack of transparency as regards the financing of the common costs of EU operations having military or defence implications, since the Athena mechanism clearly does not afford an overview of all the financial implications of missions conducted under the CFSP. It welcomes, therefore, the setting-up of the **start-up fund** under the new Treaty and asks to be consulted on its management, noting also that the setting-up and operation of the **European External Action Service (EEAS)** must preserve the European Parliament's rights of democratic and budgetary scrutiny.

EU Special Representatives (EUSRs): Parliament stresses the need to establish greater clarity on the criteria for the appointment and evaluation of EU Special Representatives (EUSRs), calling for increased parliamentary scrutiny of, and control over, EUSR appointments and mandates. It wants to see a review and extension of existing inter-institutional agreements so as to ensure the smooth and efficient implementation of the budgetary, consultation and supervision procedures for the CFSP and the CSDP and to improve access to sensitive information. It expresses its determination to exercise budgetary power and democratic scrutiny with regard to the CFSP in connection with all **institutional innovations**.

CFSP matters of a thematic nature: Parliament continues to be concerned about the security of energy supply and repeated gas crises, such as the Russian-Ukrainian crisis of January 2009. It underlines the need to **prevent the energy dependency** of the EU on third countries weakening the independence of EU foreign policy, and recall the urgent need implement a common European external energy policy. It wants the VP/HR to promote EU cohesion in constructive dialogue with energy suppliers, especially with Russia and transit countries, by developing effective energy diplomacy and more efficient mechanisms for responding to crisis situations and, finally, by promoting the diversification of energy supplies, sustainable energy use and the development of renewable energy sources. Only a common EU approach could prevent any future shortcomings in the oil and gas supplies of the Member States and could increase the energy security of the EU as a whole. Parliament believes that significant potential threats and conflicts arise from intensified competition over access to, and control of, **natural resources**, and consequently, that the EU should further develop mitigation, adaptation and energy conservation policies. The EU must strengthen its leadership and further develop a dialogue with other key actors such as the emerging powers (China, Brazil, Russia, India), the United States and developing countries.

Parliament expresses its support for strengthening the United Nations system and according special importance to consolidating the Human Rights Council and abolishing the death penalty. It reiterates the importance of orderly migration management, the need to avert illegal immigration by promoting local development in the countries of origin and fighting criminal organisations that traffic in human beings.

The Union's civilian and missions: Parliament stresses the importance of an adequate balance between civilian and military planning capabilities in the Council Secretariat and calls for the adequate staffing of the civilian component. Member States are urged to use the great opportunity provided by the EEAS to pool currently available resources in order to achieve a coherent, effective and **efficient crisis management planning capability**. Member States are asked to redouble their efforts to deploy sufficient numbers of suitable, qualified and gender-balanced personnel to take part in CSDP civilian and military endeavours and Parliament calls, in this respect, for common training of the personnel of CSDP missions. Parliament is convinced that increased coherence and cohesion as regards staff on the ground will enhance the running of missions and also facilitate the secondment of EU nationals, which, from a purely budgetary perspective, is preferable to using international contracted staff.

Non-proliferation: Parliament invites the European Council and the Commission to intensify the EU's engagement in multilateral negotiations to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons, and reiterates the need for disarmament and strengthened international guarantees of non-proliferation. It calls the EU and its Member States to enhance their diplomatic efforts in order to achieve a successful revision of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in May 2010.

In the second part of the resolution, Parliament sets out its **main priorities in the geographical areas**. It recommends that the EU strengthens the political dialogue with third countries and regions, particularly with strategic partners with whom to coordinate positions in the international organisations and support and promote democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. It calls on the Council, the Member States and the Vice-President/High Representative actively to seek peaceful solutions in international conflicts and to strengthen the EU's conflict prevention mechanisms. Other initiatives suggested include **strengthening the role and impact of international organisations** with the United Nations as the main guarantor of international peace and security. Parliament considers it essential that the relevant EU delegations at the UN's headquarters in New York and Geneva be adequately equipped with means and staff. It takes the view that the EU and NATO should develop a more intense and effective partnership, and recommends a review of the Berlin-Plus arrangements and the development of a more strategic dialogue on shared strategic interests. It urges the facilitation of broader practical cooperation on the ground at military or civilian level, in particular when both organisations operate in the same theatre of missions.

As regards **EU foreign policy by geographical zone,** Parliament states the following:

- **Transatlantic relations**: Parliament calls on the VP/HR to ensure that the EU acts as a coherent, active, equal and yet autonomous partner of the US. Parliament strongly supports the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue in its broad effort to create effective legislator-to-legislator relationships between Parliament and the US Congress;
- **Western Balkans**: stressing that the countries of the Western Balkans are part of the enlargement process, Parliament considers that stability in the Western Balkans based on the rule of law should remain a top priority in the Union's external action. It welcomes the fact that the EULEX rule of law mission in Kosovo is working at full operational capacity and encourages the Council to continue its efforts, with the support of the international community, to pursue a dialogue with political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- **Eastern Partnership, Black Sea cooperation**: Parliament continues to support the development of the Eastern Partnership with the Union's European neighbours, and reiterates its view that the partnership needs to be provided with adequate financial resources. It calls on the VP/HR to step up efforts to implement projects under the Black Sea Synergy. Taking note of the outcome of the presidential elections in Ukraine, it calls on all parties to contribute to the necessary political, economic and social stability in this country;
- **Russia**: Parliament underlines the need for a reinvigorated partnership with Russia, based on mutual respect and reciprocity, on the issues of the fight against terrorism, energy security and supply, climate change, disarmament, conflict prevention and nuclear non-proliferation. It looks forward to speedy progress in the current negotiations on a new comprehensive agreement that is expected to substantially enhance EU-Russia relations;
- **South Caucuses**: Parliament urges full implementation of the ceasefire agreement between the Russian Federation and Georgia and urge the Council to ensure that EU monitors are granted full access to all areas affected by the conflict including the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It calls on the HR/VP to intensify the EU's efforts to work towards effective conflict prevention and peaceful settlement under international law of the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria, and recommends the setting-up of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the South Caucasus, embracing the countries concerned and the relevant regional and global actors, with a view to developing a Stability Pact for the South Caucasus;
- **Middle East**: Parliament, once again, calls on the EU to assume a stronger political role in the ongoing international efforts to re-launch the Peace Process, commensurate with its financial engagement in supporting a Palestinian economic recovery and addressing the dramatic humanitarian crisis in Gaza. It welcomes the Council's decision to extend the mandate of the EU

Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS) until December 2010m and take note of the Council's decision to extend the mandate of the EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah (EUBAM Rafah);

- **The Union for the Mediterranean**: Parliament considers it important to intensify political dialogue among the members of the Union for the Mediterranean at all levels and hopes that the Union for the Mediterranean may contribute positively to the resolution **of the conflicts in the Middle East,** rapprochement between Turkey and Cyprus, and the democratic development of the Arab states. Parliament also stresses that trust-building measures between Palestinians and Israelis in order to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East are of the utmost importance to facilitate the appropriate functioning of this new institution;
- **Afghanistan/Pakistan**: Parliament calls on the Council, the Commission and the Presidency to make a concerted effort to implement the Action Plan without delay and before the end of 2009. It urges the Council to make more progress towards full deployment of staff in EUPOL in order to establish sustainable and effective civilian policing arrangements capable of enhancing the security environment. Recognising that Pakistan continues to face very serious challenges, it endorses the EU's firm support for a strong, secular and civilian government of Pakistan and reiterates that a stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan is also central to addressing global issues such as counter-terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, counter-narcotics and human rights;
- **Iran/Iraq:** Parliament endorses the EU's commitment to supporting democracy in a unified, federal Iraq. They call for increased institutional interaction, particularly on economic issues, with the authorities of the Kurdish Regional Government. It calls on the Commission to accelerate the activation of its own premises in Baghdad. On Iran, it expresses grave concern over the reported massive electoral fraud during the presidential elections of June 2009, as well as continuous stalemate in the negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme. It regrets that the visit by the Iran delegation of the European Parliament, in January 2010, was cancelled by the Iranian authorities and condemns Iran's efforts to block freedom of information by jamming foreign broadcasts and the Internet. It calls on the Council and Commission to consider **sanctions** against individual members of the administration and the security services responsible for the widespread human rights violations;
- **China/India:** Parliament remains gravely concerned about the lack of willingness on the part of the Chinese authorities to tackle numerous human rights violations and to ensure that the people enjoy basic rights and freedoms. It reaffirms strong support for strengthening the strategic relationship between the EU and India, and for exploring further ways to upgrade the relationship in areas of mutual interest in the **economic, political, security and trade sectors**. It also wants to increase cooperation with ASEAN in several areas;
- **Africa:** noting with satisfaction that EUNAVFOR Atalanta continues to make a successful contribution to maritime security off the coast of Somalia, Parliament welcomes the Council's decision to extend the mandate of the operation to 12 December 2010. It stresses the need to integrate trained security forces into state and command structures so that, once they return, they will not turn against the government they are supposed to be protecting;
- **Latin America**: recalling, once again, its proposals for a global partnership and a common strategy for relations between the EU and Latin America Parliament invites the Union to take active steps to realise this ambitious goal and to support this proposal at the next EU-LAC Summit, which will take place in May 2010 in Madrid. It considers that a prompt signature of the Association Agreement with the Central American countries and of the Multilateral Agreement with the Andean Community countries, as well as the progress of negotiations on the Association Agreement with Mercosur, must be a priority. Parliament indicates that it will endeavour to carry out with due accuracy the parliamentary ratification procedure on these agreements in order to ensure that they have a positive impact on all aspects of mutual concern.