Role of the common security and defence policy in case of climate driven crises and natural disaster

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Indrek TARAND (Greens/EFA, EE) on the role of the Common Security and Defence Policy in case of climate-driven crises and natural disasters. It **notes the impact of climate change on global security, peace and stability.** Members regret that, in the last four years, the issue of climate change as the biggest threat to global security has become overshadowed by the economic and financial crisis. The increase in extreme weather events in recent years represents an escalating cost to the global economy, not only for developing countries but for the world at large.

Natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change, are highly destabilising, particularly for vulnerable states. Members stress, however, that **so far no case of conflict can be exclusively attributed to climate change.**

They recognise that **complex crises can be predicted, and should be prevented** by applying a comprehensive approach including policy areas that make full use of the tools available within the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP), the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the policies for humanitarian and development aid.

The committee also emphasises that **in its external action strategies, policies and instruments the EU should take into consideration the effects of natural disasters and climate change** on international security, devoting special attention to women and children.

Reiterating the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction, Members call for the **integration of the analysis** of the impact of climate-driven crises, and consequent natural disasters, into CSDP strategies and operational plans before, during and after any natural or humanitarian crises that might emerge, and to **create mitigation back-up plans aimed at the regions most at risk.** They also call for practical cooperation, such as cooperation exercises.

Whilst welcoming the new tools provided by the Lisbon Treaty in terms of conflict prevention (conflict prevention missions, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, peace-keeping and post-conflict stabilisation). Members are of the opinion that **duplication of instruments** should be avoided and that a clear distinction should be made between instruments within and outside the scope of the CSDP.

They highlight the **value of civilian-military synergies in crises** such as those in Haiti, Pakistan and New Orleans.

The need for political will and action: Members call on the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR):

- whenever deemed appropriate, take into account of climate change and natural disasters and their security and defence ramifications when analysing crises and threats to conflicts;

- to assess which countries and/or regions are potentially at greatest risk of conflict and instability as a result of climate change and natural disasters, and make a **list of such countries/regions;**

- to enhance the EU's practical ability to ensure conflict prevention, crisis management and post-crisis reconstruction; closely coordinate efforts with the Commission and EU development policy regarding the need to assist partner countries when it comes to resilience against climate change;

- to adapt, in close cooperation with the Commission, the EU's long-term planning of civilian and military capacities and capabilities accordingly.

The EU has to present a list of the challenges it faces in areas such as the Arctic, Africa, the Arab World, and the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau ('the Third Pole'), notably the potential for conflicts over water supplies. Members call, therefore, on all institutional levels (EEAS, DG ECHO EuropeAid (DEVCO)) to draw up a **list of all countries and regions most vulnerable to climate change over the coming decades.**

In the meantime, Members underline that the EU should work with key regions at risk, and with the most vulnerable states, to strengthen their capacity to cope (for example the EU-Africa Strategy, the Barcelona Process, the Black Sea Synergy, the EU-Central Asia Strategy and the Middle East action plan).

Members also call on the HR/VP and the Commission to:

- mainstream the potential effects of climate change on security into the most important strategies, policy documents and financial instruments for external action and CSDP;

- put forward **proposals for the implementation of the start-up fund** (Article 41(3) TEU) with regard to possible future pooling and sharing projects, joint capabilities and a joint, permanent, pool of equipment for civilian crisis operations.

The committee draws attention to the fact that energy security is closely related to climate change. It recalls that Russian pipelines will become vulnerable to disruption by the melting of the permafrost, and that the **transformation of the Arctic represents one major effect of climate change on EU security.**

It welcomes the recent attempts to strengthen coordination between NATO and EU in the field of capability development.

The need for a new spirit: **strategic and conceptual challenges**: in response to the crises, Members suggest:

- integrating the negative impact of climate change and natural disasters on peace, security and stability in all strategic CFSP/CSDP documents;

- early-assessment and fact-finding capabilities, **deploying multidisciplinary teams at the earliest time possible, which would be composed of civilian, military and civil-military experts;**

- **accurate and timely analysis** to predict and respond to climate change insecurity, and steps to further develop capacities for data collection and information analysis through structures such as EU Delegations;

- adequate human resources the relevant EEAS units and Commission's services integrating analysis and developing common criteria for analysis, risk assessment and the setting-up of a joint alert system;

- the relevant EEAS and Commission bodies should enhance the coordination of situation analysis and policy planning, notably ECHO, but also with UN agencies and programmes as well as with NATO;

- **developing contingency plans for the EU's response to the effects of natural disasters and climate-driven crises occurring outside the Union** that have direct or indirect security implications on the Union (e.g. climate-driven migration).

Whilst welcoming the measures taken so far in climate diplomacy, Members note that the latter represents only one dimension of possible external action and that there is a great need to anticipate climate crises and natural disasters in the context of CSDP by mainstreaming the specific needs and implications.

Adaptations and modifications addressing the implications of climate change and natural disasters could be made to the main CSDP policy documents, including the Concepts for Military Planning at the Political and Strategic level, for Military Command and Control or Force Generation and Military Rapid Response as well as to documents that are relevant for civilian CSDP missions, such as the EU Concepts for Comprehensive Planning, Police Planning and the Guidelines for Command and Control Structure for EU Civilian Operations in Crisis Management.

Members are of the opinion that civilian and military capabilities should be developed in such a way as to allow their deployment in response to natural disasters and climate-driven crises with special attention to the **process of pooling and sharing and a greater role of the European Defence Agency in this matter.**

The need for institutional creativity: instruments and capabilities: Members reiterate that effective responses to crises such as natural disasters **often need to be able to draw on both civilian and military capabilities.** They stress the need to elaborate a specific list of military and civilian CSDP capabilities that have special relevance both in responses to climate change and natural disasters and in CSDP missions. Civil defence assets should include engineering capacities such as the ad hoc construction and operation of port/airport infrastructure, air and sea operational management and transport, mobile hospitals, communication infrastructure, water purification and fuel management. They invite the Council and the EDA, as part of the 2013 review of the capabilities development programme, to reconcile the current catalogues of civilian and military capabilities with those required in order to meet the challenges of climate change, and to put forward the necessary proposals to remedy any existing deficiencies in those catalogues.

Furthermore, the committee stresses the need to explore:

- on the basis of already existing capacities such as the EU Battle Groups and the European Air Transport Command, the possibility of creating further joint capabilities that are relevant;

- ways of improving energy efficiency and environmental management within the armed forces at home and abroad;

- strengthening a comprehensive approach within the context of the next multiannual financial perspective 2014-2020 through the use of a renewed Instrument for Stability;

- coordination mechanisms to be established between the EU and Member States which may in the future act in accordance with the provisions of permanent structured cooperation to ensure the consistency of actions;.

Lastly, Members call for the EU to examine the security implications of climate change in dialogue with third countries, especially with key partners such as India, China and Russia to attain a multilateral approach.

It should also be noted that a **minority opinion** was tabled by several Members of the Greens/EFA group, who objected to the report on the grounds that it wrongly focuses on repressive and military counter-measures whilst advocating further EU - militarisation. These Members would like to see more focus on global distributive equity, all activities conducted strictly within UN Charter and international law, civil measures to counter climate change and consequences, and strict separation of EU from NATO; strict separation of civil and military capabilities.