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

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The European Parliament adopted by 474 votes to 80, with 18 abstentions, a resolution on the role of the Common Security and Defence Policy in case of climate-driven crises and natural disasters.

Parliament notes the impact of climate change on global security, peace and stability. 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.

Parliament stresses, however, that, **so far, no case of conflict can be exclusively attributed to climate change**.

It recognises, however, 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. It also recognises that, while addressing climate change through a security nexus can be positive, **it is but one component of EU action on climate change**, which attempts to use political and economic tools to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Parliament 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, Parliament calls 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**. It also calls 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). Parliament is 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. It highlights 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. However, and contrary to the position of the committee responsible, **Parliament does not call for the drawing up of a list** of all countries and regions most vulnerable to climate change over the coming decades. Nevertheless, it underlines 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).

Parliament also calls 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.

It 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, Parliament suggests:

- 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, d**eploying 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).

Parliament strongly welcomes the steps taken in 2011 at the level of the EU Foreign Ministers under the Polish Presidency, and at the UN Security Council under the German Presidency, to elaborate the interaction between climate change and its security implications.

Parliament considers that adaptations and modifications addressing the implications of climate change and natural disasters could be made to the main CSDP policy documents, including the EU Concept for **Military Planning** at the Political and Strategic level, the EU Concept for Military Command and Control , the EU Concept for Force Generation and the EU Military Rapid Response Concept. On the **civilian front**, Parliament also calls for planning, command and operation control measures to be led by the Union.

Parliament believes that special attention should be paid to the development of military capabilities to allow for their deployment in response to natural disasters and climate-driven crises and, in particular, to the process of pooling and sharing; calls for a greater role of the EDA in this matter. It calls for a **greater role of the European Defence Agency (EDA) in this matter**.

The need for institutional creativity: instruments and capabilities: Parliament reiterates that **effective responses to crises such as natural disasters often need to be able to draw on both civilian and military capabilities**. It stresses 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. It invites 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, Parliament 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, Parliament calls 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.