UN principle of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P). Recommandation to the Council

2012/2143(INI) - 04/04/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affaits adopted the initiative report by Franziska Katharina BRANTNER (Greens/EFA, DE) with a proposal for a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on the UN principle of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (‘R2P’).

The parliamentary committee recalls that the **principle of the responsibility to protect**, embedded, for the first time, in the UN 2005 World Summit Outcome, **represents an important step forward towards a more peaceful world**.

The principle of R2P is based on **three pillars**, namely: (i) the state bears the primary responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing; (ii) the international community must assist states in fulfilling their protection obligations; (iii) when a state manifestly fails to protect its population or is in fact a perpetrator of these crimes, the international community has a responsibility to take collective action.

Members consider that more than a decade after the emergence of the concept of R2P, **recent events** - in Sri Lanka, Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and Syria - have **again brought to the fore the importance and the challenges of ensuring timely and decisive responses to the four core crimes covered by the concept**, as well as the need to further operationalise the principle in order to implement it effectively and prevent mass atrocities.

In this context, the report addresses the **following recommendations** to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP), the EEAS, the Commission, the Member States and the Council:

- to reconfirm the EU’s commitment to R2P by adopting an **interinstitutional ‘Consensus on R2P’**;
- to include a chapter in the HR/VP’s **annual report** to Parliament on the CFSP concerning the EU’s actions on conflict prevention and mitigation in applying the R2P principle;
- to integrate the R2P principle in the EU’s **development assistance**;
- to **ensure sufficient** policy planning, operational concepts and capability development goals within the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to enable the Union to fully implement R2P in close international cooperation within the UN and regional organisations;
- to **further develop the EU’s conflict prevention and mitigation capacities** and the creation of an autonomous **European Institute of Peace**;
- to **strengthen linkages between early warning, policy planning and high-level decision-making** in the EEAS and the Council;
- to include a **systematic assessment** of the risk factors of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in regional and country strategy papers, and to include their prevention in dialogues with third countries that are at risk of those crimes and violations;
- to develop **cooperation with and training of the staff of the EU delegations and Member States’ embassies**, as well as of civilian and military missions, in the fields of international human rights, humanitarian law and criminal law;
- to launch and promote an **internal debate within the EU** on the reform of the UN Security Council;
- to insist on respect for the **International Criminal Court (ICC) clause** in agreements with third countries.

In particular, the report encourages the HR/VP and the Council:

- to promote the R2P principle at the UN, and to work towards ensuring its universality;
- to draw lessons, in cooperation with the Member States and our international partners, from the experience of R2P in Libya in 2011 and from the current inability to take action in Syria;
- to propose to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council the adoption of a voluntary code of conduct which would limit the use of the right of veto in cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity;
- to work towards establishing R2P as a **new norm of international law**;
- to work with the UN towards the establishment of a clear link between the implementation of R2P and the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes covered by this concept.

The HR/VP is invited to present to the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs **a concrete plan of action within six months of the adoption of the present Recommendation, on the follow-up of the Parliament's proposals**, notably outlining the steps towards achieving a 'Consensus on R2P'.