

Common foreign and security policy in 2012.

Annual report from the Council to the European Parliament

2013/2081(INI) - 24/10/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 389 votes to 114 with 58 abstentions, a resolution on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Parliament highlighted the fact that the first quarter of the twenty-first century was characterised by a period of prolonged structural change that was transforming the global order which demanded a **fresh approach to shaping a new multi-polar world order that was inclusive** and underpinned by the rule of law and a pluralist democratic model as well as universal values, including human rights. It noted that many obstacles lie ahead, not least in engaging with emerging powers in reforming the multilateral system. The world financial crisis and the growing assertiveness of new emerging economies posed major political, economic, social, cultural and environmental challenges, which required **collective and united EU action**.

Defend the interests of the EU: Parliament considered that the EU must defend its citizens' interests in the world in a determined, unified manner, while always basing its policies on the promotion of the fundamental values on which the Union is founded. In this respect, **EU foreign policy must be flexible** in responding to emerging threats and challenges in many areas. The EU needed not only to be coherent and consistent in its external action, but, also develop a **common vision**. For this reason, Parliament demanded that the instrument of enhanced cooperation be used to secure greater capacity to act, and to overcome the inappropriate use of the veto within the Council. A joint or unified approach should give the EU the strength to pursue its interests and defend its values in the world.

Parliament stressed that the effectiveness of the EU's external action also depends on the full support of its **citizens** and on the legitimacy it acquires by being anchored in the EU's fundamental values of democracy. It called for Parliament to be regularly informed of foreign policy priorities of the Union.

Building a new, comprehensive approach to the EU's foreign policy: Parliament urged Member States to play a constructive role in the Union's foreign and security policy and to improve the Union's effectiveness as a cohesive global actor. The need to develop closer cooperation in order to guarantee military security is stressed.

Overall, Members regretted the fact that the EU had not yet developed a clear strategy for its relations with the rest of the world and that its activities were defined more by reaction than by action. It demanded, therefore, **a fundamental strategic debate, which should include the Council, the Commission and Parliament** and called, as a contribution to this debate, for the European Council in December to further elaborate on the European Global Strategy initiative.

Parliament also stressed that a comprehensive understanding of the CFSP covered all areas of foreign policy, including the progressive framing of the CSDP, which could lead to a common defence.

It called on the Council and the VP/HR to respond to Parliament's recommendation on the 2013 review of the organisation and the functioning of the EEAS in order to ensure the further development of an

appropriate and gender-balanced structure within the EEAS (with the participation of the relevant Commission services), in which geographic and thematic expertise are integrated and drive a **comprehensive approach to policy planning, formulation and implementation**.

Providing leadership and coherence in EU foreign policy: stressing the political leadership role that the VP/HR is expected to play in ensuring the unity, consistency and effectiveness of Union action, Parliament congratulated Lady Ashton on her success in bringing the parties together in the EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. It considered that these examples of leadership should be applied to Central Asia to the Middle East and from the Horn of Africa across the Sahel. It called for a review of the infrastructure distribution and staffing of EU delegations in order to ensure that the Union's efficiency, visibility and representation in third countries reflected the EU's political ambitions and expected priorities. Parliament **regretted the Council's rationale for cutting the multiannual financial framework**, which would reduce the Union's capacity to promote peace, security and sustainable economic development and its credibility in respect of such efforts. It stressed the importance of ensuring that the new external relations financial instruments under consideration by Parliament and the Council were fully funded, tailored to furthering the Union's strategic interests.

Assessing the achievements of the VP/HR and of the Council in 2011: Parliament welcomed the steps taken by the Council, with the VP/HR's support, in the 2011 Annual Report towards mapping out the Union's foreign policy in a forward-looking and strategic policy document. It considered, however, the Council's Annual Report still falls short of the ambitions of the Lisbon Treaty in important ways, and therefore called for the following in future:

- establish clear priorities and strategic guidelines for the CFSP;
- setting out a framework for assessing existing strategic partners and developing new partnerships, including with international and regional organisations;
- setting out a roadmap for making progress on important innovations of the Lisbon Treaty, in particular (1) by making operational the assignment of **special tasks and missions to a core group of Member States**, (2) through the establishment by capable and willing Member States of **permanent structured cooperation in defence**, and (3) by enhancing the role of, and providing more resources for, the **European Defence Agency**;
- addressing acute problems in CSDP decision-making, inter alia in relation to **funding procedures** and the financing of operations, that result in incomprehensible delays between the taking of political decisions to launch a mission and the actual deployment of that mission on the ground (Libya and Mali being the most recent in a long line of examples).

In this respect, Parliament called on the Council to request that the VP/HR set out in the next Annual Report her foreign policy objectives for the years 2014 and 2015, along with the timeframe and necessary resources for their implementation. These priorities should focus on the EU's strategic aims, starting with the transatlantic partnership, the economic and political development of its Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods, and the Middle East Peace Process.

It called on the Council and the VP/HR, when drawing up future Annual Reports on the CFSP, to engage with the Committee on Foreign Affairs at an early stage in order to discuss foreign policy objectives for the coming years. Members also welcomed the initiative of holding a European Council Summit in December 2013. Parliament called for this meeting to deliver a clear roadmap with timelines for achieving key objectives, including, in the first instance, the timely review of the European Security Strategy and the use of a White Book serving as a common template for concurrent national security and defence reviews. It stressed the need to develop closer cooperation in order to guarantee military security and achieve savings.

Strategic priorities: Parliament welcomed the development of 'strategic partnerships' as a format for the EU's engagement with both established and emerging powers. These partnerships should focus on the

USA, Russia, China and Turkey (given the latter's status as a candidate country and its growing international standing as regards providing vital humanitarian assistance to Syrians fleeing violence – although the most important reforms have yet to be carried out in Turkey.)

Parliament considered that **enlargement remains an important tool of EU foreign policy** and was in the EU's long-term strategic interest. However, it stressed that enlargement policy needs to take into account the EU's own integration capacity and the genuine commitment of the Western Balkan countries and of Turkey to take up their responsibilities and address outstanding concerns.

Parliament stressed that the EU needed to put further effort into, place a higher priority on, and show greater commitment to, the **European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)** at a time when this policy was in difficulty. It called for the principles underlying the new ENP approach, as set out by the VP/HR and the Commission in the relevant joint communications, in particular the 'more-for-more', differentiation and mutual accountability principles and the 'partnership with society', to be fully operational and for Union assistance to be fully aligned to this new approach. As regards the Southern Neighbourhood, Members called for further actions with the Arab Spring countries.

Parliament regretted the fact that the EU gave up its common policy of an arms embargo on Syria, thereby undermining a common approach on the matter. It invited the Member States to show **solidarity and to provide help to refugees from Syria** and displaced persons within Syria.

Parliament also made a number of recommendations with a view to strengthening the EU's position in South Africa, Latin America, Asia and Afghanistan. It called for the EU to have a greater presence in the Asia-Pacific region, with a focus beyond China, India and Japan, and extending particularly to Indonesia and the Philippines.

It called on the EU and the Member States to reconfirm the EU's commitment to advancing effective multilateralism, with the UN system at its core and called on the VP/HR to take stock of the effectiveness of the **EU's Strategy Against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction** and its policies for tackling conventional weapons, including arms exports. Lastly, Parliament reiterated its call for the EU to play a more active role in the resolution of the Western Sahara conflict, which currently represented an insurmountable obstacle to the full development of good-neighbourly relations in the Maghreb.