Implementation of the common security and defence policy

2013/2105(INI) - 21/11/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 421 votes to 104, with 80 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), based on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Parliament welcomed the prospect of a summit on security and defence at the December 2013 European Council and believed that the time had come for Member States to show the **political will** needed for making the EU a relevant global actor and security provider with real strategic autonomy. A change of mindset on the part of Member States was required in order to anchor a European approach to a committed and effective security and defence policy. Parliament also welcomed the report by the HR/VP of 15 October 2013 but deplored the fact that it did not propose more in the way of measures aimed specifically at remedying the shortcomings of the CSDP.

It looked forward to **substantive decisions being taken at the December Summit** and put forward its own recommendations, the main points are as follows:

- Unleashing the potential of the treaties: noting that the Lisbon Treaty introduced several new instruments in the area of the CSDP which have not yet been put into practice, Parliament stressed the possibility of entrusting CSDP instruments and military planning and conduct capabilities to a group of Member States. A **start-up fund** was called for by the Members for preparatory activities for missions which are not charged to the Union budget.

- First cluster: increase the effectiveness, visibility and impact of the CSDP: Parliament stated that although elements of the 2003 European Security Strategy remain valid, the EU needed to complement this strategy by redefining its strategic interests, with a greater emphasis on the **protection of its citizens, the defence of critical infrastructures and its neighbourhood.** It noted with concern that the number and timeliness of CSDP missions and operations, and the development of civilian and especially military means and capabilities for the CSDP, **fall short of what is required, given the EU's increasingly unstable neighbourhood.** It deplored, in particular, the limited overall scope of the CSDP missions related to the crises in Libya and Mali and regretted the lack of flexibility within the Union's decision-making procedures which accounted for delayed effective responses in crisis scenarios.

- **White Paper**: Parliament asked the European Council to launch a debate on the appropriate strategic framework for the Union, and to mandate the VP/HR to come forward with proposals in this respect before the end of 2014. The review of the EU strategic framework should form the basis for a White Paper on EU security and defence policy and the European Council could set the necessary process in motion.
- **National strategies**: EU Member States were asked to give serious consideration to the European dimension in their national security strategies, White Papers and decision-making in the field of defence. Member called on the VP/HR to develop a common template for the shaping of concurrent national reviews.
- **Permanent headquarters**: Parliament highlighted the fact that successful military operations required a clear command and control function, and reiterated the call for the **establishment of a permanent military operational headquarters**, noting with regret the lack of progress on this

issue and the strong resistance by some Member States. Furthermore, it stressed that these headquarters should **include cells for intelligence gathering and for early warning/situational awareness**.

- **Battlegroups**: noting the fact that EU battlegroups had never yet been deployed, Parliament underlined the fact that EU battlegroups should be deployable for all types of crises, including climate-driven humanitarian crisis. It is convinced that the EU should dispose of **high-readiness standing battle forces, with land, air, naval, cyber and special forces components and a high level of ambition**. Parliament confirmed that the existing financial system of 'costs lie where they fall' constitutes a serious problem for the CSDP, leading to delays or complete blockages in decision-making, notably on the quick deployment of battlegroups. It recommended that **Member States agree on an EU financing mechanism** based on burden-sharing for the use of battlegroups under the EU flag, in order to give them a realistic future. It also called for the EEAS to be given control over the financial instruments linked to the crisis management measures that it plans and carries out.
- **NATO**: Parliament called for stronger cooperation between the EU and NATO structures through a complementary approach and closer coordination in order to help avoid duplication between the two partners and to effectively tackle the new threats.

- Second cluster: enhance the development of defence capabilities: Parliament stressed that further cuts in national defence budgets would make it impossible to maintain critical military capabilities and will result in the irreversible loss of know-how and technologies, but considered that **the problem is less of a budgetary nature than of a political one**. It stressed the opportunity for Member States to enjoy the full benefits of working closer together to generate military efficiency and to optimise scarce resources by creating synergies and by a coordinated reduction of unnecessary duplication, redundant and obsolete capabilities.

Members wanted the **European Defence Agency** (EDA) to be given a stronger role in coordinating capabilities, with a view to ending duplication and the existence of parallel programmes in the Member States.

Parliament expects the upcoming Defence Summit in December to consider launching development work on a **Military Headline Goal 2025, possibly complemented by an Industrial Headline Goal**.

- Third cluster: strengthen Europe's defence industry: Parliament reiterated the need for a strong and less fragmented European defence industry that was **capable of enhancing the EU's strategic autonomy,** and called on the European Council to mandate the EDA to prepare a roadmap for the development of defence industrial standards, and on Member States to streamline European certification procedures with the mutual recognition of certificates.

Lastly, Parliament expressed high hopes that this European Council **would not be an isolated event**, but rather would be the starting point of a continuous process that revisited security and defence matters at European Council level on a regular basis. It favoured the establishment of a roadmap with specific benchmarks and timelines, and a reporting mechanism. It also advocated the creation of a Council of Defence Ministers in the medium term.