

Resolution on preparations for the European Council meeting (19-20 December 2013)

2013/2626(RSP) - 12/12/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 423 votes to 135 with 15 abstentions, a resolution on preparations for the European Council meeting (19-20 December 2013). The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, and ALDE groups.

On the Banking Union: noting that the restoration of financial credibility needs to be completed by a true Banking Union, Parliament insisted that the ‘**Community method**’ was the appropriate approach for dealing with the regulation of financial services and the Banking Union. It reminded the European Council that the **Single Resolution Mechanism** should be agreed before the end of the current legislative term, and that the negotiations on the **Deposit Guarantee Directive** and the **recovery and resolution framework** be concluded successfully before the end of 2013.

On deepening EMU: since better economic policy coordination was needed in order to enhance competitiveness, and job creation in the EU, Parliament called on the European Council to make a **political commitment with regard to legislative preparation of better economic policy coordination**, with Parliament agreeing the key features before the end of the current legislative term.

Furthermore, it called for the following:

- a legal act on ‘convergence guidelines’ be adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure, laying down, for a set period, a very limited number of targets for the most urgent reform measures;
- Member States to ensure that the national reform programmes, which should be established on the basis of the aforementioned convergence guidelines and verified by the Commission, to be discussed and adopted by their national parliaments;
- Member States to commit themselves to fully implementing their national reform programmes, as verified, and entering into a ‘convergence partnership’ with the EU institutions, with the possibility of conditional funding for reform activities;
- any additional funding or instruments, such as a solidarity mechanism, to be an integral part of the EU budget, but outside the agreed multiannual financial framework (MFF) ceilings;

On defence policy: in a rapidly changing and volatile geostrategic environment marked by the US rebalancing towards the Asia-Pacific region, Parliament felt that the EU needed to assume its responsibility as a global political player and a credible security provider, particularly in its neighbourhood. The only way for the heads of state and government to address these geopolitical trends and the uncoordinated decline in defence spending was to **accelerate the coordination of defence cooperation**.

Members called on the European Council to implement the suggestions made in Parliament’s reports on the [Common Foreign and Security Policy](#), [the Common Security and Defence Policy](#) (CSDP) and the [European Defence Technological and Industrial Base](#) (EDTIB).

They underlined the fact that the **Lisbon Treaty introduced several new instruments** relating to the CSDP, such as permanent structured cooperation among Member States, the start-up fund and the possibility of entrusting CSDP missions and operations in particular to that group of Member States. These had not been put into practice, and Parliament called on the Council to take full advantage of these instruments. It stated its support for the **creation of a Council of Defence Ministers** to give defence the weight it deserves.

Parliament highlighted the need for the following:

- the importance of **launching a process of strategic reflection** with a view to defining EU objectives and priorities and setting out a roadmap, with timelines, for deeper defence cooperation (a White Book that would serve as a framework to reflect on national processes);
- **support for a robust EDTIB** which could overcome the fragmentation, and enhance the creativity and strength, of European industries through closer coordination of the planning of national defence budgets (potentially through the setting-up of a 'European Semester' for defence issues) and closer coordination at the industry level (harmonisation of standards and certification of defence equipment);
- **enhanced cooperation in the field of armament**, notably by empowering the European Defence Agency to play its full role in promoting coordination, and prioritising investment in technologies (including strategic enablers such as air-to-air refuelling, satellite communication, strategic airlift, remotely piloted air systems, cyber defence and the Single European Sky), agreeing on the greater use of coalitions of the willing / core groups, and finding a workable solution for the use of Battlegroups;
- **further incentives and support for the defence industry**, with a commitment to the development of key defence technologies and systems (tax incentives, financial support for research and development, and the institutionalisation of synergies between civilian and military capabilities);
- significantly deeper cooperation between Member States and coordination on those aspects of defence which are relevant for an effective CSDP, with a much more **ambitious pooling and sharing process**;

Members emphasised that the EU's strength, as compared with other organisations, lies in its unique potential to mobilise the full range of political, economic, development and humanitarian instruments under the roof of a single political authority – the VP/HR – and that this comprehensive approach, **whether through its 'soft power' or through more robust actions**, gave it unique and widely appreciated flexibility and efficiency.

Lastly, Members stated that they were deeply concerned about the political situation in **Ukraine** in the aftermath of the Vilnius Summit and called on the Council to address it.