Resolution on the use of armed drones

2014/2567(RSP) - 27/02/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 534 votes to 49 with 10 abstentions a resolution on the use of armed drones.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA, and GUE/NGL groups. It expressed its grave concern over the use of armed drones outside the international legal framework, and urged the EU to develop an appropriate policy response at both European and global level which upheld human rights and international humanitarian law. Members noted the use of remotely piloted aircraft systems (‘drones’) in extraterritorial lethal operations had increased steeply over the past decade, and that unknown numbers of civilians had been killed, or seriously injured. Parliament was clear that drone strikes outside a declared war by a state on the territory of another state without the consent of the latter or of the UN Security Council constituted a **violation of international law** and of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of that country. Furthermore, international law did not permit the targeted killing of persons who were located in non-belligerent states.

Parliament called on the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Member States and the Council to:

- oppose and ban the practice of **extrajudicial targeted killings**;
- ensure that the Member States, in conformity with their legal obligations, do not perpetrate unlawful targeted killings or facilitate such killings by other states;
- include armed drones in relevant European and international disarmament and arms control regimes;
- ban the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention;
- commit to ensuring that, where there are reasonable grounds for believing that an individual or entity within their jurisdiction may be connected to an unlawful targeted killing abroad, measures are taken in accordance with their domestic and international legal obligations;
- support the work and follow up on the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism;

Furthermore, the Council was urged to adopt an **EU common position** on the use of armed drones.

Members noted that seven Member States (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain) had signed a **letter of intent with the European Defence Agency (EDA**) tasking it to draw up a study on joint production of Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) craft, which could be used to strike military targets or for surveillance of migrant boats in the Mediterranean Sea, thus starting work on a European drone.

Lastly, recalling that any expenditure arising from operations having military or defence implications is excluded from EU budget funding, Parliament asked the Commission to keep Parliament properly

informed about the **use of EU funds for all research and development projects associated with the construction of drones** and for human rights impact assessments in respect of further drone development projects.