Annual report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament

2014/2219(INI) - 03/03/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Elmar BROK (EPP, DE) on the Annual Report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament.

The report pointed to the **dramatically aggravated security environment around the EU**, especially in its immediate neighbourhood, where the international law-based order and stability and security of Europe were challenged to a degree unprecedented since the beginning of European integration.

Due to its internal crisis, the **EU had so far not been able to use its full potential** to shape the international political and security environment, and a lack of policy coordination and coherence between EU policies, and financial limitations, posed additional restraints on Europe's influence in the world.

The report contained the following principal recommendations:

The EU as a credible actor: Members believed that an ambitious and effective EU foreign policy needed to be based on a **shared vision** of key European interests, values and objectives in external relations and on a common perception of the threats affecting the EU as a whole.

The **political, economic, financial and defence resources** of the EU and its Member States must be strengthened and combined in order to maximise the EU's influence in the world, produce synergies and ensure peace and stability in Europe and its neighbourhood.

Members took the view that the Council and the Commission, with the active cooperation of the Member States, need to **ensure the coherence and consistency of internal and external policies pursued by the EU,** including the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the policies relating to neighbourhood, trade, development, humanitarian aid, justice and home affairs, energy, the environment, and migration.

The report called for

- **enhanced cooperation and coordination** between the different EU-level monitoring and crisis response capacities;
- exploring means to improve external policy coherence, notably in relation to **human rights and international law;**
- promoting the creation of a **European Defence Technological and Industrial Base** (EDTIB), by fostering cooperation concerning the development of defence capabilities,
- better coordination of efforts to respond to **terrorist attacks** in the EU by stepping up the sharing of security-related intelligence.

Preserving and strengthening the European political and legal order: the report underlined the need to consolidate the EU and to strengthen its integration capacity. It took the view that an **overarching political strategy** was needed aimed at restoring the European political order under international law binding all European states, including Russia.

Supporting those countries that wanted to draw closer to the EU must be a top priority for EU foreign policy and an important response for containing Russia's ambitions in its neighbourhood was to invest in the independence, sovereignty, economic development and further democratisation of these countries.

Strongly condemning the fact that Russia had broken international law through its direct military aggression and hybrid war against Ukraine, Members called on the HR/VP to develop, as a matter of priority, a **common EU strategy on Russia**, aimed at securing a commitment from Russia on peace and stability in Europe including unconditional respect for its neighbours' sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Supporting security and stabilisation in the southern neighbourhood: the Union needed substantially to revise the EU´s policy towards its southern neighbourhood. Members stressed the need for a **comprehensive strategy** focusing the EU's instruments and resources on support for the building of functioning and inclusive states capable of delivering security for their citizens, promoting democracy, **confronting religious extremism, and respecting human rights**.

The EU leadership was urged to develop, in close coordination with the US and involving major powers (e. g. Russia and China), a strategy encouraging regional actors (including Turkey, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, the Gulf Cooperation Council governments, Iran, the Arab League and Kurdish forces) to unite in order to put an end to proxy wars and halt financial support for fundamentalists, and to develop a solution for peace and stability in the region particularly with a view to ending the war in Syria and Iraq.

Strengthening a cooperative, rule-based global order: Members believed that **EU-NATO cooperation** should be strengthened and closer planning and coordination undertaken between NATO's smart defence and the EU's pooling and sharing, in order to avoid duplication and make best use of the scarce resources available. They underlined the need for an **EU strategy**, in coordination with the US, on how to share with Russia, China, India and other major powers the responsibility for the peace and stability of the global political and economic order.

The report reasserted the need for a reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), for the latter to better reflect today´s global realities. It stressed, in this respect, that the EU should become a full member of the UN.