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

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The European Parliament adopted by 436 votes to 145 with 64 abstentions, a resolution on the Annual Report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament.

Parliament 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.

In this context, the priority tasks for EU foreign and security policy should be:

- **protecting European values and interests** and enforcing the political and legal order in Europe, thereby restoring and safeguarding peace and stability;
- improving the **EU's contribution to the territorial defence of its Member States** and the security of its citizens by strengthening its ability to defend itself against the threats facing it, including terrorism and arms, drug and human trafficking;
- supporting **security, democratisation, the rule of law and economic and social development** in the EU's neighbourhood;
- taking a **leading role in the resolution of conflicts**, including through peacekeeping and peace enforcement in the context of CSDP;
- strengthening, together with its partners, the **rules-based, pluralistic global political, economic and financial order**, including respect for the rule of law and human rights; and
- **improving the EU's internal structures** and working methods in order to strengthen its resilience and allow it to unleash its full potential as a global player.

The resolution 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. Parliament welcomed the commitment of the HR/VP, to initiate as a matter of priority a process of strategic reflection on the EU's foreign and security policy, which should lead to a **new European Security Strategy.**

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.

Parliament particularly called for:

- reform of the internal structures of the EEAS so as to enable it to assist the HR/VP in all her roles;
- **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;**
- strengthening the **European Defence Technological and Industrial Base**, inter alia by coordinating defence budgets, harmonising requirements, reducing inefficiencies and creating synergies;
- developing the industrial and technological resources needed to improve **cybersecurity;**
- a renewed and coherent EU **migration policy**;
- building a **European Energy Union** with a solidarity mechanism in order to deal with possible energy disruptions;
- 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: underlining the need to consolidate the EU and to strengthen its integration capacity, Parliament 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. It recommended a new approach to the EU's relations with its eastern neighbours, based on merits.

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, Parliament 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.

The comprehensive agreement in Minsk on 12th February 2015 must be immediately implemented and sanctions strengthened should Russia continue to fail to meet its international obligations.

Supporting security and stabilisation in the southern neighbourhood: Parliament 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**.

In view of the threat posed by **terrorist jihadists groups** engaged in and associated with the so-called Islamic State (IS) to the wider Middle East and North Africa region, to Europe, and potentially to global peace and stability, Parliament **supported the global coalition against** IS and its efforts to combat IS militarily. It urged the stepping-up of resolute global regulatory pressure to deprive jihadists of oil revenues and pointed to the urgent need to counter jihadist groups' use of the internet for recruitment and propaganda.

Strengthening a cooperative, rule-based global order: stating that the US was the EU's key strategic partner, 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.

They also called for the development of a coherent climate security strategy at EU level.

Lastly, Parliament 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.