Implementation of the common security and defence policy (based on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the common foreign and security policy)

2014/2220(INI) - 21/05/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 361 votes to 236, with 54 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (based on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy - CFSP).

Adapting to emerging security challenges: Parliament considered that the threats such as the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, with the rise of the ISIS terrorist organisation, the Libyan crisis and the terrorist threat in Africa (in particular in the Sahel, Libya and the Horn of Africa) are **direct threats to the Union's security**.

Stressing that the **current level of instability** at the EU's borders and in its immediate neighbourhood was unprecedented since the late 1990s, Parliament was concerned that the Union might not jointly be able to be **a key player** in addressing each of these threats and that it might all too often be reduced to relying on the initiatives of one or a few Member States, or on ad hoc alliances in which it had only a peripheral or reserve role to play.

The Union and its Member States **must, as a matter of the utmost urgency, adapt to the new security challenges,** in particular by:

- **making effective use of the existing CSDP tools**, including by linking these better to the EU's foreign affairs tools, humanitarian assistance, and development policy;
- **coordinating national actions and pooling resources** more closely and, where appropriate;
- introducing in a pragmatic and flexible manner **new arrangements** for the expression of European solidarity.

Parliament found regrettable, especially with regard to the increasing external instabilities, the fact that the injection of political stimulus by the European Council in 2013 did not lead to enhanced cooperation and the substantial and rapid implementation of practical measures.

It considered that the upcoming **European Council meeting in June 2015 on defence** should take decisions that will lead to the improvement of the capacity of the Union and the Member States as regards territorial defence, in total complementarity with NATO as well as their ability to:

- respond to internal security challenges;
- develop the deployable capabilities needed to ensure a meaningful contribution by the EU to crisis management;
- strengthen the European Defence Agency and the European Defence and Industrial Base;
- initiate the elaboration of a comprehensive security concept that will integrate the internal and external dimensions of security.

The June 2015 European Council meeting must **encourage recalcitrant Member States** to invest more resources in defence, and that it must also focus its efforts on those area of crisis management in which the EU can genuinely add value.

CSDP missions and operations: Parliament was concerned that the most recent civilian and military operations under the CSDP had continued to be dogged by **structural shortfalls, which had been evident for several years**, namely (i) inefficiency as regards immediate reactions to civilian and military actions, (ii) lengthy and inflexible decision-making processes, (iii) the need for greater solidarity among Member States in funding missions, (iv) mission mandates which were unsuited to the operational environment, (v) the problem of 'force generation', and (vi) logistical and financial inertia.

Members welcomed the Council's intention to **initiate a process of strategic reflection on the challenges and opportunities** for the foreign and security policy. They called, furthermore, on the VP /HR to initiate a wide-reaching process to develop **an even more ambitious white paper** on European security and defence in order to streamline the EU's strategic ambitions and capability development processes

The resolution underlined the importance of **achieving a common level of cybersecurity** among the Member States and called furthermore, for a coherent European strategy to secure critical (digital) infrastructure against cyber attacks, while also protecting and promoting citizens' digital rights and freedoms.

Capabilities: the **reduction in national defence budgets** due to the effects of the 2008 economic and financial crisis took place without coordination between the Member States, thus **jeopardising the Union' s strategic autonomy**.

Parliament stressed the importance of:

- upfront planning on strategic investment in the purchase and renovation of equipment among Member States;
- developing the EU institutional framework – both civilian and military –in order to implement the European Maritime Security Strategy;
- continuing to implement the European Defense Agency (EDA)'s code of conduct on pooling and sharing equipment, ensuring the strict avoidance of duplication of initiatives already underway elsewhere and for greater attention to be paid to the identification of ways in which real value could be added;
- putting in place EU-level tax incentives for cooperation and pooling;
- ensuring that such space services, particularly Copernicus, were put on an operational footing to help meet the high-resolution satellite imaging needs of CSDP missions and operations.

The Union should encourage Member States to meet NATO capacity targets, which require a **minimum level of defence spending of 2 % of GDP and a minimum 20 % share of the defence budget** for major equipment needs, including for research and development.

The defence industry: Members believed that all the measures in question depend on the **prior joint determination of what falls within the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base** (EDTIB) so that potential beneficiary companies or strategic activities can be targeted, with due regard for the capacity differences between the Member States' defence industries.

This definition could be based on a **number of criteria**, such as (i) the development within the EU of equipment and technology, (ii) control by companies of the property and utilisation rights for the equipment and technology they develop, and (iii) the assurance in the event of foreign ownership that

foreign owners do not have excessive voting rights, which would jeopardise control by companies over their activities.

Members also pointed out that Union programmes in other areas such as **internal and border security, disaster management and development** offer a significant prospect of jointly developing capabilities relevant to those policies and to the conduct of CSDP missions.

The Commission was asked to clearly identify and **mobilise EU financial means and instruments** aimed at assisting in the establishment of a European Common Defence Industry Market.