Resolution on the mutual defence clause (Article 42(7) TEU)

2015/3034(RSP) - 21/01/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 448 to 181, with 36 abstentions, a resolution on the mutual defence clause (Article 42(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D and ALDE groups.

Parliament condemned in the strongest terms the horrifying terrorist attacks perpetrated by Daesh on 13 November 2015 in Paris, following which the French Government officially invoked the **mutual defence clause** of Article 42(7) TEU.

It took note of France's role as a catalyst in the common endeavour to combat terrorism and encouraged the competent EU institutions to **provide and sustain their support as necessary**.

Political debate: recalling that the mutual defence clause was invoked for the first time, Members considered that the current case must **serve as a catalyst** for in-depth political discussions on the multidimensional nature of European security and defence.

Invoking the mutual defence and solidarity clauses under the Treaties is first and foremost a political matter, the resolution underlined the fact that, when these clauses are invoked, both the **European Council and the European Parliament** are the place for the political debate.

Practical arrangements and guidelines: anxious to encourage the continued development of the mutual defence clause and strengthening the role of the relevant institutions of the Union as facilitators, Parliament recalled its invitation to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to propose practical arrangements and guidelines for ensuring an effective response in the event that a Member State invokes the mutual defence clause, as well as an analysis of the role of the EU institutions should that clause be invoked.

Policy framework: Parliament called on the Council and the Member States to urgently develop and adopt a policy framework which helps to guide the implementation of Article 42(7) TEU and contains a **time frame, a review clause and monitoring mechanisms**. It noted that the solidarity clause in Article 222 TFEU would make it possible to put all relevant EU means at the disposal of France and other Member States directly engaged in the fight against terrorism.

Civil-military headquarters: Members are convinced that the EU needs a **permanent civil-military headquarters** at strategic and operational levels, and that this structure should be tasked with strategic and operational contingency planning, including for collective defence as provided for by Articles 42(7) and 42(2) TEU and the future application thereof in close cooperation with relevant NATO structures.

Parliament insisted on the need to:

- take measures to control the movement of weapons, explosives and terrorist suspects;
- set up **structured information-sharing and operational cooperation** between border management, police and other law enforcement agencies, as well as **intelligence-sharing** by

interconnecting national databases and fully exploiting existing frameworks such as Europol's secure information and intelligence platform (SIENA) and by maximising the use of other Europol platforms and services;

- put in place a **comprehensive approach towards de-radicalisation**, including efforts at national level directed towards young people, the prevention of violent extremism, and counter-terrorism which focuses on strengthening social cohesion, crime prevention, targeted policing and security activities based on an individual suspicion or concrete threat determined by people, not machines;
- **tighten up rules** on the acquisition and possession of weapons, export rules and the fight against the illegal trafficking of weapons.

Parliament called on all European countries to continue to offer every support in the fight against terrorism and to take a **rigorous approach** at home and abroad. It also called for an EU common foreign policy on the **future of Syria and the broader Middle East**.