EU in a changing global environment - a more connected, contested and complex world

2015/2272(INI) - 29/03/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Sandra Kalniete (EPP, LV) on the EU in a changing global environment – a more connected, contested and complex world.

Members noted that the **EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy** must define a political level of ambition for the EU as an international actor. They stressed that the EU must recognise the **full extent of the deterioration in its immediate strategic environment**, and the long-term consequences thereof. The fact that multiple crises were occurring simultaneously within the Union meant that no Member State could respond alone and that Europeans should exercise their responsibilities collectively to ensure their security.

Defend the European Union's people, and its states, societies and values: the committee considered that the EU and its Member States should rely less on the United States, especially in Europe's neighbourhood, and **step up their defence capabilities**, in order to be prepared to respond to the broad spectrum of civilian, military and hybrid threats and risks. The Union was urged to:

- enhance cooperation on defence research, the industrial base and cyber defence through pooling and sharing and other cooperative projects;
- launch an EU-funded defence research and technology programme in the next multiannual financial framework (MFF);
- strengthen the role of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and increase its resources;
- strengthen EU-Nato cooperation.

Member States should:

- commit to using at least 2 % of their GDP for defence expenditure by 2024 in order to attain the necessary and adequate civilian and military capabilities to implement the objectives of the CFSP /CSDP;
- take more responsibility for building urgently needed European capabilities, increase their military research expenditure through the EDA and strengthen the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base and the European Defence Market.
- ensure European intelligence exchanges are improved and a true European intelligence and forecasting capacity developed.

Stabilise Europe's wider neighbourhood: Members felt that the EU should take greater responsibility on filling the security vacuum in its wider neighbourhood, and should be more engaged in de-escalatory diplomacy, especially in the Southern Neighbourhood. They also felt that the current refugee crisis demanded urgent concerted action, and called for a long-term strategy on asylum, migration and readmission policies involving the reinforcement of the Schengen system, the European Border and Coast Guard and FRONTEX.

Strengthen multilateral global governance: the EU should aspire to be a 'rule-maker', contributing to efficient multilateral global governance with the aim of strengthening democracy, good governance, the rule of law and human rights. The report stressed that the EU should:

- develop synergies between security, development, trade, human rights, democracy promotion activities and EU external action;
- establish closer relationships with non-state actors, local and regional governments and civil society, ensuring a comprehensive approach to global challenges;
- promote free and fair trade and investment, secure trade channels and increased market access throughout the world, and safeguard the stability of the global financial system by promoting high standards of regulation and governance;
- ensure that EU development policy is an essential part of the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy;

Members called for a clear link between the EU Global Strategy and the structure and priorities of the EU budget, including enhanced own resources, in order to allocate the necessary resources for its implementation.

Engage – the EU, national parliaments and European citizens: Members felt that Parliament should play a key role in the regular, detailed monitoring of the external action of the EU institutions and considered that the national parliaments could be more closely involved in this monitoring exercise. European policy-makers should also engage with citizens, civil society, industry, and local and regional authorities. The report stressed that the Global Strategy should be revised every five years, with the new European Parliament and the new Commission.