

Implementation of the common foreign and security policy

2016/2036(INI) - 30/11/2016 - 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 on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Members noted that the European Union faces unprecedented internal and external challenges, and is now surrounded by an **arc of instability**, as large parts of the Middle East and North Africa are engulfed in ethno-religious conflicts and proxy wars. These conflicts have direct and serious consequences for the security and well-being of EU citizens as they increasingly spill over into the EU, be it in the form of terrorism, massive refugee flows, or disinformation campaigns aimed at dividing our societies.

Continuing the EU's success story: noting that the EU is one of the greatest achievements in European history, Members welcomed the roadmap and the commitments of the Bratislava summit of 16 September 2016, but felt that the **current challenges demand reform**. Member States must change their mentality since nowadays thinking about foreign policy and security in a narrow minded national perspective is obsolete. The committee was convinced that no single Member State alone could tackle any of the challenges alone. It urged Member States to finally show **sufficient levels of unity, political will and trust in one another** to make it possible to use the tools at hand in a concerted manner. In this respect, it called for an effective implementation of the **EU Global Strategy** presented by the VP/HR in June 2016, including the appropriate human and financial resources to be allocated by Member States. In addition, Members called on the VP/HR to devise an implementation plan on security and defence, complemented by a White Book process, in order to deliver first results in 2017.

The resolution suggested that EU external action should be based on three pillars: diplomacy, development and defence.

Taking responsibility for security: noting that since **power politics** is again dominating international relations, and defence and deterrence capabilities are critical for leverage in diplomatic talks, Members emphasised that the **EU must strengthen its security and defence capabilities**. In view of an already underfinanced EU budget, they felt that additional efforts for operations, administrative costs, preparatory actions and pilot projects under the Common Security and Defence Policy, **additional funding from Member States**, as well as efforts to enhance synergies, are also needed. They called on the Commission and the Member States to seize the opportunity of the current revision of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) to address the budgetary needs for the growing security challenges.

Furthermore, the instruments provided by the Treaty of Lisbon must finally be implemented, **notably Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**. Members called on the VP/HR to take the lead on this initiative, as well as on other recent proposals, including the following:

- the creation of a **permanent civilian and military headquarter**, with an equally important Military Planning and Conduct Capability and Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability;
- enhancing the EU's rapid reaction tools, notably by further improving the usability of battlegroups ;
- extending the common financing of CSDP operations, including through an urgent review of the Athena mechanism ;
- setting up a Defence configuration of the Council.

Russia: taking the view that it is time to define a new, more realistic strategy for the EU's relations with Russia, Members underlined at the same time the importance of investing more into Russian civil society. They felt that sanctions have proven to be an effective means of deterring further Russian aggression in Ukraine, and insisted that the EU should keep open the option of further gradual sanctions, in particular against high-technology products in the oil and gas, IT and armaments sectors, if Russia continues to violate international law.

ENI: noting that the revised European Neighbourhood Instrument has not lived up to its goals, especially when it comes to the 'more for more' principle, Members encouraged consideration of the policy of less for less with regard to those countries which go into reverse in terms of governance, democracy, and human rights.

Building resilience: Members took the view that it is necessary to tackle the root causes of instability and forced and irregular migration, namely poverty, the lack of economic opportunities, armed conflict, bad governance, climate change, human rights abuses, inequality and trade policies which do not address these challenges.

On Syria, they highlighted the importance of finding a sustainable solution to the conflict in line with the transition process set out in the Geneva Communiqué and UNSC resolution 2254 (2015), noting that the bilateral negotiations between Russia and the United States will not be sufficient to bring about a sustainable response to the Syrian crisis. In addition, the committee made recommendations on West Africa and the Sahel, Turkey and the Middle East.

European diplomacy: Members urged the EU to show political leadership in preventive diplomacy and conflict mediation, and welcomed in this regard the role of the EU Conflict Early Warning System, the EEAS Mediation Support Team and the European Institute of Peace.

Lastly, they regretted **the limited budget** of around EUR 320 million (0.2 % of the EU budget) for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), stressing that the budget allocations decided for 2016 remain at the same level as 2015 and that the margin available at the end of March was EUR 170 million. They expressed concern at the shortage of resources available in view of the commitments that will have to be met throughout 2016.

In a minority report, 4 GUE/NGL Members tabled objections to the report, stating it fostered further EU-militarization, stronger EU-NATO cooperation, and the merger of internal and external security.