Constitutional, legal and institutional implications of a common security and defence policy: possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted an own-initiative report prepared by Esteban GONZÁLEZ PONS (EPP, DE) and Michael GAHLER (EPP, DE) on constitutional, legal and institutional implications of a common security and defence policy: possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty.

Constitutional and legal framework: Members considered that the reform and innovation that the Lisbon Treaty brings to the CSDP constitute a **sufficient and coherent framework** and should set the path for a truly common policy, based on shared resources and capabilities as well as on coordinated planning at Union level.

Members considered that the **European Defence Agency (EDA) and permanent structured cooperation (PESCO)** should be treated as Union institutions *sui generis*, as is the case with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and that they should be **financed with a specific section in the Union budget**. They called for the reinforcement of the EDA's political backing, funding and resources, as well as of its coordination with the actions of the Commission, the Member States and other actors, especially in the areas of capability development and defence procurement.

Parliament should, jointly with the Council, **exercise legislative and budgetary functions**, as well as functions of political control and consultation as laid down in the Treaties.

The views of Parliament should be duly taken into consideration in the framework of the consultation of Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the CSDP as part of the CFSP.

Members highlighted the continued need for the establishment of a **Council format of Defence Ministers** under the presidency of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in order to coordinate the implementation of the CSDP and make it more efficient.

They encouraged Member States to establish and **join PESCO** within the Union framework as soon as possible and that a permanent "European Integrated Force" (EIF) should be set-up as a multinational force.

Moreover, the **EU Battlegroup system** should be brought under PESCO, alongside the creation of a permanent civilian and military headquarter. This would strengthen strategic and operational planning across the entire planning cycle, enhance civil-military cooperation and improve the EU's ability to react speedily to crises.

Members called for a closer relationship between the **CSDP and NATO**, which offers a political opportunity for collaboration and complementarity at every level.

The European added value of the CSDP: convinced that the security and defence threats faced by the EU, and directed at its citizens and territory, are common and cannot be addressed by a Member State alone, Members called on the EU to develop an **effective system for European burden-sharing** for its own security and defence.

Members considered it essential to **increase national defence expenditure to 2 % of EU GDP**, this would mean extra expenditure of nearly EUR 100 billion on defence by the end of the coming decade.

A substantial part of that expenditure should be channelled to research and development, as well as to strategic cooperative programmes, focusing on new dual-use and defence technologies.

Political recommendations: the report supported the proposal for a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence and called on the Council and the VP/HR to elaborate an **EU white book** on security and defence that includes an appropriate definition of the threats and dangers to European security faced by the EU. The adoption of this white book should drive the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy.

Members called for the immediate reform of the **Athena mechanism** in view of enlarging its potential for cost sharing and common funding, as well as of ensuring a fair sharing of operational costs.

Lastly, the report underlined the need for deeper discussions on the future relation between the Union and the United Kingdom in CSDP matters, and in particular in the field of military capabilities, should the UK decide to trigger Article 50 TEU.