Annual report on the implementation of the common security and defence policy

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Michael GAHLER (EPP, DE) on the annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy.

The report stressed that **no single Member State can tackle the complex security challenges** the EU faces - inter-state conflicts, natural disasters, extreme weather events, water shortages, state collapse, proliferation of criminal organisations, terrorism, cyberattacks - and that the EU must step up its efforts to establish concrete cooperation within the framework of the CFSP/CSDP and to act effectively as a global player, which implies speaking with one voice and acting together, but also focus its resources on strategic priorities.

Institutional framework: the report stressed that the Union needs to use the **full range of policy instruments available** - diplomacy, development cooperation, civilian and economic instruments, crisis prevention and post-conflict strategies, peacekeeping and peace-enforcing - in order to cope with the rising challenges.

Members welcomed the progress made in developing a stronger European defence stance since the adoption of the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) in June 2016. They in particular, congratulated the **launch of the European Defence Fund**. They urged the HR/VP and the Commission to act on Parliament's calls for an **EU Security and Defence White Book** in the context of preparing the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

Members are in favour of:

- urgently installing the **start-up fund** as foreseen by the Treaty in order to allow fast deployment of operations;
- establishing **permanent structured cooperation** (PESCO) on those military aspects that are necessary to implement CSDP tasks such as permanently pooled military units;
- making **pooling and sharing of capabilities** the rule and not the exception;
- **pooling national resources** with regard to research, development, procurement, maintenance and training;
- **coordinating national defence planning** (Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, CARD) as currently planned;
- initiating **common rules for military certification** and a common policy on security of supply.

All possibilities provided for in the Treaty would improve the competitiveness and functioning of the defence industry within the single market should be used. Parliament should turn its Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) into a fully-fledged parliamentary committee.

Permanent structured cooperation: Members considered that the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) should develop within the EU framework and that it should benefit from effective Union support, in full respect of Member States' competences in defence. They renewed their call for **appropriate PESCO funding** to be provided from the Union budget.

They also called for the establishment of a **fully-fledged EU civilian-military strategic headquarters** under PESCO. They encouraged the Member States participating in PESCO to set up a permanent

'European Integrated Force', composed of divisions of their national armies, and to make it available to the Union. They called for the evaluation, in close coordination with the VP/HR, of the opportunity to establish a **Directorate-General for Defence** within the Commission (DG Defence).

CSDP missions and operations: Members regretted that the efficiency of these missions can still be jeopardised by structural weaknesses, uneven contributions from Member States and unsuitability to the operational environment, deploring in particular the limitations in the CSDP mission mandates. They stressed, in this context, the need for real effectiveness that can only be achieved with the provision of **proper military equipment**, and urged the Council and the VP/HR to make use of the possibilities provided for in Article 41.2 TEU to this end.

Members are also convinced of the need to **contribute further to crisis management and prevention** and, specifically, to provide assistance to the reconstruction and stabilisation of Iraq. They called for increased efforts to improve **cyber security**, in particular for CSDP missions, inter alia by taking measures at EU and Member State levels to mitigate threats to the CSDP.

EU-NATO cooperation: Members believe that in the current context, the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO is **fundamental** to addressing the security challenges facing Europe and its neighbourhood, noting that a stronger EU and NATO are mutually reinforcing. Member States should increase their efforts to act both within an EDU and as autonomous regional security providers, and in a complementary role within NATO.