EU-NATO relations

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Ioan Mircea PACU (S&D, RO) on EU-NATO relations.

The EU and NATO are indispensable for ensuring the security of Europe and of their citizens. Their cooperation should not be considered a goal in itself but a way to achieve shared security priorities and goals through complementarity of missions and available means.

More substantive partnership: the EU and NATO, both engaged in crisis management, would be more efficient in that activity if they were to act in a **truly coordinated manner** and make the most of their expertise and resources. Members stressed **openness and transparency** in full respect of the decision-making autonomy and procedures of both organisations. Moreover, the report noted that cooperation with non-NATO EU Member States and non-EU NATO members is an integral part of EU-NATO cooperation.

Convinced that for its members, NATO is the cornerstone of collective defence and deterrence in Europe, Members are also convinced that a stronger EU with a more effective Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), through multiple projects between Member States and capable of honouring the provisions of Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), by which Member States can request assistance, contributes to a stronger NATO.

They emphasised the need to strengthen EU-NATO cooperation on missions and operations, at both the strategic and tactical level. The EU-NATO strategic partnership is equally fundamental for the EU's evolving CSFP and for the future of the Alliance, as well as for EU-UK relations after Brexit. According to the report, after Brexit, 80 % of NATO's defence spending will be non-EU and three out of four battalions in the east will be led by non-EU countries.

US commitment: Members welcomed the re-affirmation of US commitment to NATO and European security. However, recent political developments could have an impact on the strength of the transatlantic relationship. The report noted that the US, which generally encouraged and welcomed the substantive developments in EU defence, should continue efforts for a better understanding of European strategic interests, including the development of European defence capabilities.

Improved infrastructure and cooperation: Members emphasised the importance of improving NATO's rapid reinforcement capabilities through improving EU and national infrastructure, removing bureaucratic and infrastructural barriers to the swift movement of forces and by pre-positioning military equipment and supplies. They welcomed the launch of **Permanent Structured Cooperation** (**PESCO**) and stressed its potential to strengthen the European contribution within NATO. They highlighted PESCO's complementarity to NATO and that it should be a driver for further EU-NATO cooperation in the development of capabilities as it aims to strengthen the EU's defence capacities and, in general, to make CSDP more effective and relevant for responding to today's security and military challenges.

Members considered that the development of common standards, procedures, **training** and exercises should be considered an important enabler for more efficient EU-NATO cooperation.

Security threats have become more **hybrid and less conventional**, and that international cooperation is required to tackle them. The EU and NATO should further build resilience and develop shared situational awareness of hybrid threats.

The EU should increase its capacity by providing more EU staff with security clearance, dedicated training for working with classified information and by investing in secure communications. Fostering reciprocity and a ‘need-to-share’ approach to the exchange of appropriate information would also benefit missions and operations of both organisations.

In this regard, Members invited the EU and NATO to enhance their cooperation on strategic communication, especially in the area of **cybersecurity**. There is a need to improve cyber incident prevention, detection and response.

The important role of women in CSDP and NATO missions, in particular in dealing with **women and children** in conflict areas is stressed.

Lastly, Members emphasised the need for the EU to ensure a close security and defence relationship with the United Kingdom after Brexit, acknowledging that the **UK will remain a lead contributor** to European defence as both a NATO member and European nation, while no longer being a member of the EU.