EU-NATO relations

2017/2276(INI) - 13/06/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 569 votes to 84 with 35 abstentions, a resolution on EU-NATO relations.

Members were convinced that the EU and NATO, who share the same values in pursuit of international peace and security, faced **similar strategic challenges**. With 22 members in common, they have converging strategic interests including the protection of their citizens against any threats.

Stronger partnership: Parliament believes that the strategic partnership between the Union and NATO is fundamental to tackle common security challenges. Cooperation between the Union and NATO should be complementary and respectful of the specificities and roles of each of the two organisations.

Convinced that for its members, NATO is the cornerstone of collective defence and deterrence in Europe, Members were 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.

Parliament stressed the importance of developing a **common European strategic culture** and achieving common threat perception, while the Union must work to strengthen its strategic autonomy. It welcomed the launch of **Permanent Structured Cooperation** (PESCO) and highlighted its potential to strengthen the European contribution within NATO.

The resolution emphasised the need to **strengthen EU-NATO cooperation on missions and operations**, at both the strategic and tactical level, noting that this 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. They 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.

Main areas of 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.

Parliament believes that initiatives to strengthen the Europe of Defence should benefit both organizations, thus enabling EU Member States to be able to intervene militarily together, in a credible way, while ensuring implementation of the **principles of openness, reciprocity and full respect for the decision-making autonomy** of both organisations.

The resolution emphasised the need to:

- improve coordination of crisis response mechanisms to respond coherently to **hybrid threats;**
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- strengthen **cooperation on the exchange of classified information and intelligence analysis,** particularly in the fight against terrorism but also irregular migration flows. The Union should increase capacity by providing more Union staff with security clearance and specific training to work with classified information, and by investing in secure communications;
- intensify the exchange and sharing of information in the field of **cybersecurity;**
- take into account the importance of **women's role** in CSDP and NATO missions, especially for relations with women and children in conflict zones.

Parliament encouraged all EU Member States that are also members of NATO to redouble their efforts to achieve the **2% of GDP** defence target, and to allocate 20% of this spending to the acquisition of major new equipment.

Lastly, it 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.