Military mobility

2018/2156(INI) - 21/11/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Tunne KELAM (EPP, EE) on military mobility.

Members stressed that military mobility is a central strategic tool enabling the EU to pursue its security and defence interests effectively and in a complementary manner with other organisations such as NATO.

While the achievement of military mobility in Europe depends above all on the commitment expressed by the Member States and their political will, the Union should contribute by guiding the process by setting a **framework for requirements, providing funding, drafting protocols** to facilitate the efficient movement of technical equipment and human resources, fostering cooperation and providing forums for an exchange of best practices, information and experiences involving both civilian and military authorities.

Stressing the importance of mobility when responding to a crisis, Members believe that an efficient military mobility policy will **strengthen the EU's CSDP missions** by increasing synergies between defence needs and strengthen the EU’s capacity to respond to emergency situations. Humanitarian missions and natural disaster responses in the EU should also benefit from greater military mobility.

Members acknowledged the **complex nature of the challenge**, which involves, among other aspects, issues relating to infrastructure construction, common standards, transport regulations, customs, taxes and travel authorisations, and which concerns all levels of government. They called for the establishment of **frameworks to bring together civilian and military actors** at all levels, including NATO and its partners, to discuss relevant issues and thus ensure added value and effective coordination and implementation.

The report underlined that the development of the **Action Plan on military mobility** within the European Union is an integral part of the major objective of improving mobility within the Union and, at the same time, of meeting the logistical challenges of mobility set out in the CSDP.

Members welcomed the Commission's proposal to use the **Connecting European Facility** (CEF) to implement dual-use military mobility projects and the significant funds earmarked for this purpose. They see the implementation of the Action Plan as an opportunity to enable the civilian transport network to benefit from increased network capacity and to promote multimodal connections. They considered that any transport project of common interest financed by the CEF should integrate, if necessary, military mobility requirements at the conception phase.

The report pointed out the need for a **customs and fiscal regulatory framework**, in particular as regards VAT. In particular, it stresses the importance of achieving harmonised rules on permissions for cross-border movements, which constitute a major obstacle to rapid movement.

Member States should work together to maximise the effectiveness of cross-border dual use and to reduce administrative costs. In this regard, Members supported the ambition to speed up border crossing times by 2019, and – with that aim in mind – for diplomatic authorisations for land, sea and air movements to be issued within five days, and for that deadline to be even shorter for rapid reaction units.

Members called on the EU, its Member States and NATO to **intensify their cooperation and coordination**, in particular by using funds for common projects, increasing political flexibility, formalising the EU-NATO relationship, broadening areas of cooperation and sharing information more widely, where this is in the interests of the Union's security.

The report strongly supported the Council's call on Member States to develop national military mobility plans by the end of 2019 and to make their implementation a priority.