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 Ioan Mircea PACU (S&D, RO) on the annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy.

Faced with the **continuing deterioration of the strategic international environment** faced with inter-state and intra-state conflicts, terrorism, state failure, cyberattacks and the effects of climate change, Members believe that **no single state can succeed in addressing these vast challenges** on its own and stressed that it is essential for the Union to respond rapidly and consistently, with one voice, in concert with its allies and partners and with other international organisations.

Cooperation is still in its development stage and much remains to be done if the Union and its Member States are to reap the benefits of deep and sustained long-term cooperation in the field of defence. Members insisted on the existence of practical and financial benefits of further integration of European defence capabilities. They underlined the importance of the transatlantic relationship and recalled how important multilateralism is in maintaining peace and stability.

Common Security and Defence Policy - the way forward: Members considered that Member States and the Union urgently need to **invest more** in security and defence, and that solidarity and cooperation in defence matters should become the norm. Member States shall strive to achieve the target of **2% of GDP** for defence, and spend **20% of their defence budgets** on equipment identified as necessary by the European Defence Agency (EDA), including related research and development.

While welcoming the creation of a **dedicated heading for defence** in the Commission's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal, the report stressed that funding from that budget line shall be exclusively spent for defence purposes, without politicisation

Members considered it essential to develop a clearly defined overall strategic approach to European defence, which could best be defined by an EU security and defence **white paper**.

Capabilities for the Union's security and defence: Members underlined the importance of developing the necessary civilian and military capabilities, including through pooling and sharing, to deal with the comprehensive security challenges in and around Europe and its periphery.

They considered that EU Member States must endeavour to **improve military capabilities** to cover the full spectrum of land, air, space, maritime and cyber capabilities, including strategic enablers to make the EU's CSDP a credible force.

Members stressed the need to invest in Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, satellite communications, and autonomous access to space and permanent earth observation to better assess internal and external threats. They also considered that interference in other countries' elections through cyber operations undermines or violates the right of people to take part in the government of their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, and that such interference by other states constitutes a violation of international law, even when there is no use of military force.

Members considered that the capabilities for the Union's security and defence could be improved by: (i) making better use of the existing frameworks of defence and military cooperation such as the European

multinational High Readiness Corps HQs and the EU Battlegroups; (ii) reinforcing and not duplicating similar initiatives within NATO.

The report welcomed the proposal for a regulation establishing a **European Defence Fund** (EDF) and the substantial funding proposed by the Commission for the next MFF. It reiterated that the EDA should be the agency for the implementation of the Union's actions under the European Capabilities and Armaments Policy, where envisaged by the Lisbon Treaty.

Members also welcomed the implementation of an inclusive Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) as a fundamental step towards closer cooperation in security and defence among the Member States.

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.

They believed that the EU's longstanding CSDP mission, **EUFOR BiH / Operation Althea**, still plays a role of deterrence as a visible sign of EU commitment to the country and the wider Western Balkan region. Stressing the strategic importance of the **partnership between the EU and Africa**, they suggested intensifying cooperation, including in the field of security.

Members also welcomed:

- the activities of the EU missions and operations in the Sahel region – EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUTM Mali – and the contributions they are making to regional stability, the fight against terrorism and human trafficking, and the security of the local population;
- the continuous contribution of EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia to the wider EU efforts to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking in the southern central Mediterranean and to prevent further loss of life at sea.

Members called for the swift implementation of the Capacity Building in support of Security and Development (CBSD) initiative to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of CSDP missions and operations.

EU-NATO relations: the report emphasised the **complementarity** of the Union and NATO and the need to ensure that multinational initiatives to develop the Union's and NATO's capabilities are complementary and mutually reinforcing. The two organisations have very distinct features and their cooperation should be conducted in accordance with the autonomy and decision-making procedures of the other, based on the principles of reciprocity, without prejudice to the specific nature of the Member States' security and defence policy.