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

2018/2097(INI) - 12/12/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 401 votes to 173, a resolution following the Council's annual report on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Ambitious, credible and effective common foreign policy

In a context where the EU's security environment is now more volatile, unpredictable, complex, Parliament stressed that the time has come for the European Union to **take its destiny into its own hands** and embrace its role as a fully-fledged, sovereign political and economic power in international relations.

Convinced that no single EU Member State can respond effectively to today's global challenges on its own, Members called for a genuine common European foreign and security policy, based on strategic autonomy and its integration, including in terms of capabilities, in the areas of industry and operations.

Protect common values

Parliament called for greater **solidarity and enhanced coordination** between the EU and the Member States in order to safeguard our **democracy, common values, freedom**, and the Union's social and environmental standards. It called on the EU to stay true to its principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and encouraged consideration of the policy of 'less for less' for those countries which go into reverse in terms of governance, democracy and human rights.

The EU should make the ratification of bilateral agreements with third countries conditional on compliance with human rights criteria.

Act according to strategic priorities

Parliament called on the institutions and the Member States to act strategically by following an **integrated approach** and by using all the means at their disposal to strengthen the EU's geopolitical influence and overall image in the world and to protect its interests.

Members called for **adequate financial resources** to be made available for the EU's external action under the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) (2021-2027) and for the EU to focus its resources on strategic priorities, while stressing the need to involve Parliament in the scrutiny and strategic steering of external financing instruments.

The resolution called on the EEAS to develop **'issue-based coalitions'** with like-minded countries and engage with emerging powers in the provision of global public goods such as peace and security. It also called on all Member States to respect the principle of solidarity enshrined in the Treaties (Article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) and to take the necessary measures to deal with the migration crisis.

Members recommended, *inter alia*:

- to strengthen the EU's internal resilience to **external interference** and to establish a common strategy with international partners, both when it comes to protecting critical infrastructure as well as the basic institutions and hallmarks of our democracies;

- to invest in the stability and prosperity of the **Western Balkans**, reaffirming that the European perspective for the countries of the Western Balkans must lead to their full membership, provided that they meet all the criteria;

- to encourage closer relations within the framework of the **Eastern Partnership** by strengthening economic ties through trade and association agreements, access to the single market and closer people-to-people contacts, including visa facilitation and liberalisation, when all requirements are met;

- to promote economic and social development on the **southern Mediterranean basin** and in sub-Saharan Africa to help countries address the root causes of instability.

Deeming the **transatlantic partnership essential** for security and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic, Parliament regretted the progressive retreat of the US from the multilateral, rules-based world order, namely its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. It called on the EU to show unity, firmness and proportionality in its responses to such decisions in order to reaffirm its full support for the joint comprehensive action plan with Iran. It also reaffirmed their determination to support the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Union's partners, condemning Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its military intervention in eastern Ukraine.

Stressing that the EU must play a leading role in the **Middle East** and the Persian Gulf, Members regretted the US government's decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and urged the EU to take a leading role in relaunching real peace in the Middle East peace process aimed at establishing a two-state solution. They called on the Union to do its utmost to put an end to crimes and the use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people. They also condemned **Russia's repeated use of its right of veto** in the UN Security Council as undermining international efforts for peace and conflict resolution.

Strengthening defence cooperation

Members considered that the establishment of **Permanent Structured Cooperation** (PESCO) on defence projects and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) will help the Member States deepen their defence cooperation and spend their defence budgets more effectively. They favour a strong defence industry, including the promotion of a single market for cybersecurity products.

Lastly, the resolution pointed out that the establishment of **new formats**, such as an EU Security Council, as advocated by Chancellor Merkel and President Macron, and new and more advanced methods of coordination within the EU and with international bodies could make decision-making in the context of foreign and security policy (CFSP) more effective.