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

2018/2099(INI) - 12/12/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 376 votes to 215, with 41 abstentions, a resolution on the annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy.

The Union's strategic context

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, Parliament stated 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.

The **defence of the rules-based international order**, international law and the values defended by liberal democracies should be of the utmost priority and should be approached without compromise.

Members emphasised the practical and financial benefits of further integration of European defence capabilities; underlines that through comprehensive and trustworthy work on the part of all stakeholders it is possible to increase the scope and efficiency of defence spending without increasing defence spending itself. They stressed the importance of the transatlantic bond for the security and defence of the European and North American democracies.

Parliament also stressed the need to develop a **common definition of threats** for all EU Member States, to adopt restrictive measures against those responsible for the use and proliferation of chemical weapons, to adopt a more common strategic approach towards Russia and to define a well-coordinated strategy against jihadist terrorism. It reaffirmed the strategic importance of the Western Balkans for the security and stability of the Union.

Common Security and Defence Policy - the way forward

Parliament 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, and in particular the establishment of a budget line from which the European Defence Fund and Military Mobility projects will be funded, the resolution 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

Parliament 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.

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 resolution reiterated that the EDA should be the implementing agency for Union actions under the European Capabilities and Armaments policy, where envisaged by the Lisbon Treaty.

Parliament also welcomed the implementation of **permanent structured cooperation** (PSC) as a fundamental step towards closer cooperation in security and defence among the Member States.

Common security and defence policy

Parliament 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.

Members of the Parliament are convinced 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.

Members also welcomed the activities of the EU missions and operations in the Sahel region and stressed 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.

Parliament 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. It stressed the need to include a gender perspective in the EU's CSDP actions.

EU-NATO relations

Parliament insisted on 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.