

# Implementation of the common security and defence policy - annual report 2018

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Arnaud DANJEAN (EPP, FR) on the implementation of the common security and defence policy - annual report.

In a persistently uncertain and unpredictable security context, Members reaffirmed that European strategic autonomy is a legitimate and necessary ambition and must remain a priority objective of the CFSP and European defence policy.

## *Need to develop and strengthen European strategic autonomy*

The report stressed that European strategic autonomy is based on the EU's ability to enhance its freedom to assess its autonomous operational capacity, including credible military forces, its industrial capacity to produce the equipment needed by its forces and its political capacity to take decisions where circumstances so require. Such autonomy reflects the objective of assuming greater responsibility for European security, in order to defend its common interests and values, with its partners as far as possible, and alone when necessary. It presupposes the EU's capacity to assess a crisis situation and take a decision autonomously, which necessarily implies an independent and effective decision-making process, means of evaluation and freedom of analysis and action.

Members are of the opinion that the affirmation of European strategic autonomy depends on the establishment of a comprehensive CFSP supported by European defence cooperation in the technological, capability, industrial and operational fields. Only concrete and flexible cooperation based on pragmatic initiatives will make it possible to gradually overcome difficulties, forge a genuine common strategic culture and shape common responses tailored to the main security and defence challenges facing the Union.

In order to increase the EU's strategic autonomy, Member States should increase defence spending and aim for a target of 2% of GDP, invest more urgently in security and defence, and ensure that solidarity and cooperation on defence becomes the norm.

Members considered it appropriate to pursue a restrictive arms export policy for all types of weapons, including for dual-use goods. They urged the Member States to comply with the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.

## *CSDP missions and operations*

Members considered that the Union must become a more robust player in crisis management, conflict resolution and peacekeeping, if possible together with other regional and international organisations, such as the United Nations and the African Union, in line with its commitment to multilateralism, but also alone when the situation requires it. They encourage the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Member States to introduce a more forward-looking approach to planning and capability development and to anticipate future needs so that the Union can provide a strong response to crises and conflicts.

Member States and European bodies are encouraged to maintain a high level of commitment in Africa. The report highlighted the Union's overall commitment to the Sahel and the Horn of Africa through six civilian and military missions and welcomed the effort made to regionalise the operation of civilian

missions in the Sahel in the face of security challenges which go beyond the framework of the States where European missions are deployed. It reaffirmed the strategic importance of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans for the security and stability of the Union and stressed the need to focus and strengthen the Union's political commitment to this region.

Noting, however, that the effectiveness of CSDP missions and operations in general is hampered by persistent structural weaknesses and the growing reluctance of Member States and European institutions to make them more robust, Members called for a common European solution to remedy this. They stressed the need to regularly evaluate missions and operations in order to improve their effectiveness and the importance of joint training and exercises between European armed forces as well as parallel and coordinated exercises between the EU and NATO. They stressed the importance of reviewing the Athena mechanism with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the funding mechanism for CSDP military operations and missions.

### ***Capability and industry***

The report stressed that achieving European strategic autonomy will necessarily be based on increasing the Member States' capabilities and defence budgets, and on strengthening the European defence technological and industrial base.

Members welcomed the Commission's proposal of June 2017 to create a European Defence Fund (EDF) that would coordinate, complement and amplify national defence investment, encourage cooperation between Member States in the development of ultra-modern and interoperable defence technologies and equipment, and support an innovative and competitive defence industry throughout the Union, including cross-border SMEs. They also welcomed the Commission's proposal to allocate EUR 6.5 billion to military mobility projects in the next MFF.

Members supported the effective implementation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) as an essential step towards closer security and defence cooperation between Member States. They also stressed the strategic dimension of the space sector for Europe, highlighting the need to make progress in developing technologies with both civilian and military uses which are capable of ensuring European strategic autonomy.

### ***Defence cooperation and CSDP partnerships***

The EU and the United Kingdom will still share the same strategic environment and the same threats to their peace and security after Brexit. Members consider it essential to maintain strong, close and special defence and security cooperation between the Union and the United Kingdom after Brexit.

Furthermore, recalling NATO's fundamental role in collective defence, Members are convinced that the EU-NATO strategic partnership is essential for addressing the security challenges facing Europe and its neighbourhood. EU-NATO cooperation should take full account of each of the two institutions' specific features and roles and continue with full respect for the principles of inclusiveness and reciprocity and the decision-making autonomy of both organisations.

### ***Institutional framework***

Members welcomed the announcement of the creation of a Directorate-General for the Defence and Space Industries within the European Commission, under the responsibility of the Internal Market Commissioner. They also undertook to ensure close parliamentary monitoring and scrutiny of European defence missions, instruments and initiatives.

They called for progressive steps towards a common defence policy and, ultimately, the establishment of a common defence. They called for the drafting of a European Defence Strategy and for the elaboration of a European Union White Paper on Security and Defence as an essential strategic tool to reinforce the governance of the Union's defence policy.