EU-African security cooperation in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Javier NART (Renew, ES) on EU-African security cooperation in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa.

The report stressed the need to establish a strong nexus between security, development, and humanitarian intervention is essential for the sustainable development of the Sahel, West Africa and Horn of Africa regions.

European Union action

Members called on the Commission, the Council and the Vice President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) to coordinate the development, humanitarian and security strategies in which they are involved as part of an integrated strategy leading to independent African ownership in security and defence affairs.

The report welcomed the EU's comprehensive engagement in the Sahel, West Africa and the Horn of Africa and the contribution of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations to peace, security and international stability. It nevertheless stressed the need to: (i) adapt the financial and administrative rules, as well as political decision-making process, in order to increase the speed of and effectiveness of the response to crises; (ii) strengthen CSDP missions and operations, as well as the EU’s overall communication and strategic planning policy, in order to increase the visibility of the EU’s actions.

Members welcomed the proposal to create, under the EU's CFSP, an instrument to finance military and defence cooperation with third countries and international organisations. In view of the current situation in Africa, they called on the Council to adopt, without delay, the decision needed to create this new instrument to support the capabilities of African armed forces.

Members called for the format of the EUTM Mali, EUTM CAR and EUTM Somalia training missions to be redefined to better adapt them to the real needs of the armed forces and populations of the beneficiary countries. They also called on the EU to help the G5 Sahel Joint Force, a key instrument in the fight against terrorism, jihadist activities and threats to regional security, to become operational by providing financial assistance. They supported the African Union's intention to send 3000 soldiers to support the G5 Sahel in combating armed groups.

Good governance

Welcoming the EU strategy for the Horn of Africa, which covers not only security and humanitarian aid policies, but also longer-term development policies and the Millennium Development Goals, Members stressed the importance of a long-term vision for development policies. They called on the Commission and Member States to coordinate their policies in this respect and to employ joint programming for the various countries and the region as soon as possible.

The report stressed that meaningful security cooperation between the EU and Africa must be based on sustainable development, with particular emphasis on:

- the consolidation of democracy by ensuring responsible democratic systems of governance through effective parliamentary scrutiny, democratic institutions and the rule of law, as well as guaranteeing all civil liberties;

- ending conflicts and preventing their recurrence;

- the development of youth-oriented policies that promote economic development and the creation of employment opportunities;

- support preventive stabilisation action plans;

- empowering women through recognition of their role as agents of change in African communities;

- the provision of basic services, including health, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, social protection and support to displaced populations, in order to increase citizens' confidence in the state;

- ensuring administrative security and legal stability;

- the eradication of poverty, impunity and corruption;

- tackling the effects of climate change,

- the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices.

The report stressed that an integrated approach to peace, security and sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement of local civil society actors. It stressed the importance of partnership with the United Nations, cooperation with other international institutions, including the African Union, and dialogue with other regional organisations.

Stressing that Communist China and authoritarian Russia had adopted different approaches in their relations with African countries, in opposition to EU action, Members called on the Commission to improve public diplomacy efforts in order to explain EU security support in Africa more effectively as a contribution to the African development strategy 2063.