Implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy - annual report 2020

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Sven MIKSER (S&D, EE) on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy – annual report 2020.

Members stressed that given the current, increasing multi-faceted threats to global regional and national security and stability the EU is facing, a more robust Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is needed in order to play a stronger and more relevant role on the international stage.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the EU's vulnerability and its dependency on third countries. Therefore, there is a need to provide a common formal definition of strategic autonomy and intensify the EU’s efforts towards this goal.

Strengthening cooperation with Strategic Partners

The report noted the level of cooperation between NATO and EU in assisting civilian authorities in containing and stopping the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they are called on to enhance the mutually reinforcing cooperation including between missions and operations, and to deepen their Strategic Partnership.

More effective EU security and defence cooperation should be regarded as a factor that strengthens the European pillar of NATO and as the EU taking up a bigger part in ensuring its own security.

Members stressed the need for EU-NATO cooperation with a view to achieving a common effective approach to threats to maritime security, such as cross-border and organised crime, including organised crime networks facilitating human, arms and drug trafficking, smuggling, maritime piracy.

While welcoming the progress of the EU-UN partnership, Member States are urged to contribute more to UN peacekeeping.

The report reaffirmed that, despite Brexit, the United Kingdom remains a close strategic partner of the EU and its Member States and that it is essential to maintain strong, close defence and security cooperation. The UK is encouraged to participate in CSDP missions and operations.

Increasing the EU’ resilience and preparedness

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed new global fragilities and tensions and amplified existing ones. In this regard, the EU is called on to enhance its role on the international scene, for more European unity, solidarity and resilience, for a more cohesive foreign policy with effective multilateralism as a central element.

Proactively countering and preventing hybrid threats

The EU and its Member States are urged to develop and strengthen the security of their information and communication systems, including secure communication channels. There is an urgent need for the EU to introduce a more robust strategy to detect and proactively counter aggressive and malicious disinformation campaigns against it coming from third countries and non-state actors.

Given the growing importance of space security and satellites, Members stressed the importance of the European Union Satellite Centre and commissions the agency to analyse and provide a report regarding the safety and/or vulnerabilities of the EU and Member-State satellites to space debris, cyberattack and direct missile attack.

Giving the Union the means to implement CSDP

Members regretted the European Council's current lack of ambition in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for security and defence initiatives. They urged the Council to restore an ambitious budget for the EDF that is designed to strengthen collaborative actions and cross-border cooperation throughout the EU for military mobility.

The report called for the EU to build its own ballistic missiles defence system, as well as an integrated and layered strategic air defence system, that is also designed to counter hypersonic missiles.

Setting up an ambitious EU agenda for global arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament

Recalling that effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes are a cornerstone of global and European security and stability, Members expressed alarm at the current threats to international values and rule-of-law and potential future erosion of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. It feared that non-compliance with, withdrawal from, or the non-extension of, major arms control treaties would seriously damage the international arms control regimes that have provided decades of stability, would undermine relationships between nuclear-armed states could directly threaten European security.

Members stressed the urgent need to restore cross-border trust. They are convinced that as the EU is increasingly ambitious in the defence area, there is a need for greater convergence, transparency and consistency in the Member States' arms export policies, as well as for the strengthening of public oversight.