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

2020/2206(INI) - 20/01/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 340 votes to 100, 245 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy – annual report 2020.

Positioning the EU as a 'partner of choice' in a changing geopolitical order

Parliament stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up call for the need for a stronger, more autonomous, more united and assertive foreign and security policy. If the EU wants to play a leading role on the international scene, it should defend and develop a rules based international order which guarantees multilateralism, democracy and human rights, and to promote its values and interests more decisively worldwide. To achieve this, the EU first has to successfully assist its partners in the immediate neighbourhood.

Parliament called on the EU to establish more strategic cooperation with third countries based on trust and mutual benefit, and of building alliances with like-minded democracies. Its partnership with the UN and NATO should be enhanced to build a common complementary approach to current and future regional and global security challenges as well as to conflict situations, health crises, asymmetric and hybrid threats, cyberattacks and disinformation.

A new level of ambition for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP): strategic regional approaches based on a stronger political will

Recalling that no EU Member State alone has sufficient capability and resources to effectively deal with current international challenges, Members considered that, in this context, the EU needs first and foremost a stronger and genuine political will on the part of the EU Member States to jointly agree on and push EU foreign policy goals.

The EU institutions and Member States are called on to coordinate any actions in response to the COVID-19 crisis among themselves and with international partners to foster a coherent and inclusive global response to the pandemic. In this regard, Parliament reiterated its call for a revision of the EU Global Strategy in order to draw the lessons from the new geopolitical dynamics, current threats including the COVID-19 pandemic and expected upcoming challenges, and to reassess the goals and means of the CFSP.

The resolution recalled that the European Parliament's diplomacy constitutes an important pillar of the EU's foreign policy, with its own distinct and complementary instruments and channels. It stressed that Parliament should therefore be recognised as an integral part of the 'Team Europe' approach promoted by the Commission and the EEAS).

It called on Member States to urgently open a debate on the possibility of moving from unanimity to qualified majority voting at least in selected areas of CFSP, such as decisions on human rights issues and sanctions, as a concrete means by which to strengthen the EU's influence on the global scene.

Geopolitical priorities

UK

Members stressed that it is essential to agree on common responses to address foreign, security and defence policy challenges based on the principles of multilateralism, the resolution of conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy, and international law, bearing in mind that most international threats affect both sides with the same intensity.

Turkey

Parliament reiterated that the accession negotiations with Turkey are formally frozen, in light of human rights situation, democratic back-sliding and challenges to the rule of law inside Turkey. It called on the EU to urgently define a better geopolitical strategy for its short, medium and long-term relations with Turkey, while underlining the common strategic interest of the EU and Turkey in establishing a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean.

US

Members stressed that transatlantic cooperation remains crucial and is paramount in the EU's common foreign and security policy. This partnership should be revitalised in order to deal more effectively with the pandemic and other major international challenges such as climate change. They strongly condemned the mob assault on the US Congress by rioters incited

by President Donald Trump's conspiracy theories and baseless claims that the presidential election of 3 November 2020 was rigged. They expressed concern about the rise of populism and extremism on both sides of the Atlantic.

Russia

Parliament called for a new EU-Russia strategy to be elaborated, which would send a clear signal to the prodemocracy faction in Russian society of the EU's continued willingness to engage and cooperate. It called for the sanctions regime to be strengthened, particularly in view of the attempted assassination of Alexei Navalny on Russian territory using a military nerve agent belonging to the 'Novitchok' family. It deplored Russia's negative role in disinformation campaigns and other forms of hybrid warfare against the EU and the West and recalled that compliance with the Minsk agreements was an essential condition for any substantial change in relations between the EU and Russia.

China

Members stressed the importance for the EU to pursue a unified, realistic, effective and more assertive strategy towards China. They called for an EU policy based on the principles of 'cooperate where possible; compete where needed; confront where necessary'.

Regarding Hong Kong, they called on China to make clear that the EU will not tolerate the continuation of human rights violations in Hong Kong, Tibet and Xinjang, nor its treatment of people belonging to minorities.

Strengthening the EU's capacities and means in the CFSP

Parliament supported the progressive definition and promotion of a common defence policy, while calling on Member States to invest more in their defence capacities and to rebalance responsibilities within NATO. It insisted that the EU should take a leading role on the international stage in dealing with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires sufficient financial resources. Similarly, it stressed the importance of CSDP missions and operations, insisting on the existence of framework agreements with third countries for their participation in European crisis management operations.

Lastly, the resolution stressed the need to develop a coherent climate policy dimension in the CFSP.