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

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The European Parliament adopted by 387 votes to 180, with 119 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) - Annual Report 2020.

Members stressed that given the current and growing multifaceted threats to the EU's regional and national security and stability, a stronger Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is needed in order to play a more relevant role on the international stage.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the vulnerability of the EU and its dependence on third countries. Parliament therefore called on the Council to give a common formal definition of strategic autonomy and to define very clearly the objectives, means and resources for its implementation.

Preserving stability in the immediate neighbourhood

Members stressed the primary geopolitical importance for the Union of sustainable regional stability, security and prosperity and preventing destabilising processes in its neighbourhood, both East and South and the Arctic.

Parliament reiterated its condemnation of Russia's military intervention and illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula and the perpetuation of the frozen conflict in Moldova, stressing the need for the EU to speak with one voice in this context. It expressed concern about the recent escalation of tensions in some potential flashpoints in the Indo-Pacific region, such as the disputed border between India and China, the East and South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait. In addition, it expressed concern about Turkey's illegal activities and threats of military action against Member States in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Enhancing the effectiveness of CSDP missions and operations in an unpredictable and destabilised environment

Parliament called on Member States to increase their contribution of forces and assets to all CSDP missions and operations, in particular by addressing existing shortfalls, as the issue of financing CSDP missions and operations is crucial for their sustainability.

Parliament recognised the contribution made by civilian and military CSDP missions to maintaining peace and stability, strengthening international security and supporting third countries in the fight against terrorism. It urged the EU to enhance its institutional capacity for conflict prevention and mediation. It called for a more pro-active approach in resolution of protracted conflicts in the immediate EU’s neighbourhood and called for conflict-sensitive and people-centred approaches that put human security and rights at the core of EU engagement.

Developing effective CSDP capabilities

Parliament stressed that it was crucial to enhance the coherence and coordination of all EU defence planning instruments and capability development tools and initiatives. It called on Member States to increase their defence spending to reach a target of 2% of GDP.

Strengthening cooperation with strategic partners

Parliament recalled that NATO remains the cornerstone of collective defence for those Member States that are also members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. EU-NATO cooperation should be complementary and take full account of each of the two institution's specific features and roles and should avoid any unnecessary duplication or replacement of structures.

Members stressed the importance of further strengthening the EU-NATO partnership in the field of military mobility and of organising joint training and exercises between European armed forces.

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

Parliament 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.

Proactively countering and preventing hybrid threats

Parliament welcomed the set of priorities and guidelines adopted for EU cooperation in the field of countering hybrid threats and enhancing resilience to these threats. It called on the EU and its Member States to strengthen the security of their information and communication channels. It stressed the 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.

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 concern that non-compliance, withdrawal or non-renewal of key arms control treaties would seriously undermine international arms control regimes, jeopardise relations between nuclear-weapon states and directly threaten European security.

Giving the EU 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 Commission to present and implement an ambitious strategic work programme for the European Development Fund that is designed to strengthen collaborative actions and cross-border cooperation throughout the EU and for military mobility.

The EU is called on 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.