Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Commission Vice President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Horn of Africa

2021/2206(INI) - 18/07/2022 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the report by Fabio Massimo CASTALDO (NI, IT) on a European Parliament recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's strategic relationship and partnership with the Horn of Africa.

The Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Eritrea, South Sudan, Djibouti) is a region of strategic political, economic and commercial importance to the EU, with which Europe has long-standing political and economic ties.

The report makes a series of recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the Horn of Africa

In particular, the report recommends the following:

- recognise that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has worrying immediate and long-term consequences for the Horn of Africa and that in response the EU must adapt its engagement with the region and respond to the fact that Russia's illegal actions are having a detrimental effect on the overall security situation in the region

- take account of the fact that Russia has already created well-established and multi-faceted links and influence in the region, including through investments (both civilian and military) and the deployment of paramilitary groups such as the Wagner group in Sudan, and recognise that these actions have the potential to further destabilise neighbouring regions;

- counter the Russian attempts to orchestrate misinformation and disinformation campaigns in the region aimed at fomenting anti-EU sentiment;

- immediately deepen diplomatic engagement with the governments in the region to address the devastating impacts of the Russian objectives and operations in the region and acknowledge that the ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, in particular the Russian naval blockade, disrupts supply chains and severely impacts the food security of the Horn of Africa, both in the short and medium term, as around 90 % of its wheat is imported from Russia and Ukraine.

Guiding principles

The report recommended (i) recognising the potential and strategic relevance of the region; (ii) developing a truly strategic vision for cooperation and dialogue; (iii) moving from an obsolete donor-recipient mentality to a partnership on an equal-footing; and (iv) adopting a conditionality approach, including on security issues, based on the more for more and less for less principle. It called

It calls for a strengthened a bottom-up approach, where local communities and civil society organisations can work to build their own capacities and prepare, coordinate and organise themselves better to become more resilient.

Regional peace and security

The report recommended in particular:

- contributing to regional security and stability through an integrated approach, fostering the link between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace through civil conflict prevention, peaceful dispute resolution, conflict resolution, mediation, capacity building and reconciliation activities;

- coordinating with partners and international organisations in providing adequate humanitarian aid and assistance to countries affected by conflict, extreme drought and other natural disasters, as well as by Russian aggression in Ukraine;

- expressing concern about the persistent activity of radical militant Islamist terrorist groups operating across the Horn of Africa and in neighbouring countries, most notably al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda and Daesh, which are highly adaptable and able to gain a lasting foothold among the population.

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law

The report particularly emphasised the need to (i) fully support democratic transitions, rule of law and state-building processes, (ii) strengthen cooperation with civil society to address key issues and priorities in the region, including human dignity and rights, democratic and human rights, rule of law issues and mitigating the COVID-19 health crisis; (iii) take action to protect women's and girls' rights to equality, health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights and education, and to allow them to live free from gender-based violence and discrimination.

Sustainable and inclusive economic development - society

In particular, the report called for:

- the role of youth and women to be recognised in achieving sustainable economic development and strengthening EU support for access to education and vocational training and for retraining and upgrading of the workforce;

- support to be given to capacity building for local vaccine manufacturing and assist in strengthening local health systems and supporting structural reforms in the health sector;

- common actions tackling combat climate change to be increased, in particular regarding mitigation, adaptation, resilience and disaster risk management, and pay particular attention to the impact of climate change on human and food security;

- further coordination with the Commission to ensure that the EU's trade policy review leads to sustainable economic growth for the region, including by making the trade and sustainable development chapters of FTAs fully applicable.

Migration

The countries of the Horn of Africa are among the main countries of origin, transit and destination of significant migration flows to other countries in the region as well as to the EU.

The report recommended a holistic, conflict-sensitive and context-specific and that puts humans first taking into account the different drivers of migration in the region and the persistent vulnerabilities of migrants, upholding the rights of migrants and refugees and recognising the benefits of circular migration and regional mobility in the wider region. It suggested immediate assistance and long-term support to the countries hosting and assisting refugees to secure their protection.

Lastly, the report recommends **countering the influence of third-party actors**, including China and Russia, which do not share the EU's values and objectives in the region and pursue strictly bilateral interests.