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

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The European Parliament adopted by 457 votes to 59, with 122 abstentions, a **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. However, these countries face common risks and threats, including the immediate and long-term effects of climate change, jihadist terrorism, ethnic tensions and problems of weak governance.

The EU is a major partner for peace, security, democracy, sustainable development and humanitarian aid.

Parliament made 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

Members believe that in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU must recalibrate its engagement with the region and that it must respond to the fact that Russia's illegal actions are having a negative effect on the overall security situation in the region.

Russia has already created well-established 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. It is important to recognise that these actions have the potential to further destabilise neighbouring regions, to counter Russian attempts to orchestrate disinformation campaigns in the region with a view to countering anti-EU sentiment by putting in place a comprehensive EU public communication strategy to counter and defeat Russian efforts.

The report recommended deepening diplomatic dialogue with governments in the region and recognising that the continuing war, including the Russian maritime blockade, is disrupting supply chains and having serious repercussions for food security in the Horn of Africa, given that around 90% of wheat is imported from Russia and Ukraine.

Guiding principles

Parliament recommended (i) develop a truly strategic vision for cooperation and dialogue by giving new impetus to a mutually beneficial relationship based on effective consultation and shared values, interests and perspectives (ii) foster African ownership of programmes, to enable African solutions to African

problems, through a conditional approach based on the more for more and less for less principle; (iii) facilitate an approach in which local communities and civil society organisations can work to build their own capacity and better coordinate and organise themselves.

Regional peace and security

Parliament 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;

- considering the inclusion of youth and the representation and active participation of women in peace and security issues;

- addressing the root causes of conflict, extremism and radicalisation, such as extreme poverty and inequality, the consequences of climate change, i.e. the scarcity of resources such as arable land and water, long-standing border disputes, through political, financial, operational and logistical support;

- 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.

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law

The recommendation 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, Parliament called for:

- strengthened EU support for access to education and vocational training and for the retraining and further training of the workforce, in line with labour market needs, and to empower and provide real opportunities for younger generations and women;

- support to be given to capacity building for local vaccine manufacturing and assist in strengthening local health systems;

- 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;

- the EU's trade policy review to lead 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.

Parliament 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.

External influence

Members recommended **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. The growing presence of these actors in the region, including through propaganda campaigns aimed at reinforcing their role in the region while undermining their competitors, including the EU, undermines regional peace, EU efforts and assistance, and the EU's role as a privileged partner.