Recommendation to the Council taking stock of the functioning of the EEAS and for a stronger EU in the world

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Urmas PAET (Renew, EE) on a European Parliament recommendation to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy taking stock of the functioning of the EEAS and for a stronger EU in the world.

As a reminder, the Treaties clarify that the role of the European External Action Service (EEAS) is to assist the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission and work in cooperation with the diplomatic services of the Member States. The EEAS must be consulted by the Commission on matters related to the external action of the EU in the exercise of its functions.

The role of the EEAS is at the heart of the implementation of the EU's foreign, security and defence policies. It should be reformed to strengthen the EU's role as a more proactive and resilient actor within the international order. Its role and capacity in defining the strategic orientation and contributing to the implementation of EU external financial instruments should be strengthened.

Recommendations

Members recommend that the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy should:

- reinforce the strategic coordination structure composed of all relevant commissioners, the VP/HR and the Commission and EEAS services to ensure coherence, synergy, transparency and accountability of the EU's external action, including of its external financing instruments, other relevant policies and programmes and policy coherence for development;

- ensure that the **EEAS has overall responsibility and the leading institutional role** for the conduct of all EU external relations, including on the external dimensions of internal policies;

- increase the leverage and the effectiveness of the EU's foreign policy by ensuring the **full use of QMV** for certain foreign policy areas, such as human rights and the protection of international law, and for the imposition of sanctions, and with the exception of decisions creating and deploying military missions or operations with an executive mandate under the CSDP, for which unanimity must still be required, as provided for in the Treaty;

- submit sound proposals on how to achieve and guarantee an **own and permanent seat** for the Union in addition to the seats of the Member States in every multilateral forum, including the UN Security Council to strengthen the EU's actorness, coherence and credibility in the world;

- establish a new sanctions regime dedicated to targeting individuals and entities responsible for large-scale corruption.

Strengthening the toolbox

- end the duplication of Commission and EEAS staff, resources and responsibility in EU delegations; convert the EU delegations into **genuine EU embassies**, with one clear chain of command for their staff;

- endow EU delegations in third countries with the necessary resources and expertise;

- support the EU Crisis Response Centre (CRC) in coordinating the response of EU and Member State embassies and delegations and the services they offer to EU citizens in times of crisis;

- consider the establishment of a system for the **flow of intelligence** from Member States to the EEAS on foreign and security issues occurring outside the Union;

- maximise the cooperation and coordination with the rotating presidency and Member States' ministers of foreign affairs

- improve the European Union's preventive diplomacy as a proactive external policy tool to prevent disputes with and between third countries and to limit the consequences when conflicts break out;

- ensure that EU delegations follow up on Parliament's urgency resolutions;

- fully implement the mandate of the High Representative in his capacity of Vice-President of the Commission to ensure consistency of the EU's external action and the task of the EEAS to support the High Representative in this role;

- reinforce the coordinating role of the EEAS to ensure consistency of the EU's external action, including with regard to the Commission's organisational structures, in order to reduce institutional complexity and duplication, increase efficiency and coherence of EU external policy;

- change the name of the position of VP/HR to **Commissioner for Foreign Affairs**;

- significantly and urgently strengthen the Union's Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), which should be the preferred command and control structure, including also for executive military operations and in particular for operations of the future rapid deployment capability.

Increase legitimacy

- provide Parliament with the means to fully play its role in the external action of the Union, including its functions of political control;

- continue efforts to rejuvenate the EEAS staff and develop a permanent, specialised European diplomatic corps;

- provide the EEAS with a **proper political mandate** that gives it a real and substantial role in shaping and driving policy planning beyond its current primary focus on its Brussels-centred, consensus-seeking and management role;

- allow for full functional **autonomy of the EEAS** in terms of recruitment and careers within its structure, including for VP/HR office positions;

- fully support and develop the 'Towards a European Diplomatic Academy' pilot project, which has been extended by one year to integrate these functions within permanent organisational structures;

- increase Parliament's access to documents, as a better formal exchange of information will improve cooperation and understanding between the institutions.