

Implementation of the common security and defence policy – annual report 2023

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Sven MIKSER (S&D, EE) on the implementation of the common security and defence policy – annual report 2023.

Providing Ukraine with the defence capabilities it needs

Members expressed concern about the rapidly deteriorating global security situation and deplore the global consequences of Russia's illegal war of aggression which is hitting countries and vulnerable societies around the world through increased energy prices and food shortages and which also grossly undermines European and global security and stability. They call for a further increase in and speeding up of financial and military assistance to Ukraine and for the immediate deployment of modern equipment, weapons and next-generation air defence and surface-to-surface systems.

The joint procurement of ammunition for Ukraine should also be sped up according to the report and the need to ramp up the manufacturing capacities of the European industry by ensuring rapid and effective implementation of the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP) is stressed.

The EEAS and the Commission are called on to come forward with a plan for a sustainable and long-term package of security commitments for Ukraine that is complementary to ensuring the increasing security requirements of the EU.

Moreover, Members also condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the despicable terrorist attacks committed by the terrorist group Hamas against **Israel**, including the taking of hostages, and express support for the State of Israel and its people. While emphasising Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law and international humanitarian law, the report called for continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need through all necessary measures including humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs.

Strengthening European defence in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

The report underlines and expresses its unwavering support for the commitment of the EU's heads of state and government to provide all the necessary support needed by Ukraine and to take greater responsibility for European security by bolstering Member States' and EU defence capabilities. It encourages greater coordination with transatlantic allies and NATO in this respect. Members consider it necessary to **update the Strategic Compass** in order to incorporate the lessons learned from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine that began days before its adoption, as well as in the light of recent events in the Middle East.

Furthermore, Members reaffirm that, to become a credible geopolitical player, the EU should **reform its decision-making system**. They regret that the potential for fast, efficient and effective foreign, security and defence action, as provided for by the passerelle clauses of the TEU, has been used only in a very limited manner. The Council is called on to gradually switch to **qualified majority voting for decisions on the CFSP and CSDP**, at least in those areas that do not have military implications.

The report calls for the appointment of a **Defence Union Commissioner** (DUC), within the next Commission who is responsible for the finalisation of a true European Defence Union and all defence-

related matters, including CSDP, following a clear division of tasks with the VP/HR. Members believe that, together with the to-be-established fully-fledged Security and Defence Committee in the Parliament, the DUC should jointly oversee a dedicated and substantial Defence Union budget.

Funding

The report calls on the Member States to increase and ensure sustainable levels of defence spending to adjust to the current geopolitical situation and address the significant threats towards the Union's security. The EU NATO Member States are called on to increase their military budgets, based on an assessment of their own requirements, and to spend at least 2 % of GDP, in a well-coordinated and comprehensive manner, which achieves economies of scale and interoperability, also when recalling the strong increase in defence spending by other rivals, such as Russia and China, and in order to remedy shortfalls and meet the requirements across all domains arising from a more contested security order and considering the impact of historic under-investment and spiralling inflation on defence budgets.

Global cooperation

Members express concern over **China's aggressive military posturing** in the South China Sea, including island-building, harassment and dangerous manoeuvres conducted by its navy, coast guard and maritime militia, as well as its continued military pressure, assault exercises, airspace violations and other grey-zone military actions, including cyber and disinformation campaigns against Taiwan.

In addition, the EU's cooperation with certain African countries is being contested. Therefore, the EU and its Member States need to evaluate the effectiveness of EU CSDP missions and operations.

In this regard, the report underlines the importance of the partnership dimension of the Strategic Compass in reinforcing cooperation between the EU and its like-minded allies and partners around the world in order to counter foreign strategies aimed at undermining the EU and destabilising the rules-based international order.

The report also welcomes the accession of **Finland** to NATO but strongly deplores the delaying of the ratification of Sweden's NATO accession. Members urge Hungary and Türkiye to ratify Sweden's NATO membership without any further delay.

Members also underline the importance of developing security and defence dialogues with partners around the world, in particular in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership, but also with key partners in strategic maritime areas such as those stretching from the Southern Neighbourhood and the Indo-Pacific, from the east coast of Africa to the South Pacific and the Far East.

Moreover, the report recognises that the **Arctic region** carries significant strategic and geopolitical importance and underlines the importance of preserving security, stability and cooperation in the area.

Members strongly condemn the numerous missile tests conducted by **North Korea** in 2023 and underlines the particular responsibility of China and Russia when it comes to North Korea. They call on the two countries to use their influence to prevent any further escalation.

The role of the European Parliament

Members calls for the reinforcement of parliamentary democracy and improved scrutiny of non-EU partner countries through parliamentary dialogues on security and defence issues and by building parliamentary resilience against hybrid threats, including cyber and foreign information manipulation and interference.

Members reiterate their demand for delegated acts for work programmes of EU-budget funded defence industrial programmes and their call for the establishment of a fully-fledged European Parliament Committee on Security and Defence with full legislative and budgetary responsibilities on European defence matters.