

# Implementation of the common security and defence policy – annual report 2024

2024/2082(INI) - 10/02/2025 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the report by Nicolás PASCUAL DE LA PARTE (EPP, ES) on the implementation of the common security and defence policy (CSDP) – annual report 2024.

## *Challenges to EU Security*

In recent years, particularly since Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel in October 2023, the EU has faced unprecedented threats and crises in its immediate neighbourhood, necessitating a stronger focus on security and defence. The EU has responded by deepening its involvement in European security and defence, exploring new directions, and launching initiatives to strengthen collective and cooperative defence capabilities.

This first annual report on CSDP implementation under the tenth parliamentary term assesses progress in the current geopolitical and security context.

The report highlighted several areas for enhancing CSDP, including institutional decision-making processes, the joint development of military and armament capabilities, and the financing mechanisms to support these efforts. It also stressed the EU's commitment to addressing evolving security challenges through collective action and offers a roadmap for advancing the CSDP to ensure a more secure and resilient Europe.

## *The Consequences of a Changing Geopolitical Paradigm for European Security*

The report stressed that the security threats facing Europe have reached levels not seen since the Second World War. These include geopolitical fractures, imperialist ambitions of authoritarian powers, systemic rivalry among great powers, nationalist unilateralism, terrorism (including jihadist terrorism), and the increasing use of force and violence by malicious actors to advance political and economic goals.

Members also highlighted the interconnected nature of geopolitical crises in Ukraine, the Middle East, the South China Sea, and the Indo-Pacific. It noted the deepening ties between **Russia and China**, which pose significant challenges to global peace, the rules-based international order, and democratic values. **Hybrid threats**, such as attacks on elections and efforts to undermine European cohesion and adherence to the rule of law, are also emphasised. This represents a paradigm shift away from international law, multilateralism, and a rules-based order.

The EU's **Global Gateway initiative** and other development programmes should align with security objectives, promoting inclusive growth, good governance, and human rights to build resilient societies.

The report called for a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to address the changing geopolitical paradigm, combining diplomatic, developmental, and security measures to ensure long-term peace and stability in Europe and beyond.

## *The EU's Response: a new era of European security and defence*

While achieving greater **strategic autonomy and defence readiness**, as outlined in the Strategic Compass, is crucial, the report stressed that the EU must respect the **military neutrality** of some Member States while emphasising the need for collective security alignment.

The report highlighted that the appointment of the first **Commissioner for Defence and Space** and the development of a white paper on European defence mark steps toward a European Defence Union. Priority measures are needed to address threats, bolster deterrence, and enhance operational capabilities, including dual-use approaches.

The European Defence Union should **complement deeper EU-NATO cooperation**. Joint development of strategic enablers (e.g., air defence, hypersonic weapons) and regular EU-NATO conferences are essential to avoid duplication and enhance interoperability. In addition, close EU-NATO coordination on deterrence, capability development, and industrial production is critical.

The report stressed the need for the EU to adopt a **unified, strategic approach to defence**, combining enhanced autonomy, solidarity, and cooperation with NATO to address current and future security challenges effectively.

### ***Global cooperation***

Deeply concerned about **China's** increasing investments in military capabilities, Members called on the Commission and the Member States to seriously implement a policy of 'derisking' with the aim of managing the risks coming from economic and technological engagement with China. They called, in this regard, for the risks posed by Chinese suppliers in EU critical infrastructure to be addressed, and for no EU funds or subsidies to be directed to advancing the position of these suppliers in Europe.

While condemning the **Iranian Government** for aiding and abetting internationally recognised terrorist organisations and networks that have perpetrated or attempted attacks within the EU, the EU and the Member States are urged to enhance intelligence-sharing and counter-terrorism measures to prevent any future attacks. They reiterated their longstanding call to add the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to the EU list of terrorist organisations.

Members reiterated their condemnation of the terrorist attacks carried out by the terrorist organization **Hamas** against Israel on 7 October 2023, which contributed to further destabilisation in the Middle East, intensified by aggression against Israel by Iranian proxies and the Iranian regime itself. They also reaffirmed Israel's right to self-defence as enshrined and limited by international law and called for the **immediate and unconditional release of all remaining hostages** held by Hamas, an **immediate end to all hostilities** and respect for international law, including humanitarian law.

The report also urged the Council and the Member States to designate **Hezbollah**, in its entirety, as a terrorist organisation and to push for its full disarmament.

Moreover, it is noted that the **Jordan-Syria border** is being used as a crossing point for arms and drug trafficking. Therefore, Members emphasised the need for the EU to further support Jordan, which has been weakened by the current crisis in the Middle East.

### ***Increased resources***

Members welcomed the increased budgets and investment in defence by Member States and the increase, albeit modest, in the EU budget for the CSDP in 2024. They strongly believe that, in the light of

unprecedented security threats, all EU Member States should urgently reach a level of defence spending, as a proportion of their GDP, that is significantly higher than NATO's current target of 2 %. They also called for the next MFF to genuinely provide the means for a defence union.

### ***Greater involvement of European Parliament in the CSDP***

Members stressed the need for **full parliamentary scrutiny and accountability** in light of the increased political priority of the CSDP and **higher defence spending** at both EU and Member State levels during the tenth legislative term. In addition, Members called for a stronger role in scrutinising, legislating, and overseeing the growing range of EU defence initiatives, particularly under the CSDP.

Members highlighted the need to enhance scrutiny of defence industrial regulations by introducing a procedure for delegated acts.

Lastly, the report stressed the importance of strengthening the European Parliament's oversight and involvement in EU defence policies to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective implementation of CSDP initiatives.