# European Union's role worldwide: annual debate 1997, financing the CFSP and the budget

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The report by Tom SPENCER (EPP, UK) which was adopted by the Committee seeks to look at the Union's role in the world in its entirety, rather than restricting itself to the narrower matters falling currently under the CFSP. It paints a mixed picture of the EU's activities. While levelling some criticisms, the report nevertheless emphasises that full implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty offers new opportunities provided there is a change in attitudes as well as in institutional arrangements. The lack of public perception of any progress in developing a European foreign policy, the shortcomings in the area of interinstitutional cooperation, in particular the lack of information for and consultation of Parliament, the mismatch between the EU's foreign policy and its trading activities, and the slow progress made in coordinating defence policies and incorporating the WEU into the EU were among the main criticisms contained in Mr Spencer's report. He also stressed that human rights should be a prominent feature of the CFSP and that provisions on human rights and democracy should be included in all the EU's agreements with non-member countries. Lastly, the report maintains that actions under the CFSP have tended to be very narrowly focused and that CFSP instruments seem unable to define comprehensive policies in areas of global concern such as poverty and the environment. The implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty, with the creation of a policy planning and early warning unit and the office of High Representative, as well as the provision to allow some foreign policy decisions to be taken by majority vote, should address some of these criticisms. The report also calls for a genuine development of "parliamentary diplomacy". The recent European Parliament missions to Algeria and Albania have, it claims, shown that Parliament can contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the Union's external policy. In addition, Parliament should make full use of the range of instruments available to it (recommendations, public hearings, the Sakharov Prize, etc.).