The European Civilian Peace Corps

1998/2166(INI) - 20/01/1999

The idea of setting up a European Civilian Peace Corps (ECPC) was backed by MEPs at a meeting of the Committee. The committee voted to adopt a report by Per GAHRTON (Greens, S) proposing that Parliament adopt a recommendation to the Council on this subject. The Early Warning Unit would be instructed to examine and identify cases in which an ECPC could be used. The report's basic assumption is that a purely military response to cases of conflict is in many cases insufficient and will not bring about real reconciliation between the belligerent parties. The committee believes that an ECPC should be seen as an additional instrument of the EU for underpinning its external action in the field of conflict prevention and peaceful conflict resolution. In no way should the ECPC be seen as an alternative to ordinary peace-keeping missions. Although the EU's experience of setting up the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) in former Yugoslavia could be used as a first step on the way to establishing an ECPC, the report says the Kosovo experience shows that "the inadequate deployment of unarmed observers ... may also have politically undesirable consequences", e.g. because it is easy to take such observers hostage.