Developing a common European security and defence policy CFSP after Cologne and Helsinki

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Catherine LALUMI·RE (PES, F) stressing that a common European security and defence policy (CESDP) was not an end in itself but an instrument of the EU's foreign policy. The European Council was urged to take the necessary steps to make the CESDP fully operational by 2003. The report said that crises should be resolved if possible by civilian means and any military action should be authorised by an appropriate mandate from the United Nations. In the absence of a mandate as a result of deadlock in the Security Council, the international community should intervene only at the express request of the UN Secretary-General. The report added that the EU should draw up the principles and legal bases for it to act by civilian or military means in non-Community countries where a crisis was occurring. The committee expressed support for the guidelines contained in the Feira Summit report for strengthening the EU's capabilities in the civilian aspects of crisis management and the objective of a 5000-strong European police force for conflict prevention or crisis management. The EU's intelligence-gathering and analysis capacities should also be strengthened so as to detect the earliest signs of any crisis, and an annual report should be produced on EU conflict prevention. The report noted that the Kosovo conflict had revealed the European countries' weakness in crisis intervention and supported the 'headline goal' of establishing by 2003 a Rapid Reaction Force that could be mobilised within 60 days and deployable for a year. However, it warned that this would raise the question of the professionalisation of the Member States' armed forces, which was a matter for each country to decide on in the light of its political and social traditions. Substantial joint long-range planning was also needed for the military equipment procurement process, and a common defence research policy should be established. The committee expressed concern over the effectiveness of the interim bodies set up on 1 March 2000 to manage the CESDP and over the coherence between the civilian and military operations upon which the EU might decide. It reiterated Parliament's call for the posts of High Representative for the CFSP and Commissioner for External Relations to be merged into a specially appointed Vice-President of the Commission. The costs of Petersburg tasks should be apportioned among Member States according to their GNP, and any states not wishing to take part in an operation should be required to make a financial contribution. Eventually, the committee felt, those tasks should be funded from the Community's general budget. It stressed that further development of the military tasks should in no way lead to a reduction of Community spending in non-military areas, such as development assistance and humanitarian aid. The report underlined the importance of effective parliamentary supervision of the CESDP and called for the establishment of a European parliamentary body for security and defence. The Council was criticised for its decision on restricting access to documents in this field. Lastly, the committee stressed the need to ensure that the CESDP was compatible with NATO obligations and that it would establish genuine partnership between the EU and the USA and Canada.