Progress achieved in implementing the CFSP, Common foreign and security policy

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The committee adopted the report by Elmar BROK (EPP-ED, D) expressing strong support for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as a key element in ensuring peace and freedom and protecting the EU's values and interests. The report underlined the importance of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights as factors for security and economic development. In particular it welcomed the EU's attempts to achieve the ultimate abolition of capital punishment and the elimination of torture. There was support for enlargement which, the committee felt, would lead to continental stability and security. However, thorough internal reform of the EU was seen as a prerequisite for enlargement. The common European security and defence policy (CSDP) was seen as a fundamental element of the CFSP and as an important step towards European integration. Member States were urged to draw up a calendar for the abolition of the Western European Union (WEU), with its residual functions being absorbed by the EU's new institutional framework that would emerge from the forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference. On specific issues there was broad support for EU policy in the Balkans and a welcome for the new course being followed by the Yugoslav government. Nevertheless the report argued that the EU's new foreign policy priorities should not be financed at the expense of other important tasks. Consequently the ceiling of the financial perspective should be raised to meet the new financial challenges involved in the reconstruction of Yugoslavia. The committee expressed broad support for EU policy towards Russia, Ukraine, the Caucasus and Afghanistan. However, it felt that the EU should extend its commitments in Asia and expressed concern at the lack of any substantial progress on the EU-China dialogue on human rights. It also regretted the emergence of differences between Member States regarding North Korea. The committee also called for the EU to give greater importance to Africa and deplored the persistent inability of the EU to play a constructive role in bringing peace to the Middle East. The report also underlined the importance of Parliament's role in the CFSP and the CSDP and called for the national parliaments of Member States and - under certain conditions - candidate countries and non-EU NATO countries to be involved in the development of these policies. Finally, it welcomed the steps that had been taken to reform the organisation of external relations, but called for the office of the CFSP High Representative to be integrated into the Commission.