Progress in implementing the Common Foreign and Security Policy (Article 21 TEU)

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Elmar BROK (EPP-ED, D) on the progress achieved in the implementation of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP). This 4th annual report focused on a number of areas, including institutional aspects of the CFSP, progress in European security and defence policy (ESDP), conflict prevention and crisis management, strategic partnerships for the EU and the EU's global responsibility for peace, security and sustainable development. The committee believed that the fight against terrorism should be a central component of the CFSP and called for closer links between internal and external security policy. While NATO would remain a key player, the OSCE also had an important role to play in conflict prevention. The report welcomed the fact that the EU was for the first time displaying the political will to act on its own initiative in crisis situations. However, the delay in setting up new civil and military crisis management machinery and in providing the military capabilities envisaged in Helsinki was criticised. On European defence policy, the committee hoped that by the time of the Laeken European Council the strategic shortcomings that were limiting the ESDP's effectiveness would have been overcome by the provision of adequate funding. The parliamentary dimension of the ESDP must be strengthened by intensifying cooperation between the EP and the national parliaments and also with the NATO parliamentary assembly. Finally, the report looked at a number of specific cases. As far as the Middle East was concerned, the committee supported the "road map" proposed by the Mitchell Commission and the sending of international observers to the region. It regretted the fact that the Euro-Mediterranean partnership had suffered from the deadlock in the Middle East peace process and called for priority to be given to the Barcelona process in order to promote peace in the Mediterranean. A comprehensive social dialogue was needed in the Maghreb and Mashreq countries, in particular Algeria. In Africa, conflict prevention required a strategy that took account of issues such as water and energy supplies and the need to combat trafficking in weapons and drugs, and also allowed for greater involvement of NGOs. Regarding Iran, the report called for a policy of 'rapprochement' but demanded an unequivocal condemnation of terrorism before any trade or cooperation agreement could be reached.