Implementation of the Common foreign and security policy CFSP for 1996

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Adopting the report by Mr Tom SPENCER (PPE, UK) on progress with the implementation of the CFSP in 1996, the European Parliament considered that, in terms of organization, transparency and the potential for action by the EU, the CFSP had made an unconvincing start in the eyes of the European public. It regretted, in particular that: - little use had been made of the few joint EU actions and positions and that no global actions had been established; - the European Union had been unable to impose the application of clauses on human rights and democracy; - the Community had had too low a profile in major conflicts; - the EU had, on occasions, turned a blind eye to blatant human rights violations in certain countries. It regretted in particular that the European Commission appeared to have given up making proposals on the CFSP despite its authority to do so under Article J.8 of the Treaty. However, it approved the proposals made at the IGC for a more stable Troïka (consisting of the president of the Council, the commissioner in charge of foreign policy and the secretary-general of the Council). It noted with satisfaction that the idea of integrating the Western European Union (WEU) into the European Union was progressing and advocated security which was not just military but aimed to ease ethnic tensions and promote economic and social security. Reiterating the need for a unit to study and analyze the risks and threats of conflict, it called once again for a European civilian peace corps to be set up in order to back up the humanitarian action of the European Union and prevent the emergence of new conflicts. Considering that the structure of the CFSP should be improved as a result of the IGC, Parliament deplored the fact that no interinstitutional agreement could be reached on the application of article J.7 of the Treaty and called for the operating expenditure of the CFSP to be entered in the Community budget (this spending must remain non-compulsory in order to allow proper parliamentary scrutiny of expenditure). It called in particular for the IGC to introduce majority voting on this matter and to ensure that the Union had a higher defence profile. It called on the Council to allow MEPs to be included in EU delegations to international negotiations at ministerial level and stressed the need for it to consult and inform Parliament before adopting and implementing joint actions and positions. It therefore called for the European Parliament to be properly involved in the definition and political scrutiny of CFSP measures. Reviewing all the crises in 1996, the European Parliament regretted in particular the weakness of the Community action concerning Cyprus and Turkey and the lack of a common position on the enlargement of NATO and relations with Russia. It noted especially that there was little in the way of innovation in the actions planned in former Yugoslavia and called on the Council to exert increased diplomatic pressure on the partners to the Dayton agreements so that war criminals could be extradited and the agreements implemented in full. It also regretted the absence of a common position on Bosnia, the lack of initiative in Kosovo and the ineffectiveness of EU action on the Albanian crisis. In particular, it deplored the division within the Union on the subject of relations with China. At the same time it took a positive view of joint action in the Near East and felt that opportunities remained to be exploited for Community action in Africa (Great Lakes region, Zaïre, Burundi, Rwanda). It hoped for stronger action from the Union in banning anti-personnel mines and called for an overall action programme in Latin America. Finally, the European Parliament considered that the positions taken with regard to Burma (Union of Myanmar) and Cuba set a good example and that, overall, action in defining coordinated positions with regard to security at international conferences had been a success.