

Annual report on Common foreign and security policy CFSP 2004

2005/2134(INI) - 02/02/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drawn up by Elmar **BROK** (EPP-ED, DE), in response to the Council's 2004 annual report on the EU's common foreign and security policy. Parliament considered that the Council continued to maintain the a posteriori approach of merely submitting a descriptive list of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) activities carried out in the previous year, instead of consulting Parliament beforehand. Parliament had repeatedly asked the Council to replace this practice with a genuine consultation of Parliament in order to ensure that Parliament's views have a real impact on the choices made for the following year. It reiterated its right to be consulted annually 'ex ante' on forthcoming aspects as provided for in the existing treaties, and asked its Committee on Legal Affairs to examine the appropriateness of referring to the European Court of Justice the Council's practice of merely informing Parliament and submitting a descriptive list of CFSP activities carried out in the previous year. Parliament felt that it must be properly consulted at the beginning of each year on the main aspects and basic choices to be made for that year. The Council must subsequently reporting to Parliament whether – and, if so, how – Parliament's contribution has been taken into account as provided for in Article 21 of the EU Treaty and in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999.

Impact on the main aspects and basic choices of CFSP for 2006 of the period of reflection on the process of ratification of the Constitutional Treaty: In the framework of the existing treaties, Parliament reiterated its call on the Council and the High Representative/Secretary-General of the Council to participate actively in an annual debate on the main aspects and basic choices of CFSP for the following year as well as on the European Security Strategy with both the European Parliament and the national parliaments.

Parliament regretted the attitude of certain Member States, which, in spite of the adoption of the Constitution by the European Council, have for domestic reasons used the right of veto in important foreign affairs matters. Member States should act in a constructive manner in line with the spirit of the Constitution so as to enable the EU to play an effective role on the world stage.

Specific proposals on various thematic aspects for 2006:Parliament felt that both climate change and the spread of poverty in the world should now also be seen as major threats to the Union's security, requiring decisive action, tangible compromises and a strict timetable. However, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) should be regarded as the most dangerous threat to international security. Parliament insisted on the need to continue to promote implementation of the EU's WMD Strategy at international level, to place greater emphasis on disarmament initiatives and non-proliferation issues, to strengthen the multilateral treaties making up the non-proliferation regimes and to provide the necessary financial resources to implement the EU's WMD Strategy. In addition:

- Parliament emphasised the important foreign policy dimension of energy security issues. The recent unilateral gas delivery suspensions by Russia call for a strategic response from the EU. The Commission was asked to present a communication on the foreign and neighbourhood policy aspects of the energy policy;

- one of the key aims of the CFSP should be to involve China and India, as emerging powers, as well as Russia, in responsibility for the state of global governance and for solutions to global challenges. Parliament emphasised the irreplaceable role which the transatlantic partners should jointly play in this context;

- the fight against terrorism must be seen as one of the priorities of the Union and a key part of its external action, while reaffirming the importance of respecting human rights and civil liberties;

- migration issues, including tackling the issue of illegal immigration, should form a very prominent part of the Union's external action, in its relations both with countries of origin and with countries of transit;

- home defence merits greater prominence in European strategic thinking and the protection of the external borders of the Union should be an important element. Joint management of the external borders should become an essential part of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Parliament's priorities in the different geographical areas for 2006: Parliament supported the Council's view that the future CFSP priorities for a Union aiming to be a global actor define themselves. In particular, the Mediterranean, the Transatlantic partnership and the Middle East, the Balkans, eastern Europe and conflict situations, the promotion of peace, security in all its aspects and the ongoing fight against terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction must remain at the core of CFSP for 2006.

Parliament called for a solution to the future status of Kosovo which respects its territorial integrity, upholds minority rights and does not endanger the EU's overall policy for the Balkans. The EU should try and achieve an agreement between the political forces and public opinion in Bosnia-Herzegovina for going beyond the Dayton accords in order to rationalise the institutional architecture and create a more efficient and self-sustainable state. Special attention should be given to the development of Africa. Parliament expressed its deep concern over the large-scale war crimes and human rights violations "which can be construed as genocide" in Darfur. Parliament asked the Council to examine carefully the possibility of sending a military mission to Congo as a contribution to the security of upcoming elections in Congo.

With regard to Russia, Parliament felt that the present partnership with Russia is more pragmatic than strategic since it reflects common economic interests without achieving any progress as regards human rights and the rule of law. A genuine partnership should inspire a friendly and just solution to the issue of border treaties with certain neighbours, and trigger a real peace process in Chechnya involving all the democratic components of society so as to find a peaceful solution to the conflict there. Parliament hoped that that Russia would take a more transparent and even-handed approach towards their common neighbours. It asked for the EU-Russia Four Common Spaces Agreement to be implemented without delay.

Similarly, Parliament underlined the need to improve relations with China in such a way that progress is made not only in trade and economic fields but also on human rights and democracy issues. There must be a binding EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and the Council should not lift the arms embargo until greater progress is made in the field of human rights and arms exports controls in China and on cross-Straits relations.

Parliament called on the Council to renew efforts for a revival of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians and to set up a comprehensive strategy for the broader region of the Middle East. Regarding Afghanistan, it warned that ISAF's reconstruction mission should not be merged with the US Enduring Freedom operation.

On Iran, Parliament strongly supported the view of the International Atomic Energy Agency that at this stage robust verification by the Agency, combined with active dialogue among all parties concerned, is the best way to move forward. It hoped that the negotiations between the EU-3 (Germany, France and the UK) and Iran could resume as soon as possible, incorporating the Russian proposal for the transfer by Iran to Russia of its uranium enrichment activities.

The financing of CFSP:Parliament felt that the Council's position on the financial perspective 2007-2013 did not reflect the ambitions of the EU as a global partner. It deplored the proposed reductions in the levels of spending on external actions and policies, both in themselves and as a proportion of total spending. This sends out the wrong signal with regard to the EU's policy priorities and its preparedness to deliver the results in the field of the CSFP. Parliament recommended that the revised Interinstitutional Agreement should take a step forward and provide for the joint costs of military operations in the framework of the ESDP to be financed from the Community budget, thereby discontinuing the existing practice of Member States' subsidiary budgets or start-up funds. The revised Interinstitutional Agreement should also provide that in the event of any future ESDP operations, and in opposition to existing rules such as the principle that "costs lie where they fall" or any other ad hoc arrangements such as the so-called "ATHENA mechanism", the joint costs of such operations should also be financed from the EU's budget.