

Annual report 2005 on CFSP

2006/2217(INI) - 27/03/2007

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Elmar BROK (EPP-ED, DE) on the annual report from the Council on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 2005. The committee suggested that the EU's foreign policy "should target a limited number of areas which better connect with the wishes and concerns of European citizens and their expectations of the role to be played by the Union in international affairs", including energy security, climate change, the consolidation of democracy and the fight against terrorism. It also said "much more should be done from an external action perspective to halt the spread of poverty in the world". On non-proliferation issues, the report specifically expressed concern "regarding the first test of an anti-satellite weapon carried out by China in January 2007."

The committee said that, "without the Constitutional Treaty, [...] the European Union cannot shape a foreign policy that can at least partially meet the most important challenges". MEPs noted that the mutual assistance clause, structural cooperation, the European External Action Service and the single legal personality were examples of the "urgently needed progress" provided by the Constitutional Treaty. Other recommendations included establishing the office of Minister for Foreign Affairs and setting up an EU Diplomatic Academy.

On the question of the CFSP budget, MEPs regretted that "the specific article within the CFSP budget chapter devoted to European Union Special Representatives does not avoid the proliferation of envoys of that kind," which the committee believes undermines the role of the Commission's delegations on the ground. Furthermore, the committee was dissatisfied with the fact that "the new Interinstitutional Agreement does not change the existing rules on ESDP operations, such as the principle that 'costs lie where they fall'," which in effect places the financial cost of any military operation on the Member State who provides the troops to accomplish it. The report argued that this would jeopardise future participation in ESDP operations and could be avoided if such operations were financed directly from the EU's budget.

The committee also stressed the need to involve the EP more closely in the elaboration and oversight of CFSP goals. It stressed that "the Council's practice of merely informing Parliament and submitting a descriptive list of CFSP activities carried out in the previous year, instead of really consulting Parliament at the beginning of each year [...] constitutes a de facto infringement of the very substance of Article 21" of the EU treaties. It therefore called for more active consultation of the Parliament on the CFSP in general, while also calling for additional powers, for instance "by conferring on Parliament the authority to appoint, and dismiss, the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and the Directors of SitCen, the EU Satellite Centre (EUSC) and Eurojust."

Lastly, the committee made a series of recommendations on the priorities in the geographical areas for 2007, including: reinforcing the European Neighbourhood Policy, helping to stabilise the Western Balkans, promoting peace, stability and economic development in Afghanistan, helping to stabilise the situation in Lebanon, strengthening transatlantic relations with both the US and Latin America and giving a new impetus to the Barcelona Process.