Basic information

2013/2146(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
EU comprehensive approach and its implications for the coherence of EU external action **Subject** 6.10.05 Peace preservation, humanitarian and rescue tasks, crisis management	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	DANJEAN Arnaud (PPE)	16/01/2013
	Shadow rapporteur MUÑIZ DE URQUIZA María (S&D) JÄÄTTEENMÄKI Anneli (ALDE) VAN ORDEN Geoffrey (ECR) MEYER Willy (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development	GUERRERO SALOM Enrique (S&D)	08/11/2013
INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	CLIVETI Minodora (S&D)	19/06/2013

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
European External Action Service	ASHTON Catherine

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary

12/09/2013	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/02/2014	Vote in committee		
21/02/2014	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0138/2014	Summary
03/04/2014	Decision by Parliament	T7-0286/2014	Summary
03/04/2014	Results of vote in Parliament		
03/04/2014	Debate in Parliament		
03/04/2014	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2013/2146(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/7/13289

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE516.859	22/10/2013	
Committee draft report		PE524.877	11/12/2013	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE523.103	21/01/2014	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE527.844	22/01/2014	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0138/2014	21/02/2014	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0286/2014	03/04/2014	Summary

EU comprehensive approach and its implications for the coherence of EU external action

2013/2146(INI) - 21/02/2014 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Arnaud DANJEAN (EPP, FR) on the EU comprehensive approach and its implications for the coherence of EU external action.

The EU in a changing world: Members recalled that significant geostrategic changes are also taking place in other parts of the world, owing in particular to the rise of a multipolar international scene. They considered that the refocusing of US security policy towards the Asia-Pacific, the growing struggle over energy and resource security, the increasingly serious effects of climate change and a severe and long-lasting global financial and

economic crisis affecting all EU Member States. They stressed that in such a geopolitical climate, a **fresh approach** is needed in order to shape a new multipolar world order that is inclusive, credible, just, cooperative, underpinned by respect for human rights, to resolve differences without recourse to armed conflict.

EU comprehensive approach: state of play in implementing the political framework: Members stressed the importance of effective coordination and coherence in the European Union's external action. They underlined the fact that the Lisbon Treaty provides the framework for the Union to achieve a more **coherent, joined-up and comprehensive approach** for the effective pursuit of the Union's external relations, including by creating the **triple-hatted High Representative (HR) of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**, who is also Vice-President of the Commission and Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council, and by establishing a unifying and **effective European External Action Service** (EEAS).

In this regard, Members regretted that, despite the Lisbon Treaty innovations, lack of progress in the consistency of the Union's external action persists in areas relating to development, trade, energy, environment, migration and other global issues.

Member States are urged to meet their Treaty-based commitments to support the Union's external relations and security policy actively and in a spirit of mutual solidarity and to comply, in conducting their own policies, with the **Union's action in this area**. Members called for active engagement and dialogue with citizens and civil society to **ensure legitimacy and a common understanding of the comprehensive and the EU foreign policy in general**.

Priority areas for a comprehensive approach: Members considered that as a basis for moving from concept to action in the pursuit of a comprehensive approach, the following four areas must be addressed:

1. Institutional coherence: Members stated that the concept of a comprehensive approach should be understood as the coordinated work of all relevant institutions (the EEAS and the Commission's relevant services, including ECHO, DEVCO, TRADE and ELARG, but also Parliament and the Council) pursuing common objectives within an agreed framework designed at EU level, and mobilising its most relevant instruments, **including the CSDP**.

This general approach should be supported by the **EEAS** and promote: i) mediation and dialogue; ii) the principles of humanitarian aid. Members welcomed in this regard Joint Communication "A comprehensive approach to the European Union against external crises and conflicts" (JOIN(2013) 0030), which represents an opportunity to clarify and operationalise this approach in the new post-Lisbon institutional setting. In addition, they stressed that the main goal of the EU's development policy is the eradication of poverty and that it is therefore essential that **antipoverty objectives are not marginalised**.

Members also focused on other related aspects of the comprehensive approach:

- the importance of conflict prevention;
- joint analysis, joint assessment and planning as well as the clear division of responsibilities in this context.

2. Financial coherence: Members recalled Parliament's determination to ensure that the Union's external financial instruments for the period 2014-2020 are designed so as to facilitate the pursuit of a comprehensive approach to external relations Union.

They regretted that the **lack of ambition** in the EU budget for external action for the period 2014-2020 and called for better anticipation of the funding needed for the implementation of EU strategies. They recalled the need to **review the financing mechanism for military CSDP operations** (known as the ATHENA mechanism), so as to allow for a more adequate and fairer burden-sharing of the costs of EU military operations, thus enabling all Member States to contribute through force generation or financing the supporting costs.

3. Coherence in practice: Members insisted that such strategies should clearly set out the EU's objectives and priorities and the specific timeframe for implementation and determine what instruments are best suited for action (ranging from inter alia humanitarian and development aid to diplomatic action and mediation, economic sanctions, and the CSDP). They stressed that the role and contribution from the CSDP should be part of the initial political analysis and definition of policy objectives. They regretted that, even when strategies are defined, the EU often does not manage to implement them, and is instead forced to take **contingency and emergency action** (as was the case in Sahel region, for which a very comprehensive and well-prepared EU strategy document had been unanimously approved but did not lead to satisfactory implementation until the situation in Mali deteriorated dramatically). There is a need to improve upstream action by operating a policy shift from reactive-centric approaches to a more adequate and efficient prevention-focused approach.

Members are convinced that, in cases where crises cannot be avoided, the **EU must be able to plan and deploy the appropriate civilian and military assets**, as well as mobilise complementary EU instruments, rapidly and effectively across the whole spectrum of crisis management operations, including in cases of humanitarian crises. They called on the Member States to commit to **unified EU action in third countries** and to make sure that coordination and articulation of actions on the ground are duly concerted with the EU institutions, namely the Commission and the EEAS. Members regretted in this regard that autonomous action by Member States in third countries, especially post-conflict and democratising societies, without proper articulation between them and the EU local Delegation has proved damaging to the EU's goals and interests.

4. Partnerships: Members stressed that a successful comprehensive approach also requires **developing partnerships outside the Union's institutions** and Member States, to include other international and multilateral partners, strategic partners, host countries, regional organisations, civil society actors and the private sector, with due respect for the decision-making autonomy of the EU. They reiterated their view, in keeping with the purposes of the Lisbon Treaty in enhancing EU foreign policy and the role of the EU in global peace, security and regulation, that an **EU seat in an enlarged UNSC remains a central, long-term goal of the European Union**. They, therefore, invited the VP/HR to take the initiative to develop a common position of the Member States to that end.

It should be noted that the report was subject to a minority opinion tabled by Sabine LÖSING (GUE/NGL, DE) rejecting the option recommended in the report to merge military/security and humanitarian/development aid. Instead, the minority opinion advocated a European development policy which initially focused on the eradication of poverty and which must not be used for military purposes.

EU comprehensive approach and its implications for the coherence of EU external action

2013/2146(INI) - 03/04/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Union adopted by 492 votes to 94, with 28 abstentions, a resolution on the EU comprehensive approach and its implications for the coherence of EU external action.

The EU in a changing world: Parliament recalled that significant geostrategic changes are taking place, owing in particular to the rise of a multipolar international scene with new actors pursuing competitive regional and global ambitions, growing interdependency, the rise of multidimensional asymmetric threats, the refocusing of US security policy towards the Asia-Pacific, the growing struggle over energy and resource security, the increasingly serious effects of climate change and a severe and long-lasting global financial and economic crisis affecting all EU Member States. Members stressed that in such a geopolitical climate, a **fresh approach** is needed in order to shape a new multipolar world order that is inclusive, credible, just, cooperative, underpinned by respect for human rights, to resolve differences without recourse to armed conflict.

EU comprehensive approach: state of play in implementing the political framework: Parliament stressed the importance of effective coordination and coherence in the European Union's external action. It underlined the fact that the Lisbon Treaty provides the framework for the Union to achieve a more **coherent, joined-up and comprehensive approach** for the effective pursuit of the Union's external relations, including by creating the **triple-hatted High Representative (HR) of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**, who is also Vice-President of the Commission and Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council, and by establishing a unifying and **effective European External Action Service** (EEAS).

In this regard, Parliament regretted that, despite the Lisbon Treaty innovations, lack of progress in the consistency of the Union's external action persists in areas relating to security, humanitarian matters, development, trade, energy, environment, migration and other global issues. It is concerned that the Commission often takes a restrictive approach, protecting its own competences in these areas and **minimising coordination functions with the EEAS**.

Priority areas for a comprehensive approach: Parliament considered that as a basis for moving from concept to action in the pursuit of a comprehensive approach, the following four areas must be addressed:

1. Institutional coherence: all relevant institutions (the EEAS and the Commission's relevant services, including ECHO, DEVCO, TRADE and ELARG, but also Parliament and the Council) should work together to pursue common objectives within an agreed framework designed at EU level, and mobilising its most relevant instruments, **including the CSDP**.

This general approach should be supported by the **EEAS** and promote: i) mediation and dialogue; ii) the principles of humanitarian aid. Members welcomed in this regard Joint Communication "A comprehensive approach to the European Union against external crises and conflicts" (JOIN(2013) 0030), which represents an opportunity to clarify and operationalise this approach in the new post-Lisbon institutional setting. Plenary insisted that **foreign policy objectives should not be placed in opposition to development principles** and principled humanitarian action, as all three policies are complementary. Parliament recalled that Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) establishes the principle of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), and emphasised the potential for tension between PCD on the one hand and the comprehensive approach to crisis management outside the EU on the other. It stressed that the main goal of the EU's development policy is the **eradication of poverty** and that it is therefore essential that **anti-poverty objectives are not marginalised in EU foreign policy** and that the **comprehensive approach does not erode the civilian character of development cooperation**.

Parliament called for the safeguarding of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence which are crucial for both the effectiveness of humanitarian action and the **safety of its actors**.

Parliament also focused on other related aspects of the comprehensive approach:

- the importance of conflict prevention;
- joint analysis, joint assessment and planning as well as the clear division of responsibilities in this context.

2. Financial coherence: Parliament recalled its determination to ensure that the Union's external financial instruments for the period 2014-2020 are designed so as to facilitate the pursuit of a comprehensive approach to external relations Union.

It regretted that the **lack of ambition** in the EU budget for external action for the period 2014-2020 and called for better anticipation of the funding needed for the implementation of EU strategies. It recalled the need to **review the financing mechanism for military CSDP operations** (known as the ATHENA mechanism), so as to allow for a more adequate and fairer burden-sharing of the costs of EU military operations, thus enabling all Member States to contribute through force generation or financing the supporting costs.

3. Coherence in practice: Parliament insisted that such strategies should clearly set out the EU's objectives and priorities and the specific timeframe for implementation and determine what instruments are best suited for action (ranging from inter alia humanitarian and development aid to diplomatic action and mediation, economic sanctions, and the CSDP). It stressed that the role and contribution from the CSDP should be part of the initial political analysis and definition of policy objectives. It regretted that, even when strategies are defined, the EU often does not manage to implement them, and is instead forced to take **contingency and emergency action** (as was the case in Sahel region, for which a very comprehensive and well-prepared EU strategy document had been unanimously approved but did not lead to satisfactory implementation until the situation in Mali deteriorated dramatically). There is a need to improve upstream action by operating a policy shift from reactive-centric approaches to a more adequate and efficient prevention-focused approach.

Members are convinced that, in cases where crises cannot be avoided, the **EU must be able to plan and deploy the appropriate civilian and military assets**, as well as mobilise complementary EU instruments, rapidly and effectively across the whole spectrum of crisis management operations, including in cases of humanitarian crises. They called on the Member States to commit to **unified EU action in third countries** and to make sure that coordination and articulation of actions on the ground are duly concerted with the EU institutions, namely the Commission and the EEAS. Members regretted in this regard that autonomous action by Member States in third countries, especially post-conflict and democratising societies, without proper articulation between them and the EU local Delegation has proved damaging to the EU's goals and interests.

4. Partnerships: Parliament stressed that a successful comprehensive approach also requires **developing partnerships outside the Union's institutions** and Member States, to include other international and multilateral partners, strategic partners, host countries, regional organisations, civil society actors and the private sector, with due respect for the decision-making autonomy of the EU. It reiterated its view, in keeping with the purposes of the Lisbon Treaty in enhancing EU foreign policy and the role of the EU in global peace, security and regulation, that an **EU seat in an enlarged UNSC remains a central, long-term goal of the European Union**. Parliament, therefore, invited the VP/HR to take the initiative to develop a common position of the Member States to that end.