## Basic information

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|---|---|
| **2020/2111(INI)**<br>INI - Own-initiative procedure | Procedure completed |
| Foreign policy consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak<br>**Subject**<br>4.20.01 Medicine, diseases<br>6.10 Common foreign and security policy (CFSP)<br>**Legislative priorities**<br>The EU's response to the Covid-19 pandemic | |

## Key players

European Parliament

| Committee responsible | Rapporteur | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| AFET Foreign Affairs | VAUTMANS Hilde (Renew) | 02/04/2020 |
| | Shadow rapporteur<br>ZOVKO Željana (EPP)<br>BIEDROŃ Robert (S&D)<br>BÜTIKOFER Reinhard (Greens/EFA)<br>WEIMERS Charlie (ECR)<br>VILIMSKY Harald (ID)<br>GEORGIOU Giorgos (GUE/NGL) | |

## Key events

| Date | Event | Reference | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| 17/09/2020 | Committee referral announced in Parliament | | |
| 26/10/2020 | Vote in committee | | |
| 03/11/2020 | Committee report tabled for plenary | A9-0204/2020 | |
| 23/11/2020 | Debate in Parliament | | |
| 25/11/2020 | Decision by Parliament | T9-0322/2020 | Summary |
| 25/11/2020 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |

## Technical information

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| **Procedure reference** | 2020/2111(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/9/03348 |

Documentation gateway

**European Parliament**

| Document type | Committee | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Committee draft report | | PE653.845 | 02/09/2020 | |
| Amendments tabled in committee | | PE658.797 | 01/10/2020 | |
| Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading | | A9-0204/2020 | 03/11/2020 | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | | T9-0322/2020 | 25/11/2020 | Summary |

# Foreign policy consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak

2020/2111(INI) - 25/11/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 467 votes to 80, with 148 abstentions, a resolution on the foreign policy consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak.

***Reviewing the 2016 global strategy***

As the global COVID-19 pandemic is a game changer on the international scene and a risk multiplier, Members stressed the importance of developing new partnerships and strengthening its multilateralist vision, with a strong and coordinated foreign policy response. They welcomed supporting initiatives, such as the establishment of a ‘Team Europe’ and the Global Coronavirus Response Initiative, which help partner countries to tackle the impact of coronavirus.

However, Parliament deplored the lack of global leadership and the absence of a coordinated international response during the initial phases of the COVID-19 crisis. Rejecting the search for isolationist solutions, it denounced the rise of authoritarian nationalism and disinformation campaigns orchestrated by states that foment distrust and weaken democratic societies and international cooperation. It deplored the fact that several governments and political leaders around the world are taking advantage of the crisis to gain excessive powers by restricting human rights and weakening the rule of law.

Regretting that the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated global socio-economic inequalities, Parliament called on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) to review the 2016 global strategy in the light of the global impact of the crisis, to ensure more strategic EU action, and to make support for democracy and the protection of human rights a priority of the 'Team Europe', involving the European Parliament in these efforts.

***New geopolitical balance after COVID-19***

Noting with concern that competition and geopolitical tensions had accelerated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Parliament felt that the EU should lead by example, by advocating multilateral solutions, working with international organisations, including the UN and its agencies, the WHO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and NATO, and seeking stronger cooperation with like-minded countries.

***United States***

Members proposed revitalising the transatlantic partnership to fight the pandemic and other major international challenges, such as climate change, more effectively. They stressed the importance of consolidating cooperation between the EU and the United States, based on mutual respect and a joint agenda to defend multilateralism, international law, shared democratic values, the rule of law and human rights.

***China***

Members noted China has asserted its public diplomacy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic by striving to position itself as a dominant player on the world stage with an alternative governance model. They condemned China's efforts to use ‘virus diplomacy’ against the EU in an effort to cultivate its global image as a benevolent power.

Concerned about a number of mistakes and the opacity of China's initial response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, with the concealment of the scale of the problem, persecution and the enforced disappearance of whistleblowers, Parliament called on Member States to develop a comprehensive approach to China's rise to power and to protect the EU's strategic autonomy.

Members called for a long-term strategy towards China, in which ‘the EU and Member States cooperate with China when possible, compete where needed and confront where necessary to defend European values and interests.

***Russia***

Parliament expressed concern about Russia's attempts to weaken EU unity and its response to the crisis, to create mistrust between the EU and the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries by stepping up disinformation campaigns and cyber-attacks against research bodies, and to use the pandemic to further limit human rights in the country.

Doubting the effectiveness and safety of the new Russian vaccine currently in use, Parliament called on Russia to make a useful contribution to the global response to the crisis, acting in good faith and as part of the international rules-based order.

***A stronger European foreign policy to defend the EU's interests and values and the multilateral order***

Stressing that the COVID-19 crisis has shown the need to strengthen multilateral cooperation, particularly in the field of global health governance, and to reform international institutions, Parliament called on Member States and the HR/VP to draw up an ‘EU roadmap on multilateralism’. It also asked to explore the possibility of creating a new forum for multilateral cooperation between the Western allies - the EU, the US, Japan, Canada, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

Members stated that the EU’s geopolitical ambitions should be supported by sufficient budgetary allocations under the next Multilateral Financial Framework (MFF). They also called on the Council of the Union or the European Council to adopt the rule of qualified majority voting, at least on human rights or sanctions.

Lastly, Parliament recognised the need to review the EU’s security and defence strategies to develop strategic autonomy, including in the health sector, and to improve preparedness for new and hybrid threats and technologies.