

Implementation of the common security and defence policy

2012/2138(INI) - 22/11/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 442 votes to 92 with 75 abstentions a resolution on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (based on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy).

A new strategic framework: Parliament stresses that the EU should be a global political player on the international scene in order to promote international peace and security and that it should be able to assume its responsibilities when confronted with international threats, crises and conflicts, especially in its neighbourhood. It emphasises, in this connection, the need for the EU to assert its strategic autonomy through a strong and effective foreign, security and defence policy enabling it to act alone, if necessary. It recalls that this strategic autonomy is being built with due respect for existing alliances, notably with regard to NATO, while maintaining a strong transatlantic link and duly observing and reinforcing genuine multilateralism as a guiding principle of EU international crisis management operations.

Concerned about the prospect of the strategic decline facing the EU, Members point out that the European Security Strategy, which was drawn up in 2003 and reviewed in 2008, is beginning to be overtaken by events and is no longer sufficient to understand today's world. They therefore call, once more, on the European Council to commission from the Vice-President/High Representative (VP/HR) a White Paper on the security and defence of the EU, which will define the EU's strategic interests. The White Paper should be based both on the concepts introduced by the 2003 and 2008 European Security Strategies and on the new security concepts that have emerged in recent years, such as the responsibility to protect, human security and effective multilateralism.

Members recall that the Lisbon Treaty introduced a number of significant innovations in relation to the CSDP that have yet to be implemented. They consider regrettable, in this connection, the neglect by the VP/HR of past parliamentary resolutions calling for more active and coherent advances in the implementation of the new instruments introduced under the Lisbon Treaty. They urge the VP/HR to provide the necessary impetus to develop the potential of the Lisbon Treaty so that the EU enjoys the full range of possibilities for action on the international scene within the framework of its comprehensive approach.

Civilian and military operations: the resolution emphasises that so far the CSDP has contributed to crisis management, peacekeeping and the strengthening of international security. It insists that the CSDP now needs to be able to intervene in all types of crisis, including in the context of high-intensity conflicts in its own neighbourhood, and to be ambitious enough to have a real impact on the ground.

Parliament notes that 14 operations are currently under way, 11 of which are civilian and 3 military. It welcomes the launch of three new civilian operations in the summer of 2012, in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP Nestor), Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger) and South Sudan (EUAVSEC South Sudan), and the planning of a civilian mission to support border controls in Libya. It considers that these missions are a first sign that the CSDP's agenda is being revitalised and underlines the importance of improving the framework for learning lessons from missions and operations.

Members consider it regrettable, however, that the EU does not take full advantage of CSDP military tools, even though a number of crises might have warranted a CSDP intervention, including those in Libya and Mali. They stress the need to consider providing assistance in the field of security sector reform to the Arab Spring countries, especially those in North Africa and the Sahel region. They encourage, in this context, the intensification of ongoing planning for possible military operations and, at the same time, calls for a re-evaluation of ongoing missions. Parliament calls also on Member States to back up their statements with actions and to use existing means, protocols and accords in order to put their capabilities at the disposal of the CSDP, for example in the form of battlegroups or joint task forces.

Capabilities and structures for conducting operations: Parliament notes that EU military operations still suffer all too often from problems of force generation, and that the credibility of the CSDP is at stake in the absence of credible capabilities. It calls, therefore, on the Member States to remain mobilised to provide quality personnel and equipment.

It notes, furthermore, that the crisis management structures within the EEAS remain under-staffed, on both the civilian and the military sides, which affects their ability to respond and contributes to a degree of marginalisation of the CSDP. It calls on the VP/HR to address this situation as soon as possible.

Among other recommendations, Parliament:

- invites the Commission, the Council and the European Defence Agency (EDA) to consider the adoption of innovative solutions for increasing the EU's projection capabilities, particularly as part of a twin-track approach: a public-private partnership in the field of air transport, built around a small fleet of A400Ms, would allow both the delivery of humanitarian aid for disaster relief and the transport of equipment and personnel as part of CSDP missions and operations;
- insists that the building-up of European capabilities should also result in the consolidation of the industrial and technological base of Europe's defence industry;
- calls on Member States to implement fully the Defence Procurement Directive (2009/81/EC) in order to achieve greater interoperability of equipment and to combat market fragmentation, which often benefits third countries;
- takes the view that the Council and Member States should further support those of the Union's capabilities that could lead to cost savings through pooling, in particular the EDA, the EU Satellite Centre and the European Security and Defence College;
- urges the Council and Member States to provide the EDA with adequate funds and qualified staff so that it is able to perform all the tasks assigned to it by the Lisbon Treaty;
- emphasises that, if the EU is to enjoy decision-making and operational autonomy, it must have adequate satellite resources in the fields of space imagery, intelligence-gathering, communications and space surveillance;
- supports the process of reviewing crisis management procedures, which should be concluded before the end of the year and facilitate the more rapid deployment of civilian and military CSDP operations.

Parliament reiterates its call for the creation of an EU Operational Headquarters (OHQ) for operational planning and the conduct of civilian missions and military operations within the EEAS, if necessary through permanent structured cooperation.

A space policy to underpin the CSDP: lastly, Parliament emphasises that, if the EU is to enjoy decision-making and operational autonomy, it must have adequate satellite resources in the fields of space imagery, intelligence-gathering, communications and space surveillance. It calls on the Council and the Commission to explore the possibility of an EU financial contribution to fund future space imaging satellite programmes so as to allow the Union's political-military bodies and the EEAS to task satellites and obtain, upon request and according to their own needs, satellite images of regions in crisis or regions in which a CSDP mission is to be deployed.