Annual report on the implementation of the common security and defence policy

2017/2123(INI) - 13/12/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 368 votes to 237, with 161 abstentions, a resolution on the annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy.

Parliament stressed that no single Member State can tackle the complex security challenges the EU faces - inter-state conflicts, natural disasters, extreme weather events, water shortages, state collapse, proliferation of criminal organisations, terrorism, cyberattacks - and that the EU must step up its efforts to establish concrete cooperation within the framework of the CFSP/CSDP and to act effectively as a global player, which implies speaking with one voice and acting together, but also focus its resources on strategic priorities.

Members stated that terrorism represents one of the key challenges to the security of EU citizens, requiring swift, firm and coordinated action, both at internal and external level. It stressed the need to prevent radicalisation, to block any source of financial resources to terrorist organisations, to tackle terrorist propaganda and to improve intelligence sharing between Member States, as well as with third countries, NATO and other relevant partner organisations.

Institutional framework: Parliament stressed that the Union needs to use the full range of policy instruments available - diplomacy, development cooperation, civilian and economic instruments, crisis prevention and post-conflict strategies, peacekeeping and peace-enforcing - in order to cope with the rising challenges.

Members congratulated the launch of the European Defence Fund. They urged the HR/VP and the Commission to act on Parliaments calls for an EU Security and Defence White Book in the context of preparing the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

Parliament is in favour of:

- urgently installing the start-up fund as foreseen by the Treaty in order to allow fast deployment of operations;
- establishing permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) on those military aspects that are necessary to implement CSDP tasks such as permanently pooled military units;
- reforming the intergovernmental joint financing mechanism Athena;
- making pooling and sharing of capabilities the rule and not the exception;
- pooling national resources with regard to research, development, procurement, maintenance and training;
- coordinating national defence planning (Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, CARD) as currently planned;
- initiating common rules for military certification and a common policy on security of supply.

All possibilities provided for in the Treaty would improve the competitiveness and functioning of the defence industry within the single market should be used. The Commission, the Council and the VP/HR are called on to engage, together with Parliament, in an interinstitutional dialogue on the progressive framing of a common defence policy.

Permanent structured cooperation: Parliament considered that the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) should develop within the EU framework and that it should benefit from effective Union support, in full respect of Member States competences in defence. It renewed its call for appropriate PESCO funding to be provided from the Union budget.

The resolution also called for the establishment of a fully-fledged EU civilian-military strategic headquarters under PESCO. It encouraged the Member States participating in PESCO to set up a permanent 'European Integrated Force', composed of divisions of their national armies, and to make it available to the Union. It called for the evaluation, in close coordination with the VP/HR, of the opportunity to establish a Directorate-General for Defence within the Commission (DG Defence) which should work in liaison with the European Defence Agency (EDA).

CSDP missions and operations: Members regretted that the efficiency of these missions can still be jeopardised by structural weaknesses, uneven contributions from Member States and unsuitability to the operational environment, deploring in particular the limitations in the CSDP mission mandates. They stressed, in this context, the need for real effectiveness that can only be achieved with the provision of proper military equipment, and urged the Council and the VP/HR to make use of the possibilities provided for in Article 41.2 TEU to this end.

Parliament is also convinced of the need to contribute further to crisis management and prevention and, specifically, to provide assistance to the reconstruction and stabilisation of Iraq. It called for increased efforts to improve cyber security, in particular for CSDP missions, inter alia by taking measures at EU and Member State levels to mitigate threats to the CSDP.

EU-NATO cooperation: Members believe that in the current context, the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO is fundamental to addressing the security challenges facing Europe and its neighbourhood, noting that a stronger EU and NATO are mutually reinforcing. Member States should increase their efforts to act both within an EDU and as autonomous regional security providers, and in a complementary role within NATO.