



MALTA EU 2017
PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Final Conclusions

Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the
Common Foreign and Security Policy and
the Common Security and Defence Policy



26 - 28 April 2017
MALTA

The Inter-Parliamentary Conference,¹

Having regard to the decision of the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments taken in April 2012 in Warsaw regarding the establishment and mandate of this Conference;

Having regard to Title II of Protocol I (and articles 9 and 10) of the Treaty of Lisbon regarding the promotion of effective and regular interparliamentary cooperation within the Union;

Aware of the powers and instruments foreseen by the Treaty of Lisbon for the European Union (EU) in the area of foreign, security and defence; being aware that the instruments create better opportunities for the Union to strengthen the cohesion and effectiveness of its external action aiming at greater EU international influence proportionate to its political and economic weight;

Conscious of the multi-layered decision-making process in the areas of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); aware that effective implementation of these policies must involve numerous policy actors at both the EU and national levels; conscious of the responsibility to engage in parliamentary scrutiny at the respective levels and advance interparliamentary cooperation in the areas of CFSP and CSDP;

Aware that the role of Parliaments as central actors of global decision making, with specific reference to conflicts and crises, has been strengthened;

Underscoring that the European External Action Service (EEAS), individual Member States and the European Union Special Representative for human rights should use every available political and diplomatic opportunity to uphold the respect of human rights as a priority objective of external relations, in accordance with the 2015-2019 Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy of 20 July 2015 and in keeping with the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international humanitarian law, the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights;

Regrets but respects the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.

¹ Notes that these conclusions have been adopted by the Inter-parliamentary Conference with the Danish delegation abstaining.

Priorities and Strategies of the EU in the area of CFSP and CSDP

1. Sixty years after the signature of the Treaty of Rome, the Inter-Parliamentary Conference reaffirms that the European Union is one of the greatest achievements in European history and that it has brought peace, stability and prosperity to its citizens and that these need to be defended and strengthened for the benefit of future generations of Europeans; recalls that an effective common foreign and security policy is one of the main areas where European cooperation could deliver added value; welcomes in this context the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, which sets out proposals to implement the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) in the area of security and defence and calls on all actors at EU and national level to support full implementation of this Plan;
2. Believes that the establishment of a coordinated annual review on defence (CARD) among Member States would be very useful and welcomes the review by 2017 of the Athena mechanism;
3. Emphasises that the EU should strengthen its diplomatic, civilian, security and defence instruments and capabilities, as it can only use its full potential as a global power and responsible international stakeholder if it combines its unrivalled soft power with an adequate level of hard power; respects the role of NATO regarding collective defence for participating EU Member States as well as the will of certain Member States to remain neutral and/or militarily non-aligned; underlines, in this respect, the need for the European Union to achieve strategic autonomy; highlights that building resilience should be one of the main goals of the CFSP, which requires a comprehensive approach combining traditional approaches to foreign and security policy with the use of a wide range of diplomatic, security, defence, economic, communication, cyber, trade, development and humanitarian instruments, as well as increasing energy security independence; takes the view that the CFSP should be more assertive and values-based;
4. Urges the European Union and the United Kingdom to continue their full cooperation in the areas of foreign relations, defence and security.

Eastern Dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy

5. Stresses the importance of continuous implementation of a more realistic strategy for the EU's relations with Russia, defined by the 5 principles suggested by HR Mogherini and approved by Foreign Affairs Council in March 2016 based on consensus and on the upholding of international norms and a credible deterrence, including against the use of hybrid warfare. This strategy also includes selective engagement with Russia in areas where there is a clear interest by the European Union for strengthened cooperation with and support for Russian civil society; supports the EU's imposition of restrictive measures against individuals and entities in Russia in response to the illegal annexation

of the Crimean peninsula, and military aggression in Eastern Ukraine and stresses that these measures should remain in force until the Minsk agreements are fully implemented; underlines its commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova; emphasises the invalidity of elections and referenda held in the occupied territories of Georgia and Ukraine;

6. Is of the opinion that the EU should significantly step up its cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries in order to strengthen their independence, democratic institutions and resilience, including capabilities to counter hybrid threats, capacity and capability building in the security and defence area; reaffirms the crucial necessity to support those who seek an ever closer relationship with the EU and stresses that the EU must substantially strengthen its support for implementation of the Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; recalls that respect for common values and implementation of the Association Agreements will define future developments in the EU's relations with these partner states; calls on the EU to play a more active and effective role as regards conflict resolution and peace-building in regions of conflict; supports the reform agendas in these countries in areas such as the rule of law, democracy, the economy, public administration, the fight against corruption and protection of minorities.

European Response to the Instability and Threats in the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East

7. Emphasises that ensuring peace and stability on our continent, in our neighbourhood and in Africa must now be at the heart of Europe's action; recognises that sustainable development is the condition for security, stability, social justice and democracy; takes the view that it is necessary to address the root causes leading to instability and forced and irregular migration, namely: poverty, the lack of economic opportunities, armed conflicts, bad governance, climate change, and human rights abuses;
8. Recognises that the Middle East and the Southern Mediterranean have been the epicentre of new conflicts as a result of political, demographic, economic change, geographical and climatic challenges in the region; underlines the need to urgently address the root causes fuelling terrorism and radicalisation, which equally affect West Africa, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and Europe at an unprecedented level; urges the EU to undertake concerted diplomatic efforts to put an end to the tragic conflicts in Syria and Yemen and to convince partners in the region of the need for a common and legally based strategy towards these global challenges;
9. Condemns the indiscriminate suffering of innocent civilians and believes the use of chemical, incendiary and other ammunitions against civilian targets and infrastructure equate to war crimes; underlines the urgent need for focused international and regional efforts in order to solve the Syrian crisis and further condemns Russia for vetoing numerous UN Security Council Resolutions on the conflict of Syria;

10. Recognises that trafficking in human beings has become one of the most lucrative criminal activities, is the cause of the death of thousands of people every year and produces serious regional instability; commits itself to proposing to the United Nations to recognise the organised trafficking of human beings, often associated to migrant smuggling, as a crime against humanity;
11. Believes that the EU should adopt a more active role in promoting the peace process and facilitating negotiations for a political solution to the conflict; emphasises that any political solution of the Syrian conflict should involve full respect for the human, political and social rights of Syrians;
12. Underlines that the solution to the Libyan crisis is a prerequisite for stability in the Mediterranean; in this respect, invites the United Nations to appoint a new Special Representative and to authorise the start of the third phase of operation EUNAVFOR MED – SOPHIA; urges the EU to work in cooperation with the UN and other international institutions, such as the Arab League and the African Union, in order to achieve an adequate and stable solution; stresses the need of a more effective national dialogue on reconciliation among Libyan stakeholders and urges the EU Member States to engage in dialogue with the Libyan Government of National Accord on how to support it in its efforts to address the security crisis;
13. Notes that deeper regional economic cooperation between the EU's southern neighbouring countries could lead to increased trade among them and subsequently more potential for stability and prosperity, and therefore calls on the establishment of such sub-regional initiatives;
14. Believes that more resources should be made available for the Eastern and Southern dimensions, in order to increase stability in the European neighbourhood;
15. Recognises the importance of selective engagement and, whenever the situation allows, dialogue with Russia to ensure accountability and maintain the option to cooperate on resolving global crises where there is a clear European Union interest.

EU's Migration Policy in 2017 and beyond

16. Recalls the 2015 Valletta Action Plan and recognises that the sharp increase in flows of refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants into Europe, from Africa and the Middle East, in recent years entails undue suffering, abuse and exploitation particularly for vulnerable people and the unacceptable loss of life in the desert and at sea, and places the most affected countries under severe pressure; recognises the serious humanitarian consequences and security challenges, the first priority in this context should be to save lives and do everything possible to rescue and protect migrants whose lives are at risk;

17. Accepts that member States in Southern Europe are being put under strain by the refugee and the economic crises causing massive and lasting unemployment and conflict afflicted neighbouring countries. None of these challenges can be dealt with by single States acting alone and efforts should be made to develop a common policy based on solidarity;
18. Calls for the establishment of a genuine, human rights-based common European migration policy based on the principle of solidarity and shared responsibility with the securing of the EU's external borders; stresses the importance of reviewing the existing asylum regime (Dublin III) and adequate legal channels for safe and orderly migration, as a sustainable long-term policy to promote growth and cohesion within the EU, in order to set a clear framework for EU relations with third countries; emphasises that the link between migration and development policies should be strengthened and bring about genuine and truly effective cooperation, without development aid being made conditional on cooperation in migration matters such as border management and readmission agreements; calls on the EU and the Member States to develop new, concrete initiatives ahead of the EU-Africa summit to be held in Abidjan in November 2017, based on: universal values and principles, providing better opportunities for trade, agricultural development, investment, access to energy and economic growth, including through close cooperation between European and local small and medium-sized enterprises and supporting African countries in building democratic, transparent and effective institutions and measures to mitigate the impact of climate change; considers the international cooperation and development policies as a fundamental instrument to achieve such objectives and urges the EU to improve the efficient and effective allocation and use of EU funding and to promote synergies with other international organisations;
19. Acknowledges that further efforts should be made to advance legal migration and mobility possibilities including at bilateral level, by fostering well-managed mobility between and within the continents as well as encouraging policies that promote regular channels for migration and providing the possibility for migrants to apply for asylum in the countries of origin and transit through these countries with the support of international and non-governmental organisations. Adequate financial aid must be allocated to border management, registration, distribution and settlement of refugees; welcomes the Malta Declaration which focuses on measures to stem the flow of irregular migrants from Libya; emphasises the need to help reduce the pressure on Libya's land border by enhancing Libya's border management capacity and by working with neighbouring countries currently enjoying better social and political stability; welcomes the intention of the Maltese Presidency to present a concrete plan for implementation to the Council at the earliest opportunity, to take work forward and to ensure close monitoring of results.

Fighting Propaganda and Information Warfare

20. Emphasises the vital necessity to strengthen internal resilience of the European Union institutions and its Member States; stresses the need to address potential cyber threats to the energy, transport and space infrastructures, financial systems and public health; calls on the Commission, the European External Action Service and the Member States to strengthen their capacity to counter hybrid warfare such as the misinformation and propaganda campaigns, including via StratCom East, reaching people in the EU and its neighbours; urges the Council, the Commission and the Member States to enhance strategic communication aimed at making EU values and external action more visible; stresses that it is also crucial that citizens, especially youths, are trained to distinguish facts from alternative facts, whereby the role of government is to strengthen their ability to do so; recognises that information and cyber warfare, as one of the hybrid threats, is a deliberate attempt at state and non-state level to destabilise and discredit political, economic, and social structures; confirms our dedication to the freedom of the media and respect for the plurality of different opinions in society; believes that the EU should engage with its partners and step up its assistance for capacity-building in the fields of information warfare, cybersecurity and the fight against cyber-crime and cyber-terrorism; welcomes the foundation of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats showing much needed synergy between the EU and NATO countries and calls on both organisations to participate in the activities of the Centre.

Strengthening the Common Security and Defence Policy

21. Welcomes the Rome Declaration and the expression of political will to strengthen European Defence and the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base; welcomes in this regard the intention to setup a military planning and conduct capability (MPCC) which may be considered as the first step towards a strategic civilian and military headquarters; welcomes the publication of the European Defence Action Plan (EDAP); is convinced that the effective implementation of the plan requires strong support and political commitment from the Member States and the EU institutions; underlines the necessity of inclusiveness and transparency of the process; calls on Member States and EU institutions to ensure that EDAP's implementation is beneficial to all Member States; is convinced that using EU funds to increase defence cooperation is a clear expression of the EU's solidarity and willingness to stand together on defence, taking into account the fact that not all EU Member States are NATO Member States; recalls that the EDAP while avoiding any duplication of the existing cooperation platforms should be a strategic tool to foster cooperation in defence at European level; notes the contribution that EDAP will make to strengthen the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base; urges the Commission to present ambitious proposals to establish the capability window of the fund by the end of the year that would stimulate balanced development of the EU's defence across all EU regions and countries; is strongly opposed to using the EU funds designated for crisis prevention, development or research for purposes of defence cooperation or military capability

building in partner countries; considers that the European Defence Agency (EDA) capabilities and permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) should be used to their full potential;

22. Supports the Joint EU-NATO Declaration of 8 July 2016 and its implementation proposals and encourages further practical cooperation between the EU and NATO; Acknowledges that information sharing and coordinated action between the EU and NATO will produce results in such areas as response to hybrid threats, situational awareness, resilience building, strategic communications, cyber-security and capacity building of the EU's partners.