



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 26 February 2013

6884/13

PE	95
PESC	222
ELARG	22
COWEB	25
COASI	28
CONUN	28
COHOM	26
RELEX	172

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)** held in Brussels on 25 February 2013
Chairs: Mr Brok (EPP, DE), Mr Kukan (EPP, SK)

I. Exchange of views on recent developments in North Korea in the presence of the EEAS

The EEAS representative said that the latest nuclear test carried out by the DPRK was to be understood in the context of the cycles of confrontation and *détente* which were typical for this country. It was a provocation which confirmed the DPRK's military force doctrine and which proved that the hope accompanying the appointment of a new leader the previous year "had gone up in smoke". He admitted that there was not much information on the event but it was nonetheless clear that the test amounted to a clear violation of the DPRK's international obligations. Combined with the tensions already existing in East Asia, this test would only serve to increase the regional instability. As far as the international community's reaction was concerned, he said that some 80 countries had condemned the test, including China for the first time. Finally, as to the EU reaction, he said that it was going to support the sanctions regime and consult with key partners.

The ensuing debate focused on two points: on the one hand, the EU reaction, and, on the other, the quality of the analyses by the EEAS. Ms Gomes (S&D, PT) considered that condemnation was not enough. Mr Kacin (ALDE, SI) - very upset about what he qualified as a weak analyses offered by the EEAS and asking for Member States with embassies in Pyongyang to come and give a more in-depth analysis of the situation - wondered if the EU was going to be a player or simply a long-distance observer. Mr Tannock (ECR, UK) replied that there was little the EU could do: only China had leverage, so no external pressure could work. He added that the DPRK was not remotely interested in the EU - it did not even have an embassy in Brussels, only in Berlin. The EEAS representative pointed out that very little information was available, mostly from Member States present in the country. He also drew the attention of members to the fact that the EU was not on the frontline, because it was not a member of the Six-Party talks, nor had it any security presence in the country. Mr Brok (EPP, DE) said that, even without changing the format of the negotiations, the EU had to play a role, but he was not sure if it was ready. He suggested tabling an oral question or a motion for a resolution drafted by political groups at the following plenary session, which would be attended by the High Representative.

II. Reports

a) **Recommendation to the Council on the UN principle of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P)**

AFET/7/09991, 2012/2143(INI), B7-0191/2012

Rapporteur: Franziska Katharina Brantner (Greens/EFA, DE)

Responsible: AFET –

Opinions: DEVE – Michael Cashman (S&D, UK)

Ms Brantner (Greens /EFA, DE) - who had succeeded Ms Brepoels as rapporteur after she left the European Parliament - presented the draft recommendation, whose objective was not to define the concept of the responsibility to protect, but rather to launch the process aiming to define it at European level.

Mr Menendez del Valle (S&D, ES) recalled that reducing human suffering was the only legitimate objective for intervening in a country and pointed out that the BRICS were reluctant to move on this principle. Mr Salafranca (EPP, ES), speaking for his

group on behalf of the shadow rapporteur Ms Neynsky (EPP, BG), wanted to avoid any debate on the implications of the concept and instead discuss how to apply it in practical terms. He emphasised that it should not become a pretext for military operations. Ms De Keyser (S&D, BE) considered that the draft recommendation was unbalanced and called for the EP to be more assertive on how the principle had to be implemented. Ms Neyts (ALDE, BE) warned against the risk of giving the impression that the EU was willing and able to intervene anywhere people were fighting one another. Mr Tannock (ECR, UK) went in the same direction by saying that the expression "right to protect" was preferable because the word "responsibility" gave the impression that intervening was an obligation when it was not, for example in cases where the intervention was too risky. Ms Gomes (S&D, PT) wished to push Member States in the debate and recalled that the principle offered the legal framework to intervene to stop war crimes and human rights abuses, like in Rwanda or Srebrenica. She considered that the reflection on this principle could not be dissociated from that on the reform of the Security Council.

The EEAS representative recalled that the EU consistently defended the principle as formulated in 2005 and placed more emphasis on prevention. She warned against selling it as a Western concept.

The rapporteur closed the debate by saying that she had taken note of the wish of many fellow members to include in the text how the EP interpreted the principle rather than simply to invite reflection. She also warned against the temptation to see, for example, the intervention in Mali as an implementation of the principle, since it was not.

Deadline for tabling amendments: 28 February 2013, 12.00

b) Motion for a resolution on the 2012 progress report on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

AFET/7/11177, 2012/2866(RSP)

Rapporteur: Richard Howitt (S&D, UK)

The rapporteur deplored the current political crisis in the country which risked jeopardising its integration process for years to come. He suggested postponing the vote on the draft resolution for two weeks in order to send a clear message to the

country and because he did not wish to draft a negative report. All the other groups shared his analysis. Mr Posselt (EPP, DE) was the only member to raise doubts on the strategy. He recalled that the resolution referred to 2012 - a year when FYROM had made considerable progress. He said that postponement of the vote could be misunderstood and abused by those boycotting the parliament. The rapporteur reaffirmed that to postpone the vote was not a way of buying time but rather of exerting pressure, both on the country and on Member States.

The name issue also featured prominently in the debate. Greek members (Mr Koumoustakos (EPP, EL), Ms Giannakou (EPP, EL), Mr Chountis (GUE/NGL, GR)) considered that Greece was not the only Member State to be blamed for blocking the opening of accession negotiations for FYROM, recalling that Bulgaria had also raised problems. Ms Pack (EPP, DE) argued that FYROM had the right to choose its own name and considered that once the country was given a real prospect of acceding it would forget the name issue. Ms Ibrisagic (EPP, SE) adopted a similar position: she said that the only way to stop the rise of nationalism in the country was to open negotiations and that the Greek veto had to a certain extent paved the way for the current problem with Bulgaria. To keep FYROM waiting was the worst the EU could do, she concluded. Mr Brok (EPP, DE) recalled that FYROM was responsible for a number of provocations and admitted he was himself unable to understand how a country could jeopardise its European future on an issue such as the name. Mr Koumoustakos replied to these comments by saying that Turkey had been waiting for forty years and that Greece had not vetoed granting FYROM candidate status, hoping that this would bring some change in its attitude, but with no success. The nature of the name issue was also contentious: for Ms Pack and Mr Brok it was a clear bilateral issue, albeit one mediated by the UN and on which the EU had to be more proactive. Mr Koumoustakos considered on the contrary that, since it was being dealt with in UNSCRs, it was by definition an international issue to be treated as such.

Finally the chair decided to postpone the vote for one week only. All the groups agreed, with the exception of GUE/NGL as a form of protest for not being allowed to take the floor in reply to Ms Pack's intervention.

c) Women's rights in the Balkan accession countries

AFET/7/11679, 2012/2255(INI)

Rapporteur for the opinion: Emine Bozkurt (S&D, NL)

Responsible: FEMM – Marije Cornelissen (Greens/EFA, NL)

Ms Gomes (S&D, PT) presented the draft opinion on behalf of the rapporteur and touched upon issues such as domestic violence, trafficking of human beings and rehabilitation of victims of war crimes. The importance of the last point was repeated in the short debate that followed.

d) EU-China Agreement (Articles XXIV and XXVIII of GATT 1994) relating to the modification of concessions in the schedules of Bulgaria and Romania in the course of their accession to the EU

AFET/7/11163 *** 2012/0304(NLE) COM(2012)0641

Rapporteur for the opinion: Charles Tannock (ECR, UK)

Responsible: INTA – Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL, DE)

Mr Tannock (ECR, UK) presented its technical opinion that recommended granting consent. The EPP shadow rapporteur concurred.

III. Next meeting(s)

- 4 March 2013, 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
- 5 March 2013, 15.30 – 16.30 (Brussels)