



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Strasbourg, 24 October 2013

15320/13

**PE 491
PESC 1282
JAI 936
COMAG 104
COHAFA 123
ASIM 89**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Plenary Session of the European Parliament, 23 October 2013
Joint debate Common foreign and security policy (CFSP)

M BROK, rapporteur, stated that Europe had to be a global actor instead of simply paying the bill. In his view, the successes of the High Representative in Kosovo and in the negotiations with Iran clearly showed that when Europe speaks with one voice, the world listens. EU Member States should now demonstrate greater political will to co-operate at the European level.

Mr BROK added that Europe's foreign policy must be forward-looking instead of reactive, since the EU has many individual strategies but no overall strategy.

High Representative Baroness ASHTON, delivered the speech in the annex.

Ms NEYNSKY (EPP, BG), on behalf of the BUDG Committee, considered that the aim of enabling the EU to become a global player was not in line with the reduction of funding for CFSP in the Multiannual Financial Framework. She also called for a mechanism for analysing the activities of the CFSP in order to ensure that expenditure was effective and in the interests of the EU.

Contributions on behalf of the political groups

Mr SALAFRANCA SÁNCHEZ-NEYRA (PPE, ES) welcomed the report and congratulated the rapporteur for identifying a number of key aspects of the CFSP. He agreed with the rapporteur that the EU gave the impression of reacting to crises rather than anticipating them. In his view, the CFSP should reflect the economic importance of the EU and he called on Member States to coordinate their approaches.

Mr PAȘCU (S&D, RO) felt that a new world order was being established and considered that this should also reflect European values. In his view, a strategic dialogue between EU institutions was needed in order to identify truly European interests that were lacking so far. He underlined the importance of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Mr DUFF (ALDE, UK) considered that despite the efforts of the HR, neither the European External Action Service (EEAS), nor the Defence Agency had the trust of the larger Member States. This put the credibility of the EU in the world at stake. Mr DUFF considered that the Cyprus issue should be the main subject for the European Council in December: Turkey had to decide whether it would follow the path of pluralism and democracy or choose the route to an authoritarian Islamic country.

Ms LUNACEK (Verts/ALE, AT) welcomed the work accomplished by the HR and her team and acknowledged that MS were generally unwilling to transfer powers to the EU level. She agreed with Mr BROK that this was not what citizens expected from their political leaders. She warned against subordinating EU values to economic interests, and specifically mentioned Russia. She considered that the EU could make its voice heard for protection of Human Rights in Russia more effectively if it did not have to rely on fossil fuels.

Mr TANNOCK (ECR, UK) acknowledged that some EU missions, such as in Uganda and Mali, were successful and considered that CFSP was helpful whenever there were shared interests between MS. He nevertheless strongly opposed an EU seat at the UN security council.

Mr MEYER (GUE/NGL, ES) referred to the minority opinion of his group on Mr BROK's report, since it defended and further promoted militarization as the core element of CFSP, and promoted the synergy of civilian and military capabilities. He underlined the importance of respecting the UN Charter.

Mr BELDER (EFD, NL) raised in particular the issue of jihadists from Europe to Syria. He also asked for a detailed analysis of the situation in Iran.

M SEVERIN (NA, RO) called for Europe to ensure its values could be promoted. In his view, Europe needed to have influence at the geopolitical level to ensure protection of its values and its citizens' security.

Contributions of individual MEPs

About fifty MEPs took the floor and mainly elaborated on the positions already expressed by their group representatives.

Some highlighted the economic situation and considered that budgetary constraints in MS would enhance cooperation at the EU level (DANJEAN - PPE, FR; OJULAND - ALDE, EE). Mr PREDA (PPE, RO) regretted that financing had been cut in the MFF, although Mr BÜTIKOFER (Verts/ALE, DE) felt that financing the Defence agency through the EU budget would not help pooling the EUR 200 Billion spent by MS for defence. Mr VAN ORDEN (ECR, UK) considered that it was naïve to think that MS would pool their budgets.

Other MEPs considered that CFSP was necessary in a world in transition (Ms DE KEYSER - S&D, BE; Ms SCHAAKE, ALDE, NL), or in a multi-polar world (Mr MILLÁN MON - PPE, ES; M PANZERI - S&D, IT). Ms GOMES (S&D, PT), supported by Ms KOPPA (S&D, EL) considered that clear priorities needed to be set for CFSP to act efficiently. Ms CRONBERG (Verts/ALE, FI) considered that EU delegations were key to implementing policy priorities and should be adapted accordingly.

Another group of speakers underlined the need for a comprehensive approach covering political, financial and economic aspects (Ms IANNAKOU - PPE, EL), in order to address the causes of insecurity (Mr KACZMAREK - PPE, PL) and underlined the importance of partnerships with Africa (Ms GABRIEL -PPE, BG).

Ms PANAYOTOVA (PPE, BG) stressed the importance of CSDP, while (THE EARL OF) DARTMOUTH - EFD, UK), considered that NATO was enough.

A leading and proactive role for the CFSP was called for by Mr SALAVRAKOS (EFD, EL) to enable the EU to become a global player (Mr BATTEN - EFD, UK ; Mr KELAM PPE, EE; Mr KUKAN - PPE, SK).

Specific regional concerns were expressed by Mr LANDSBERGIS (PPE, LT), who felt that the EEAS and the defence Agency were necessary to convince Russia that the EU was a calm, yet resolute neighbour. Mr LISEK (PPE, PL) drew attention to the Georgian/Russian border issue.

The importance of eastern partnerships was underlined by Ms LYUBCHEVA (S&D, BG), and Mr MIGALSKI (ECR, PL) who considered that their success would be a test for the CFSP.

Mr SOPHOCLEOUS (S&D, CY), supported by Mr HADJIGEORGIOU (GUE/NGL, CY) stressed the role of Turkey in ensuring stability. Mr PROVERA (EFD, IT) congratulated the HR for the results on Iran.

Ms NICOLAI (ALDE, RO) considered that stronger will was needed in the run-up to the Vilnius summit.

Ms Ashton, in her concluding remarks, acknowledged that much remained to be done to ensure a EU consistent external action. She noted the different approaches of MEPs to CFSP, some suggesting that the rules be changed, some wanting to keep it as it is and some even wishing to end it altogether. She expressed the opinion that the CFSP did not take away anything away from MS and considered that work in the Foreign Affairs Council had proved that action was more effective when delivered together.

She acknowledged that action was often reactive, but considered that this was also due to the speed of events. She underlined that the EU was not competing with NATO and UN, but rather seeking synergies. She also agreed with the perspective of a more comprehensive approach to external action, since EU missions, whether civilian or military, mattered. She considered that money was well spent and that joint action could help in using resources to even greater effect. She concluded by saying that the EEAS would grow and progress; she trusted that she had laid some effective foundations.

Mr BROK underlined the importance of this debate in view of the meeting in Vilnius, and expressed his conviction that the EU's common external action had to progress and grow, since none of the MS alone could have an impact on today's world.

The BROK Report on the future of the Common Foreign and Security Policy was adopted, as amended, by 389 votes in favour, 114 against and 58 abstentions in plenary on 24 October 2013.

Mr President, can I begin by thanking Elmer Brok for his comments and the rapporteurs for the reports that have been put before Parliament today. I think it is very fitting, after the Lisbon Treaty in which we talk about a comprehensive approach, that we are using this opportunity to discuss CFSP and CSDP together in one debate. Our ability to use both actions at the same time and to link them with the work we do with development and with other Commission policies is a key factor in the unique way in which the European Union operates internationally.

The honourable Members have heard me say many times that over the course of my time in office I have had three broad priorities: to set up the Service; to strengthen relations with, and effect a lasting change in, our neighbourhood; and to deepen and strengthen our relations with our strategic partners. All of these are covered in the reports.

Of course I cannot cover every aspect of the report, or indeed the whole world, in the time available in the way that Mr Brok's report does. Nor can I cover CSDP in the same depth as Ms Koppa's report, but I will focus, if I may, on a limited number of areas. But I would like to reassure this House that this does not mean that I do not consider all of the areas covered in the reports to be of enormous importance.

I want to say a little bit about the External Action Service, because it was with the strong support of this House that we established a functioning 21st-century EU External Action Service. It represents and projects Europe's policies and values across the world. When I was writing the EEAS Review earlier this year, I was struck by just how much we had achieved – against the odds in many cases – and by the solid basis we have now laid for the future.

The network of 141 delegations, the professional staff in Brussels with global expertise: I want to pay tribute to all of them. I believe we have the best of the Commission, Council Secretariat and Member States combined. And soon we will also have the best from the European Parliament.

This allows us to be represented collectively and to show that, in today's world, we are better when we operate together. I have said many times that this does not mean that we seek to detract from the role of national diplomacy, but rather – as has been acknowledged by all EU Member States – there are things we can do together that we cannot do alone.

We are particularly well placed to influence events and to promote stability and democracy in our own Neighbourhood – both in the South and in the East. I have said many times before that we should be judged by the effectiveness of what we can achieve in our own neighbourhood. What we do and how we work with the people and countries around us is crucial for them, but it is also extremely important for our own economic and security interests.

In the South we have seen dramatic changes, and our response to those events has been designed to strengthen the move towards positive change and to embed deep and lasting democracy. Political and economic support has been targeted to incentivise reform, to promote inclusiveness – with particular reference to the role of women and young people – and to mobilise all forces in society, including civil society and the private sector.

As recognised in the report, I developed the idea of task forces that bring together European institutions, international financial institutions and the private sector to develop tailor-made solutions for each country, not just in the area of economics but also to give support to civil society and human rights groups, to help them develop the institutions that will enable deep democracy to take root – democracy that goes beyond elections, that is based on institutions, the rule of law and a society that gives equal chances to everyone.

That approach has been important in our cooperation with Tunisia and Jordan. Of course, I would highlight how much more we need to do in Libya. Colleagues will know that I have been in contact with the Prime Minister of Libya in New York and beyond, but there is much that our missions are currently engaged in aimed at bringing stability and security to that country.

A lot of my time in recent months has also been spent in Egypt, where I believe we have a unique role. We have built a strong reputation and we are a trusted interlocutor. I remain able to speak with all sides in Egypt, and my message remains unchanged: an inclusive process is the best guarantee of future stability, and stability is required if we are to deal with the country's political and economic problems.

This is not only a message to take to political leaders. During my last visit I also met with the Grand Imam and the Coptic Pope to talk to them from a religious perspective. Many honourable Members have been concerned about what has happened to Christians in Egypt, so my meeting with the Coptic Pope was especially important as it allowed me to deliver those messages directly from you to him.

I should also mention, whilst on the subject of our neighbourhood, the work that is currently going on with the Middle East Peace Process, the close collaboration that I have established with US Secretary John Kerry, and the work that we are doing by engaging directly with both parties in support of these negotiations. We know that our objective is to find a lasting solution to this conflict that is based on two states. Tomorrow, President Abbas will visit me in Brussels. He and I will discuss progress. We will also continue to engage with the team that is putting together the economic programme that can help to bring a long-term economic solution to the challenges in the West Bank and beyond. Honourable Members will know that Gaza and the issues and problems there are never far from my thoughts, and that they also represent a large part of the work in which we are engaged.

We are, of course, looking now to support the process which will bring us to what we call Geneva II and the prospect of bringing together those from inside and outside Syria in support of a process that will try to bring ceasefires and, eventually, a lasting peace. Honourable Members will know too that we continue to engage with Syria. I recently sent a mission from Brussels to Damascus to meet with many of the groups with which we have continued to work. The reports from that mission were as alarming as they could be regarding what is happening in terms of malnutrition to people in the country and what needs to happen to help restore the city following the terrible destruction that has taken place there. We will continue to do all that we can to push forward, but I say now, honourable Members, that we will need to engage in the long term with Syria if we are to support the country into the future. That means remaining the largest donor in order to deal with this humanitarian emergency. EUR 2 billion in humanitarian development and stabilisation assistance has gone both to Syria and to its neighbours, and we still need to continue to do more.

We are working with the Syrian Opposition coalition to try to improve their capacity to operate, and we are working – as I have already indicated – with a wide range of people engaged in trying to support the future directly on the ground in Syria. We have worked too in helping to support OPCW as it seeks to deal with the chemical weapons in Syria. We have also provided logistical support and the vehicles that they are using. I have been in touch with the Secretary-General to make it clear that we will continue to help in any way that we can.

But I also want to talk about what is happening in our Eastern Neighbourhood. Honourable Members are very focused on the Vilnius Summit, which will take place next month. Our aim is to have a common future that will ensure prosperity and security and guarantee long-term stability, and to bring our partners as close as possible to the European Union.

In New York, together with my colleague Commissioner Füle, we hosted a meeting with the six Eastern Partnership countries to take stock of progress towards the signing or initialling of agreements. It also gave us an opportunity to reiterate the need to implement all necessary reforms and to meet the benchmarks. In recent days, I have met with the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Ukraine in order to make it clear once more what needs to happen.

With Ukraine, in particular, we have made it absolutely clear that we need to see delivery on three issues as crucial signals of Ukraine's determination: improved legislation on the electoral process, moving to adopt ambitious reform of the General Prosecutor's Office, and, of course, dealing with the issue of selective justice.

We need to see definitive progress in the case of Yulia Tymoshenko, and I want to welcome and fully support the efforts of Mr Cox and Mr Kwaśniewski and to pay tribute to them for the number of visits they have made and the work that they are doing.

Elsewhere, we have also continued to engage with Serbia and Kosovo. I met with the leaders for the 17th time in recent days as we prepare for the elections on 3 November. We continue to deal with the issues as they arise, working closely on the elections with the OSCE, which I want to thank for the work that it is doing. We have come an extremely long way in a very short time, and I hope that we will be able to sit down after the elections at our meeting, which will take place three days later, to work out the next stages of the agreements.

But again, as I have done many times before, I want to pay tribute to the leadership in Pristina and in Belgrade for their courage in wanting to move forward in the way that they have. I have talked many times about what I call the comprehensive approach, and this is really fundamental to answering part at least of the question that Mr Brok raised when he opened this debate. This is about how, in the future, we will do things differently to how we have done them in the past and about what makes the European Union unique, namely its ability to bring together all of the different elements that we have at our disposal, from our missions – be they military or civilian – through to the development work which we do, the political engagement at all levels, our security engagement, our work with civil society, the underpinnings of our values of the rule of law, human rights and justice. All of these are brought to bear on some of the greatest challenges that exist in the world. I think that these are important and significant ways in which we are distinct, unique and increasingly recognised across the world. I would argue that we are at the beginning of what can be, and what will be, in the years to come.

We have thought about this in particular in the context of countries which are going through transition. It was a great joy to be here yesterday to see Aung San Suu Kyi finally receive the Sakharov Prize, and in three weeks' time I will meet her again as we go to the Task Force meeting which we have arranged in Myanmar/Burma. This country is on a journey of reform, but it needs to deal with a legacy of conflict, poverty, oppression and weak institutions, and it will take time. We are committed to demonstrating the EU's long-term commitment to supporting that journey and to continuing to say to all those who hold positions of responsibility that there is much that they need to do. There can be no complacency if the country is to continue to move forward. Good beginnings, but by no means enough.

We are also, when we think about that region, significantly developing and strengthening our relations with Asia. I am very pleased with the positive momentum we have had in EU-ASEAN relations in the past 18 months. We have scaled up and re-directed this relationship from one focusing heavily on trade and development to a much more strategic partnership for the future. In the next few weeks, I will visit the region for the third time in seven months.

When I co-chair the next EU-ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting, which will take place in March 2014, I want us to be able to demonstrate that both sides see the strategic case for investment in this real partnership for the future.

I want to say something about the terrible events which took place in the Westgate Shopping Centre in Nairobi and to express again our horror at what happened there. What is happening in nearby Somalia, which has a direct effect on this, is really significant as the country moves from failure towards being able to show the beginnings of regaining the capacity to operate as a state. I was really pleased to co-host the Brussels Conference with the President of Somalia. This was a milestone in our efforts to reconstruct a peaceful, federal state, and in the willingness of the international community to support it.

Honourable Members, this was not only about raising money – important though money is – it was about identifying, with Somalia, the benchmarks, the milestones and the issues in which we can engage directly with them and our colleagues in countries across the world to try to help to ensure success at every level. We also have three CSDP missions operating there, and the New Deal Compact that we made in Brussels provides a framework to help with reconstruction, to really ensure that we are able to help them to develop and provide support. There is the EUR 1.8 billion, as I have indicated, but much greater than this is the genuine long-term commitment.

But of course, this is only one of the countries in Africa in which we are active. We are supporting efforts to combat insecurity, terrorism and organised crime in Western Central Africa; reducing tensions in the Great Lakes; and in Mali we continue to work with many partners, including ECOWAS, in order to provide support for MINUSMA. Our efforts are part of our broader strategy for the Sahel to ensure security and development across the region, and part of the broader concept that we have to help support peace-building in different parts of Africa. This includes in Sudan, in South Sudan and in the Central African Republic, where we are working to support the transition process and the restoration of the rule of law.

We will have the African Union/EU Summit in April, and this will be a real opportunity to set a stronger forward-looking agenda for our relations with the African Union, something that Madam Zuma and I have discussed many times and which I hope we will turn into a reality in the months between now and April, in order to make this the most successful summit ever.

This is also true of our relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. This is a region that is increasingly influential in world affairs. Last January we had the successful EU-CELAC Summit in Santiago, which was an opportunity to reinforce the partnership and to get the agenda set for the coming years. In the Caribbean, too, we have commissioned and put together a joint strategy that emphasises that our relations are about more than traditional development cooperation and trade, important though these are.

Again, it is important to develop strategic relations with regions across the world that move from traditional relationships to forward-looking strategic political partnerships. I fully agree with what Mr Brok has said: we need to operate in a world in which we forge strong partnerships with our strategic allies – the USA, of course; Brazil, India, China and Russia – and with international and regional organisations as well.

I have invested, and will continue to invest, a lot of time in those key relationships with those strategic partners across the world. This is not just because they matter bilaterally, but because they matter in terms of what we are able to do in terms of influencing and dealing with some of the issues which face us – not just far away, but in our own neighbourhood too. I agree that the relationship with the United States is vital in this. That partnership is essential for us – and, I would say, for them – and I also believe that signing the TTIP will make that even stronger.

But I also want to welcome the strong emphasis in the report on universal values. These need to be always at the core of our work. They are central to helping achieve peace and prosperity, promoting deep democracy underpinned by human rights, and ensuring that the roots of democratic freedoms are well established and cannot be removed. Our election observation missions play a vital part in doing that: seven on-going missions right now, and five completed already this year. Our promotion and protection of human rights, too, is at the centre of our policies, developing the range of instruments that we have. The Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy are designed to be a guiding reference for our action.

We have also established guidelines on the promotion and protection of the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. Let me once again stress that this is integral to our human rights efforts and a central aspect of our engagement with all our partners. But as the report says, we need to work together to improve our effectiveness. I was pleased to appoint the first ever Special Representative for Human Rights. He has made an outstanding contribution, and I want to thank him and this Parliament for your pro-active role and support and cooperation.

I would also like to say something about CSDP in the context of what it brings in terms of its unique contribution. It is an important and integral part of our policy options. We have strong relationships with the UN, NATO and the African Union. We have considerable operational expertise: 30 missions on three continents in the last 15 years, changing the fortunes of people and countries and protecting or promoting our values.

We currently deploy more than 7 000 civilian and military personnel, and this is producing results: our EU maritime operation ATALANTA has drastically reduced the problem of piracy off the Somali coast. Security in Somalia has greatly improved, thanks to the training provided by our mission to 3 000 Somali recruits and the EU funding of AMISOM. In Afghanistan, our police mission has trained 5 000 Afghan police officers, and EULEX Kosovo plays a key role in the accompanying implementation of the recent Belgrade-Pristina agreement.

Honourable Members will know that the European Council last December asked me to develop proposals and actions to further strengthen CSDP. In July 2013, I presented my interim report, and on the basis of discussions that took place from that, I issued a final report on 11 October 2013. This contains a range of proposals and actions in line with that mandate, and I have shared these reports with Parliament.

There is no question that the changing geostrategic context, rising security challenges and continuing squeeze on national defence budgets, seen in the light of increased spending in other parts of the world, make the strategic debate at the December European Council a real priority. I believe that leaders must address the crucial question of the political will to develop and deploy capabilities.

Between 2005 and 2010, European defence spending declined by almost 10 %, and it is estimated to have declined by a similar amount over the last three years. Global growth is predicted to rise by 6.8 % in the years 2011 to 2015 as we see accelerated defence spending in emerging markets, Russia and China. In 2012, Asian defence spending overtook Europe's for the first time. We know too that the US is also expected to make changes in the region of at least 10 %.

This points, I would argue, to more European inter-dependence. We have to do more together and identify ways of using the EUR 200 billion we spend on defence each year more effectively, developing and enhancing cooperation and common approaches. When I look at the work of the Commission in its July document 'Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector', as Vice-President of the Commission, I would say that we tried to set out the importance of working together and of seeing a joined-up and coherent effort. I thank Michel Barnier and his team, and Antonio Tajani, for the work that they have done.

We know the defence industry is a driver for jobs, growth and innovation: EUR 96 billion in 2012. It brings major contributions to the wider economy, directly employs 400 000 highly-skilled people and generates nearly 960 000 indirect jobs.

So the message of my report is clear: we need to be able to act, through the CSDP, as a security provider in the neighbourhood and, at international level, to protect our interests and project our values. The Member States' commitment to this is required, so I hope that we will see a successful European Council where leaders can come together and make the decisions that can drive this further forward for the future.

Honourable Members, thank you for listening to what has been quite a long speech covering these reports. I would again like to thank the rapporteurs for the work that they have done and to thank you for listening to this report.