



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 8 September 2014

12938/14

PE 322  
RELEX 718  
ELARG 90  
EUJUST-LEX 1  
PESC 911  
COEST 320  
COSCE 5  
COTER 62

**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Delegations

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Subject: Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament  
Committee on **Foreign Affairs (AFET)** held in Brussels on 1-2 September  
2014 - items 4, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 on the agenda

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Ms Federica MOGHERINI, Minister for Foreign Affairs, appeared in the AFET Committee to present the priorities of the Italian Presidency of the Council in the area of external relations. The Committee then held exchanges of views on the crisis in Iraq (with the Head of EU Delegation in this country), and on the crisis in Ukraine (with the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and Peter BALAS, Head of the European Commission Support Group). AFET also elected a second Vice-Chair, and adopted its opinion on the Council position on the draft EU general budget for 2015.

## **10. Exchange of views with Federica MOGHERINI, Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the Italian Presidency priorities on enlargement**

Ms Frederica MOGHERINI appeared in the Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs to present the priorities of the Italian Presidency of the Council in the area of external relations, i.e., mainly on enlargement. She also reported on the Gymnich held in Milan on 28-29 August 2014, and the subjects discussed largely covered the crises in the European neighbourhood. The room was full and the long discussion that followed showed support from many MEPs for more EU action on the international scene. MEPs also asked many questions on the Ukrainian issue.

In the introduction, the Chair of the committee, Mr Elmar BROK (EPP, DE), recalled that any questions relating to the role of High Representative should only be addressed in the framework of the future hearings of the Commissioners-designate. After having stressed the importance of those hearings and of the cooperation between the HR and the Parliament, Ms MOGHERINI focused on the Gymnich, where the Member States, the HR and the European Parliament had held informal discussions on the strategy concerning the various crises, and on the Presidency's priorities.

Concerning the situation in Iraq, Ms MOGHERINI referred to the substance of the European Council conclusions on 30 August 2014. More generally, she took the view that the EU should develop a strategic and consistent regional approach for the Middle-East, in place of a mere crisis by crisis, country by country management. Answering to concerns raised by the ECR and a member of the EPP, she elaborated on the protection of religious minorities being a fundamental rights issue, not restricted to the protection of Christians. Replying to a question on Syria, she excluded any coalition with Bashar AL ASSAD.

On Gaza, the Minister considered that the EU should play a strategic role in facilitating the political process that should follow from the cease-fire. She stressed the importance of involving regional actors (Egypt, Iran, the Arab League).

The Minister considered that the role of the EU in the Mediterranean region was crucial, and in particular regarding the situation in Libya. In line with the preoccupations raised by the S&D group on this country, she considered that the EU and the Member States should coordinate their actions and cooperate with regional actors, under the auspices of the United Nations. The EFDD group also voiced particular concerns at the situation in Libya and its consequences for the stability of the region and security in Europe. Ms MOGHERINI addressed migration issues, including the development of dialogue with third countries of origin and transit of migratory flows.

Regarding the crisis in Ukraine, Ms MOGHERINI called on the EU to speak with one voice and stressed the need for a sustainable political solution based on respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence. Ukraine was the subject of many questions by MEPs, several calling for more EU action or for stopping the delivery of military equipment to the Russian federation (Mr AUSTREVICIUS, ALDE, LT; Ms FOTYGA, ECR, PL; Mr KELAM, EPP, EE; Mr GRZYB, EPP, PL). She considered that developments, and in particular the aggression by Russian armed forces on Ukrainian soil, since the drafting of the Presidency's programme, showed that Russia was not a strategic partner anymore, but rather a strategic actor. She was asked to provide details about her recent and future trips to Kiev as well as on her contacts with Mr Sergey LAVROV. The representative of ALDE called for dialogue with Russia, including civil society, whereas GUE/NGL took the view that, following what they considered to be a coup d'état in Ukraine, the authorities there included right-wing extremists. Speaking in a national capacity, Ms MOGHERINI took the view that NATO countries sharing a border with Russia should be assured that Article 5 of the Atlantic Treaty would be implemented by the allies if needed.

The Minister referred to the importance placed by the Presidency on the implementation of the Association Agreements, including a DCFTA with Georgia and Moldova.

Another strategic priority for the Presidency will be enlargement, which she considered an essential element for European security, stability, credibility and economic prosperity. In the Western Balkans, concrete results should be pursued and reforms monitored closely, taking into account the specificities of each country, on which she referred in substance to various Council conclusions. Reactions from MEPs regarding enlargement process were generally positive, with the exception of ECR in particular. Replying to concerns voiced by several MEPs on the situation in Turkey, as well as on the issue of its talks with Cyprus, she believed that the accession process was key to facilitating political reform.

Finally, Ms MOGHERINI recalled the general role of the Presidency to support the HR and to promote the respect for human rights, freedom of religion, protection of minorities, women's rights, the fight against the death penalty and against domestic violence.

**11. Exchange of views on crises in the EU wider neighbourhood with:**

- **Ertugul APAKAN, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and Peter BALAS, Head of the European Commission Support Group for Ukraine**

**Mr Ertugrul APAKAN presented the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, of which was appointed Chief Monitor on 2 April 2014:**

The Special Monitoring Mission has been deployed following a request to the OSCE by Ukraine's government and a consensus agreement by all 57 OSCE participating States. The monitors are to contribute to reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability and security. The Mission engages with authorities at all levels, as well as civil society, to facilitate dialogue on the ground. The Mission is also working on facilitating and monitoring a ceasefire and contributing to border control, according to the 17 April 2014 Geneva Statement on Ukraine (by the EU, the United States and the Russian Federation) and the 2 July 2014 Berlin Joint Declaration (by Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany).

Mr APAKAN expressed concerns at the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation, the increasing number of refugees, and all sorts of human rights abuses.

He concluded with the importance of President POROSHENKO's peace plan and of the October 2014 parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

**Mr Peter BALAS, Head of the European Commission Support Group for Ukraine, explained that the group was created in April 2014, mainly to:**

- coordinate support to Ukraine from the EU, other donors and the International Financing Institutions;
- support Ukraine in advancing the reforms necessary to ensure that immediate benefits can be obtained from the Association Agreement and Visa Liberalisation Action Plan.

MEPs mainly supported the actions of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and of the Support Group, with the exception of GUE/NGL, which took the view that, following what they considered to be a coup d'état in Ukraine, the authorities there included right-wing extremists.

MEPs raised concerns as to future developments, Mr BALCITYS (S&D, LT) even wondering about the likelihood of a much wider conflict. Replying to questions, Mr APAKAN and Mr BALAS provided details on reforms in Ukraine, on the development of a surveillance programme for the borders (with the use of drones), but also on the high financial requirements for military, humanitarian, reconstruction and other purposes.

- **Jana HYBÁŠKOVÁ, Head of the EU Delegation in Iraq**

**Ms HYBÁŠKOVÁ** described the security and humanitarian situation in Iraq as a result of the occupation of part of the territory by the "Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL).

In her remarks she set out the following strategies for defeating ISIL:

- The new legitimate Iraqi authorities need to be supported in the formation of a government which includes the three components of Iraqi society (Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds). Sunnis feel marginalised. Disengaging them from ISIL is key. This was supported in particular by Mr HOWITT (S&D, UK) and Mr KELAM (EPP, EE).
- MEPs should use their influence to help empower the legitimate parliament and to support the adoption of reforms.
- MEPs should work to prevent any country from buying the oil sold by ISIL, whether it be Turkey, Iran, or EU Member States. Restrictive measures should be used efficiently. This was supported by several MEPs, including Mr KELAM (EPP, EE). Mr SMITH (Greens/EFA, UK) asked for more information to enable MEPs to act.
- The delivery of arms from Member States to the Kurdish regional authorities needs to be coordinated. Many MEPs were concerned by the lack of coordination, including Ms GOMES (S&D, PT) and Mr TANNOCK (ECR, UK), a supporter of the delivery of arms to the Kurds. However, GUE/NGL underlined the risks of delivering arms in this region. Replying to a few MEPs, Ms HYBÁŠKOVÁ stressed that the independence of Kurdistan at this point would destabilise the region further.

- An international military strategy should be developed; a legal framework is crucially needed; NATO might be a solution.
- In addition to EU intervention on humanitarian aid – she referred to the Civil Protection Mechanism and action by ECHO and Member States – the United Nations should accelerate its action in this area.

Replying to Ms ALLIOT-MARIE (EPP, FR), who focused on the need to protect Christians, the EU Head of Delegation considered that, for their protection as well as for the sake of EU security, borders should not be closed to refugees. This view which was shared by GUE/NGL, particularly in relation to the border between Iraq and Turkey.

Ms HYBÁŠKOVÁ suggested that it might be useful for AFET to discuss these issues with Mr Gilles de KERCHOVE, the EU's Counter-terrorism Coordinator.

The Chair concluded that the resources for the EU Delegation in Iraq need to be increased, and that the EU Financial Regulation should be revised to facilitate financial aid.

**7. Exchange of views on the global challenges facing the EU's foreign policy with Eneko LANDABURU (Fondation Notre Europe - Jacques DELORS Institute) and Kevin WATKINS (European think tanks group) on the occasion of the release of studies on "Engaging Europe in the world" and on "Why Europe's problems need global solutions and the world's problems need European action" respectively.**

The two researchers presented the results of their studies.

Eneko LANDABURU considered that the worsening international situation required stronger EU action and global solutions. They made suggestions to adjust the external relations policy of the EU, including the following:

- Speed up the adoption of mechanisms for the collective management of crises, and check the decline in military capabilities.
- European interests in the energy sphere must be coordinated in order to ensure security of supply, which can be enabled by a European energy community.

- Evince greater solidarity in the struggle against illegal immigration by simultaneously developing a common policy for legal immigration that will allow the EU to address the challenge of our demographic decline.
- Help European businesses to benefit from the growth of the emerging markets and promote European standards in the context of the EU's common trade policy.
- Adopt a more pro-active stance with the EU's neighbours.

Kevin WATKINS argued that the EU's ambitions for its own citizens – for prosperity, peace and environmental sustainability – cannot be divorced from its global responsibilities and opportunities.

He identified five global problems which would shape the future of the EU and the world, and where the EU would have a comparative advantage to act:

- The world economy
- Environmental sustainability
- Peace and security
- Democracy and human rights
- Poverty and inequality.

In its conclusion, the Chair Elmar BROK considered that the two studies could provide MEPs with material for the hearings of Commissioners. On the content, he stressed the need to revise the European Neighbourhood Policy, with more differentiation between the countries concerned. He also considered the idea of involving all EP committees dealing with external affairs, including ENVI, to produce a joint report with suggestions.

## **8 and 12. General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015 - all sections**

AFET/8/00595  
2014/2040(BUD)

Rapporteur for the opinion: Zigmantas BALČYTIS, S&D, LT

Consideration and adoption of budget amendments and of draft opinion.

In the debate that preceded the vote, there was disagreement among the groups concerning whether the budget should be increased or cut. The rapporteur explained that he was aiming at reducing budget cuts proposed by the Council. The EPP considered that the budget for financing crises should not be diminished, and that appropriate resources should also be devoted to elections observation missions and to certain pilot projects. ALDE was of the view that resources should be allocated to priorities, which, in the case of ALDE, related to the Eastern Partnership and to Palestine. ECR generally supported the cuts proposed by the Council but admitted that, in exceptional situations, there could be an increase in the budget (e.g., the Eastern Partnership).

There was also a disagreement on the need to budget resources for the opening of an EU representation in Iran, which was supported by the S&D but rejected by the EPP and ECR.

GUE/NGL considered that the focus should be on civil support rather than on military expenses, and that priority should be given to support to Palestinians.

The draft opinion was adopted (with 51 votes in favour, 10 votes against and 2 abstentions) as well as a series of amendments.

#### **4. Election of second Vice-Chair**

Mr Javier COUSO PERMUY was elected the second Vice-Chair of AFET, in place of Ms Marina ALBIOL GUZMÁN (GUE, ES) who left AFET.

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