Press release

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European Parliament

MEPs want robust EU cyber defence and closer ties with NATO

- Malicious cyber attacks by Russia, China and North Korea demand robust response
- Set up European cyber rapid response team
- Maintain strategic EU-NATO ties

New hybrid threats make it vital to reinforce EU cyber defence with a rapid cyber response team and closer cooperation with NATO, MEPs said on Wednesday.

The cyber defence resolution, passed by 476 votes to 151, with 36 abstentions, notes that Russia, China and North Korea, but also non-state actors, have carried out malicious cyber attacks on critical infrastructure in the EU, engaged in cyber espionage and mass surveillance of EU citizens, run disinformation campaigns and taken internet access hostage (e.g. Wannacry, NonPetya).

Closer cooperation on cyber defence

MEPs stress that Europe's fragmented defence strategies and capabilities have made it vulnerable to cyber-attacks. They therefore urge EU member states to enhance the ability of their armed forces to work together and to strengthen cyber cooperation at EU level, with NATO and other partners. This would entail more joint cyber exercises, training and exchanging military officers, recruiting cyber forensics experts, and also improving the cyber defence expertise of EU missions and operations.

MEPs welcome two cyber projects to be launched within the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO): an information-sharing platform for cyber incidents and cyber rapid response teams.

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They hope this will lead to the creation of a European cyber rapid response team, which would coordinate, detect and counter collective cyber threats.

EU-NATO relations

In a separate resolution on EU-NATO relations, approved by 411 votes to 182 with 57 abstentions, MEPs stress that neither organisation has the full range of tools to tackle new security challenges, which are increasingly less conventional and more hybrid.

In addition to improving cyber defence cooperation, MEPs want EU-NATO strategic ties to focus on strategic communication, counter-terrorism, situational awareness, sharing classified information, stemming irregular migration and removing obstacles to the swift movement of military personnel and assets within the EU.

Quotes

EP rapporteur on cyber defence Urmas Paet (ALDE, EE) said: ”A successful cyber attack can turn a nuclear power plant into a nuclear bomb or cause chaos in a hospital, putting patients' lives at risk. In order to defend ourselves from such threats, we need to strengthen cyber defence capabilities by boosting cooperation between Member States, the EU and NATO. “

EP lead on EU-NATO relations Ioan Mircea Paşcu (S&D, RO) said: ‘’Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the pace and the substance of the EU and NATO collaboration have accelerated, representing today no less than 74 common actions. Controlling hybrid threats, countering cyber attacks, building resilience, fighting terrorism, improving cooperation on missions and operations as well as military mobility, represent concrete domains of further cooperation.”

Procedure: Non-legislative resolutions

Further information

Adopted texts (2018/2004(INI) and 2017/2276(INI)) will soon be available here (13.06.2018)

Video recording of debate (click on 12.06.2018)
Interview with EP rapporteur on cyber defence Urmas Paet

EP study on cybersecurity in CSDP

EP Research Service briefing on EU-NATO cooperation

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