



EU must unleash its internal potential to shape international politics, MEPs say

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The EU has yet to unleash its full potential to shape the international and security environment, Foreign Affairs Committee MEPs said on Tuesday. In a vote on the annual report on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), they called for a more ambitious, proactive, credible and strategic EU foreign policy based on a shared vision of EU key interests and values and a common perception of threats to the Union.

The EU must face up to a dramatically aggravated security environment, in which the international law-based order and stability and security of Europe are challenged to unprecedented levels, MEPs say. They add that the EU's internal crisis, a lack of policy coordination and financial limitations further restrict the EU's influence in the world and call on the EU to improve its internal structures so as to unleash its full potential.

Restoring the EU political order under international law must top the EU's foreign policy priority tasks, says the committee in a resolution drafted by committee chair Elmar Brok (EPP, DE) and backed by 47 votes to 8, with 6 abstentions.

Support eastern neighbours, contain Russia

Supporting the EU's eastern neighbours which wish to draw closer to it must be a top priority for the EU, the committee underlines. Investing in independence, sovereignty, economic and further democratisation of these countries is an important means to contain Russia's ambitions, MEPs say. They also condemn Russia's breaking of international law through its direct military aggression and hybrid war against Ukraine, illegal occupation of Crimea and similar steps vis-a-vis Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The EU must also reduce its energy dependence on Russia and ensure that its external energy security goals are in line its internal energy policy aims, says the text. MEPs voice strong support for establishing a European Energy Union and stress that energy should be part of a comprehensive approach to the EU's external action.

Boost security and stabilisation in the south

The EU should substantially revise its policy towards its southern neighbours, back it with adequate financial resources and do more to promote security, democracy, human rights, protection of minorities and to confront religious extremism there, MEPs say.

In the light of recent terrorist attacks in the EU, the committee also calls on EU member states to step up sharing of their security-related intelligence and reinforce counter-terrorism cooperation with Middle Eastern and North African countries.

Press release

Defence and security: more resources urgently needed

A credible EU foreign policy must be underpinned by adequate defence capabilities in the member states and an effective Common Security and Defence Policy, the committee adds. It urges EU member states to commit, as a matter of urgency, more resources to contribute to their territorial defence. Following the December 2013 European Council on defence, MEPs urge that ambitious decisions be taken at the forthcoming June summit.

The EU should also take a key role in conflict resolution and help to strengthen the rules-based, pluralistic global political, economic and financial order, including respect for the rule of law and human rights, MEPs add.

Plenary vote in March

Parliament as a whole is set to vote on the resolution when it meets in Strasbourg in March. The Foreign Affairs Committee will also vote on a separate report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), drafted by Arnaud Danjean (EPP, FR), on 9 March, followed by a plenary vote on 15 April in Brussels.

In the chair: Elmar Brok (EPP, DE)

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- Committee on Foreign Affairs: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/afet/home.html>

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