



FOREIGN POLICY: AIMS, INSTRUMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was established in 1993 and has since been strengthened by subsequent Treaties. Today, Parliament scrutinises the CFSP and contributes to its development, in particular by supporting the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) and the EU's foreign delegations. Parliament's budgetary powers shape the scale and scope of the CFSP, as well as the EU financial instruments that sustain the EU's foreign activities.

CFSP: DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TREATIES

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union was established by the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in 1993 with the aim of preserving peace, strengthening international security, promoting international cooperation and developing and consolidating democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Treaty introduced the 'three-pillar system', with the CFSP as the second pillar. While common positions and joint actions framed common foreign policy responses, the CFSP was based principally on intergovernmental procedures and consensus.

The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam established a more efficient decision-making process including constructive abstention and qualified majority voting (QMV). In December 1999, the European Council established the function of the High Representative for the CFSP (as well as that of Secretary-General of the Council). The 2003 Treaty of Nice introduced further changes to streamline the decision process and mandated the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which had been established through a Council decision in January 2001, to exercise political control and strategic direction of crisis management operations. Following the failure of the EU Constitution project in 2005, its key institutional provisions were recast in a further Reform Treaty, signed in Lisbon on 19 October 2007.

Entering into force on 1 January 2009, the Treaty of Lisbon provided the Union with legal personality and an institutional incarnation of its external service, in addition to eliminating the EU's pillar structure. The Treaty created a range of new CFSP actors, including the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (who also serves as Vice-President of the Commission) and the new permanent President of the European Council. As well as creating the EEAS, the Treaty upgraded the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which forms an integral part of the CFSP. (For details, [6.1.2](#)).

The legal basis for the CFSP was laid out in the TEU and revised in the Lisbon Treaty. Title V, Articles 21-46 TEU establish 'General Provisions on the Union's External Action and Specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)'. In the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Union's external action is covered in Part 5, Articles 205-222. Part 7, Articles 346 and 347, also apply.

PARLIAMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY POWERS AND INSTRUMENTS

Despite its limited formal role in foreign policy decision-making, Parliament has supported the concept of the CFSP from its inception and sought to extend its scope. In view of the international challenges arising in the last decade, Parliament has repeatedly pushed for the creation of an EU 'Foreign Minister' post and a 'European diplomatic service'. In practice, Parliament has achieved a degree of informal cooperation with the EEAS, the EU Presidency, the Council Secretariat and the Commission in the realm of foreign affairs, as well as with the national parliaments of the Member States.

Article 36 TEU requires the High Representative to consult Parliament regularly on the principal aspects of, and choices made under, the CFSP and to inform Parliament of the policy's evolution. Parliament holds twice-yearly debates on CFSP progress reports and asks questions of, and makes recommendations to, the Council and the High Representative.

Parliament's right to be informed and consulted about the CFSP/CSDP has been further strengthened by the High Representative/Vice-President's declaration of political accountability in 2010. The declaration provided, *inter alia*, for:

- enhancing the status of the 'Joint Consultation Meetings' (JCMs), which allow a designated group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to meet counterparts from the Council's Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EEAS and the Commission to discuss planned and ongoing civilian CSDP missions;
- affirming the right of Parliament's 'special committee' to have access to confidential information relating to the CFSP and the CSDP. This right is based on a 2002 interinstitutional agreement;
- holding exchanges of views with heads of mission, heads of delegation and other senior EU officials during parliamentary committee meetings and hearings;
- mandating the High Representative to appear before Parliament at least twice a year to report on the current state of affairs regarding the CFSP/CSDP and to answer questions.

In addition to this political dialogue, Parliament exercises its authority through the budgetary procedure. As one half of the EU budgetary authority, Parliament must approve the annual CFSP budget. Parliament also helps to shape the relevant external financial instruments (for example, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the Instrument for Stability) through a process of trilateral negotiations with the Council and the Commission.

Parliament regularly scrutinises the operations of the EEAS and provides it with suggestions on structural issues, ranging from its geographical and gender balance to its interaction with other EU institutions and the diplomatic services of the Member States. Parliament also holds regular discussions with the High Representative and the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) appointed for certain regions or issues. Parliamentary committees, which helped set up the EEAS, also exchange views with the EEAS's newly appointed heads of delegation.

Parliament also has a role to play in monitoring the negotiation and implementation of international agreements. Parliamentary consent is required before the Council can conclude such agreements. (For more details [6.2.1](#); [6.2.3](#))

INTERNAL PARLIAMENT STRUCTURES INVOLVED IN THE CFSP

Much of Parliament's work on the CFSP is done in specialised committees, in particular the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and its two subcommittees (on Security and Defence/

SEDE and on Human Rights/DROI), as well as in the Committee on International Trade (INTA) and the Committee on Development (DEVE). These committees shape the CFSP through the reports and opinions they issue. They also serve as Parliament's principal points of contact with global governance structures (including the United Nations), other EU institutions, the Council Presidencies and Member States' national parliaments.

CFSP-related work is also undertaken by parliamentary delegations, whose role is to maintain and develop Parliament's international contacts (especially through interparliamentary cooperation), promoting the Union's founding values, including liberty, democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. There are currently 34 standing interparliamentary delegations, including joint parliamentary committees (JPCs), parliamentary cooperation committees (PCCs), other parliamentary delegations and joint parliamentary assemblies.

Notable examples of these interparliamentary delegations include:

- the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, created to bring together MEPs and the elected representatives of those African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries that have signed the Cotonou Agreement;
- EuroLat, a joint multilateral assembly originating in the Bi-regional Strategic Association established in June 1999 between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean;
- the EuroNest parliamentary assembly (PA), the parliamentary forum of the EU's Eastern Partnership, which brings together MEPs and members of national parliaments in Eastern Partnership countries;
- the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM), representing the parliamentary dimension of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which replaced the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the Barcelona Process).

(For information on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly [6.1.2](#))

PARLIAMENT'S IMPACT ON THE CFSP

Parliament's involvement in the CFSP helps to enhance the policy's democratic accountability. Parliament has ardently supported the post-Lisbon institutional landscape, advocating an enhanced role for the EEAS, the EU delegations and the EUSRs, as well as a more coherent policy and a more effective CFSP. It has pushed for greater coherence among the EU's political and financial instruments for external policies, so as to avoid duplication and inefficiency.

Parliament has provided a platform for exchanges among institutional and governmental policy-makers, as well as civil society and epistemic communities (such as think tanks and academics), helping to raise public awareness of the CFSP and facilitating the participation of a wide range of partners within and beyond the EU, both governmental and non-governmental. Through its activities, Parliament has strengthened the visibility of the EU's foreign policies, and served as a bridge between the EU institutions and citizens.

GLOBAL STRATEGY AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In June 2015, the European Council tasked High Representative Federica Mogherini with preparing an EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) by June 2016. This followed the High Representative's strategic assessment of the key changes and challenges in the global environment, which concluded that there was a need to revise the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS). The goal of the Global Strategy was to provide a broad strategic framework in

which the EU would be able to understand and face today's international challenges in a strong and coherent manner, drawing on the wide range of tools and mechanisms at its disposal.

Together with Member States, national parliaments, experts and the wider public, the European Parliament has been involved in the Global Strategy consultation process. The EP organised AFET committee meetings and an expert hearing dedicated to the Global Strategy, and adopted a resolution on 'the EU in a changing global environment – a more connected, contested and complex world', which expressed Parliament's wishes for the future direction of EU external policy.

On 28 June 2016, the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy was presented to the European Council by High Representative Federica Mogherini. With its emphasis on security, its ambition for strategic autonomy and its principled yet pragmatic approach to Europe's environment, the EU Global Strategy signifies an important change of philosophy from the 2003 European Security Strategy. The EU Global Strategy identifies five priorities for EU foreign policy:

- The security of our Union;
- State and societal resilience to our East and South;
- An integrated approach to conflicts;
- Cooperative regional orders;
- Global governance for the 21st century.

In order to give effect to the new strategy, the EU will revise existing sectoral strategies and devise and implement new thematic or geographic strategies in line with the EUGS's priorities. Among these will be a sectoral strategy specifying the EU's civil-military level of ambition, tasks, requirements and capability priorities. The EUGS was welcomed by the European Heads of State or Government, leaving further deliberation on the document to the High Representative, the Commission and the Council. This started with a discussion at the Foreign Affairs Council of 18 July 2016, where Ministers expressed their readiness to continue the work in the implementation phase. To ensure a solid follow-up, the implementation of the Global Strategy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament.

On 14 November 2016, the Foreign Affairs Council was presented with a CSDP Implementation Plan, which was intended to operationalise the vision set out in the strategy with regard to defence and security issues. This document, prepared by the High Representative/Vice-President on the basis of consultations with Member States and relevant institutions, was welcomed by the Council. The CSDP Implementation Plan identifies three sets of priorities to which each CSDP mission can contribute:

- Responding to external conflicts and crises;
- Capacity building of partners;
- Protecting the Union and its citizens.

To implement the EUGS in the area of security and defence and to match the new level of ambition, the Plan sets out 13 proposals, which include a coordinated annual review of defence spending, a better EU Rapid Response including through the use of EU Battlegroups, and a new single permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) for those Member States willing to undertake higher commitments on security and defence.

[Wanda Troszczyńska-van Genderen](#)

06/2017