

DEVE letter to AFET on a European Parliament recommendation to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy taking stock of the functioning of the EEAS and for a stronger EU in the world (2021/2065(INI))

Rapporteur: Tomas Tobé (DEVE Chair)

SUGGESTIONS

- A. whereas, in accordance with Article 9 of Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service¹ (hereinafter EEAS Decision), the High Representative shall ensure overall political coordination and the unity, consistency and effectiveness of the Union's external action, while the EEAS shall contribute to the programming and management cycle for the EU's external financing instruments, including on the country allocations and national and regional indicative programmes;
- B. whereas the current global geopolitical context, marked, in particular, by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and by Russia's illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine and its consequences, requires the EU to have a more ambitious, coherent and dynamic external action that is able to react to the numerous challenges, and to promote the principles enshrined in Article 21 of the Treaty of the European Union and the pursuit of internationally agreed objectives, notably Agenda 2030 and the SDGs;
1. Underlines the important role of the EEAS in the programming and implementation of the EU's external financing instruments and therefore strongly recommends that the Council and the Vice-President / High Representative (VP/HR) revise Article 9 of the EEAS Decision to remove obsolete references and take into account the instruments applicable in the 2021-2027 period, notably NDICI-Global Europe;
 2. Recommends establishing a strategic coordination structure composed of all relevant Commissioners, the VP/HR and Commission and EEAS services to ensure coherence, synergy, transparency and accountability of the EU's external action, including external financing instruments, other relevant policies and programmes and policy coherence for development;
 3. Calls on the EEAS, when establishing financial allocations in the programming of NDICI-Global Europe, to take into account partner countries' track record in implementing international agreements and commitments, including the 2030 Agenda, international human rights conventions or the Paris Agreement, as well as any contractual relations with the Union, and to work towards developing stronger partnerships and alliances with those countries that share the EU's fundamental values and principles and contribute to rules based multilateralism; urges a coherent EU position and more effective and serious efforts in applying the "less for less" principle in relation to third countries which display a manifest disregard for human rights and international law, and to adapt the level and intensity of EU engagement accordingly, notably in terms of development cooperation, trade benefits and access to EU

¹ OJ L 201, 3.8.2010, p. 30.

programmes, and to use when appropriate NDICI-Global Europe provisions regarding the suspension of assistance;

4. Notes the growing influence of other international actors in regions of significant geopolitical importance, such as the African continent, and underlines that, in line with the stated ambition by President von der Leyen of establishing a “geopolitical Commission”, the EEAS has an important role to play in promoting and protecting the strategic interests of the European Union, its achievements and the visibility of its actions in partner countries facing an increasingly competitive international order, particularly when it comes to promoting human rights, democracy, peace, rule of law, sustainability and the fight against poverty, inequality and climate change;
5. Stresses the need to make available to the EEAS and EU Delegations the necessary financial and human resources, and expertise, and to adapt their structures in such a manner that will allow developing a more effective EU external action and development cooperation, as well as enhancing the impact of EU climate and energy diplomacy and cooperation with partner countries, to deliver on a green transition that offers new jobs, economic and social opportunities in line with a climate neutral pathway, including by promoting joint actions between the Commission, EEAS, and Member States in a “Team Europe” approach;
6. Highlights the vital role of EU Delegations in third countries, and the need for these to be endowed with the necessary resources and expertise to ensure development effectiveness by engaging in equal dialogue with partner countries, including civil society, identifying the specific development priorities of each country and providing direct support accordingly in the implementation of development cooperation.
7. Also notes the critical role of EU delegations in implementing policy coherence for development by improving the coordination and integration of EU development policy and the external dimension of EU internal policies, notably migration, trade, agriculture and energy, and calls on Delegations to be involved on the preparation of new EU policies and legislative initiatives likely to affect developing countries, including by analysing their possible impact before their adoption and monitoring their impact once they are in place;
8. Believes that the EEAS should truly function as the EU’s diplomatic service and therefore EU Delegations need to engage in meaningful, direct dialogue with partner countries to promote shared values, common goals such as the SDGs, or democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law, and to better understand cases in which partners are not aligned with EU priorities, such as countries not supporting UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
9. Stresses the importance of increasing the visibility of EU actions, including its development cooperation efforts; therefore calls for equipping the EEAS and EU delegations with the tools to develop their strategic communication capabilities to better explain EU actions to decision makers and the general public in third countries, and to counter disinformation, such as Russian efforts to blame the EU and US for the food crisis affecting parts of the African continent.