OPINION

of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the implementation of the common security and defence policy – annual report 2021
(2021/2183(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Gerolf Annemans
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Points out that European defence should no longer be a weak link in the EU integration process and that more political will and urgent concerted action is needed to strengthen the EU’s defence, its capacity to protect itself, its strategic autonomy and its global influence;

2. Points out the rapidly evolving nature of the threats facing the EU, including, inter alia, internal terrorism, cyber-attacks and hybrid warfare, as recently demonstrated by the threat posed by Belarus, which aimed to intimidate and destabilise the EU;

3. Notes that the geopolitical impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a rapidly deteriorating security environment are posing unprecedented challenges to the Union’s common security and defence policy (CSDP); emphasises, against this background, that achieving the objectives of the CSDP, as provided for in the Treaty on European Union, while also fundamentally strengthening the CSDP, is more necessary now than ever; notes that the COVID-19 crisis has also revealed that the EU is unprepared to deal with this type of challenge and considers that solutions must be found to strengthen the EU’s resilience and capabilities;

4. Recalls the Treaty provisions that confer on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) competence for the conduct of the Union’s common foreign and security policy; calls on the VP/HR and the Member States to seize the occasion to deepen multilateral security cooperation with trusted partners and ensure consistency with internal policies; points out that the EU must meanwhile assume responsibility and bolster its security policy through the relevant internal policy frameworks; calls, furthermore, on the Member States to highlight the impact of the CSDP; calls on the Commission and the Member States, in the meantime, to leverage all existing legal and policy instruments to bolster the EU’s role in the world; recalls that the fight for human rights and democracy should remain at the core of the CSDP;

5. Recalls the role played by the VP/HR; calls on the Member States to assess the reform of the decision-making process, namely that contained in Article 31 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), extending qualified majority voting (QMV) to EU foreign and security policy in areas relating to the CSDP, and to explore the full use of ‘passerelle clauses’ and the scope of articles that enhance the EU’s solidarity and mutual assistance in times of crisis;

6. Recalls the plan to establish a permanent Council of Defence Ministers chaired by the VP/HR, with a view to coordinating the defence policies of the Member States and enhancing security capabilities, in particular with regard to military tasks falling under Article 43(1) TEU, such as military crisis management, peace keeping, rescue missions and anti-terrorism, as well as cyber-security; calls on the Member States to recognise
the role of the VP/HR in international negotiations; observes, in this regard, that
provision is often not made for the involvement of the VP/HR in international
negotiations; underlines that a strong perception of the role of the VP/HR could
translate into the CSDP having an increased geopolitical impact;

7. Notes the suggestion to use Article 44 TEU as a basis for the establishment of
permanent multinational military units, such as an entry force; calls on the Member
States to strengthen the EU’s rapid response capabilities; notes the plan to improve the
deployment of the EU battle groups in order to respond to emerging crises and conflicts
around the world; recalls the suggestion to create a ‘rapid entry force’; calls for
adequate financial resources, common training and a pool of available experts for
civilian CSDP missions; points out the suitability of Permanent Structured Cooperation
(PESCO) to facilitate the integration of the EU’s crisis response capacities;

8. Highlights that PESCO is a special means of enhanced, rational and efficient
cooperation, which has the capacity to foster greater convergence in the EU defence
sector; stresses its usefulness in increasing defence investments, enhancing the joint
development of capabilities and reducing the fragmentation of the EU defence market;

9. Remains strongly committed to the Union’s partnership with NATO, which remains
fundamental to EU security policy; welcomes, in this regard, the ongoing preparations
for the new EU-NATO Joint Declaration, which will be presented before the end of the
year; underlines the compatibility between the EU and NATO and the need to reinforce
EU-NATO cooperation on defence and security issues; calls for a very tangible
development in the EU-NATO partnership, starting with enhanced consultation at the
political level;

10. Reiterates its regret that, contrary to the Political Declaration, which envisaged an
ambitious, broad, deep and flexible partnership in the field of foreign policy, security
and defence, the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement did not extend to matters
falling under the CSDP; recalls that it would still be in both sides’ interest to maintain
close and lasting cooperation in this field;

11. Stresses that the EU’s eastern border now faces new defence challenges and an insecure
neighbourhood, and calls for solutions and active measures enabling the Union to
manage these growing risks; underlines the need to intensify the cooperation with
neighbourhood countries on defence and security issues;

12. Recalls that on 16 June 2020, the EU defence ministers decided to develop a Strategic
Compass for security and defence; notes that a legal-political agreement is expected to
be issued at the end of 2022; observes the potential of the Strategic Compass, which
could form the core of the new European defence strategy and improve the current
tools; notes, furthermore, that the Compass aims to foster a common European ‘strategic
culture’, pushing Member States towards a common understanding of the key threats to
Europe and how the EU can be a security provider;

13. Welcomes the proposals made by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in her
2021 State of the Union speech to strengthen the European Defence Union by
improving intelligence cooperation through a Joint Situational Awareness Centre and
interoperability through investment in common European platforms and the
development of a European Cyber Defence Policy;

14. Calls for increased efforts to fight foreign interference in the Union’s diplomacy, security and defence, which often takes the form of cyber-threats or other types of hybrid warfare, in particular hybrid threats that weaponise migration and energy supplies, thereby endangering the EU’s internal and energy security; supports, in this regard, the development of the European Cyber Defence Policy, as announced by the Commission President in her 2021 State of the Union address; notes that the EU must increase its resilience and digital and technological capabilities in order to better address cyber-threats; calls on all EU institutions and the Member States to intensify cooperation and modernise their responses to these threats, through, inter alia, a new EU hybrid toolbox, which should include consistent collective countermeasures against foreign aggressors; calls, furthermore, for the coordination between the Member States’ security and information services to be improved; calls for new common initiatives in the field of cybersecurity;

15. Reiterates that Parliament should play a prominent and active role in scrutinising and supervising the implementation and evaluation of the CSDP, including in monitoring the implementation of PESCO, the European Defence Fund, Military Mobility and the European Peace Facility; states that Parliament should be consulted on CSDP missions and that its recommendations and remarks should be duly taken into consideration; underlines that such oversight plays an important role in ensuring the proper functioning of European democracy and public trust; stresses that such oversight can serve as the starting point towards a stronger institutional role for Parliament in the CSDP;

16. Recalls that the Conference on the Future of Europe provides the opportunity to rethink the institutional status quo and give a new impetus to European democracy; notes that a number of contributions on the Conference platform propose strengthening the EU’s role in the world; calls on the participants of the Conference to consider all possible avenues to achieve that goal; calls on the EU institutions to translate these expectations into concrete proposals and actions.
### INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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<td><strong>Substitutes present for the final vote</strong></td>
<td>Gunnar Beck, Angel Dzhambazki, Alin Mituța</td>
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<td><strong>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</strong></td>
<td>Stelios Kympouropoulos, Ljudmila Novak</td>
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## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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Key to symbols:
+ : in favour
- : against
0 : abstention