

Foreign and security policy: MEPs call for unity and strategic autonomy

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EU must champion rules-based international order

- Call to abolish unanimity in some foreign affairs areas
- EU must intensify its efforts to become more strategically independent
- MEPs strongly condemn the mob assault on US Congress incited by Donald Trump

The COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up call for Europe, which needs a stronger, more united and more assertive foreign and security policy, MEPs highlighted on Wednesday.

The EU has to be able to defend its interests and values, and champion a rules-based international order that guarantees multilateralism, democracy and human rights, MEPs stress in their annual report on the implementation of the [Common Foreign and Security Policy](#).

Strategic cooperation with third countries

Europe needs to work closely with its allies and establish more strategic cooperation with third countries based on trust and mutual benefit, they say, adding that transatlantic cooperation remains crucial in EU foreign policy. MEPs condemn in the strongest terms the “mob assault” on the US Congress by rioters, which was “incited by President Donald Trump’s conspiracy theories and baseless claims that the presidential election of 3 November 2020 was rigged”, adding that they are alarmed by the rise of populism and extremism on both sides of the Atlantic.

Europe also has to work more closely with the UN and NATO, and jointly tackle regional and global security challenges such as conflict situations, health crises, hybrid threats, cyberattacks and disinformation. To increase the effectiveness of the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy, MEPs call on member states to urgently consider whether [decisions should be taken by majority and not unanimity](#), at least on human rights issues and sanctions.

Quote

Rapporteur [David McAllister](#) (EPP, DE) said: “The EU has untapped potential regarding its Common Foreign and Security Policy. We can only step up our leadership on the international stage as the preferred ‘partner of choice’ for third parties if we are united and work together.”

The report was adopted by 340 votes for, 100 against and 245 abstentions.

A more robust defence policy

In their annual report on the implementation of the [Common Security and Defence Policy](#), adopted by 387 votes for, 180 against and 119 abstentions, MEPs underline the vital need to intensify the EU’s efforts to be more strategically autonomous.

MEPs stress that the EU can actively contribute to overcoming and settling conflicts around the world through [CSDP missions and operations](#), in particular in the EU’s neighbourhood. They urge the Commission to present and implement an ambitious strategic work programme for the [European Defence Fund](#) designed to strengthen collaborative actions and cross-border cooperation throughout the EU as well as for military mobility. Finally, recalling that effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes are a cornerstone of global and European security and stability, they point to a worrying trend of non-compliance with, withdrawal from, or the non-extension of, global arms control treaties.

Quote

Rapporteur [Sven Mikser](#) (S&D, ET) said: “We are committed to strengthening a rules-based international order and effective multilateralism. The EU must take on a stronger role in providing security and prosperity in its neighbourhood. It will only be able to do so if the member states contribute the necessary assets and forces to Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations. The EU has to continue developing its autonomous capacity, as well as strengthening its resilience to hybrid and cyber threats.”

Further information

[Committee on Foreign Affairs](#)

[Adopted texts \(20.01.2021\)](#)

[Video recording of the debate \(19.01.2021\)](#)

[Procedure file: Report on Common Foreign and Security Policy](#)
[Procedure file: Report on Common Security and Defence Policy](#)

[EP Research Service: Implementation of the common foreign and security policy \(CFSP\)](#)
[EP Research Service: Implementation of the common security and defence policy](#)

[EP Research Service: Qualified majority voting in foreign and security policy: Pros and Cons, 19.01.2021](#)

[Multimedia: Debates on foreign affairs and security policy](#)

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