

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY AND THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY CONCLUSIONS

3-4 April 2014, Athens

The Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Having regard to the decision of the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments taken in April 2012 in Warsaw regarding the establishment and mandate of this Conference;

Having regard to Title II of Protocol I (and articles 9 and 10) of the Treaty of Lisbon regarding the promotion of effective and regular interparliamentary cooperation within the Union;

Cognisant of the new powers and instruments foreseen by the Treaty of Lisbon for the European Union (EU) institutions in the area of foreign, security and defence policy; being aware that the new instruments create better opportunities for the Union to wield international influence commensurate with its political and economic weight;

Conscious of the multi-layered decision-making process in the areas of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); being aware that effective implementation of these policies must involve numerous policy actors at both the EU and national levels; conscious of the responsibility to engage in parliamentary scrutiny at the respective levels and advance interparliamentary cooperation in the areas of CFSP and CSDP;

Current priorities for the Common Foreign and Security Policy

- **Ukraine**

1. Expresses deep concern about the Ukrainian crisis and its consequences for international security, the international rule of law and global governance; condemns Russia's military intervention in, and illegal annexation, of Crimea that undermines international law and is contrary to Russia's existing commitments and obligations including the UN Charter, the OSCE Helsinki Final Act and the Budapest Memorandum; states that the so-called referendum held in Crimea on 16 March is unconstitutional, and condemns in the strongest terms all acts that compromise the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine;

2. Welcomes the statements and conclusions adopted by the Council and by the European Council, and the signature of the political chapters of the Association Agreement with Ukraine on 21 March; supports the unilateral implementation of those parts of the Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreement, along with the comprehensive

financial package, which have immediate positive impact on Ukraine in the short-term including avoiding the country's economic default and, over the long-term, supporting the necessary substantial economic and institutional reforms; further welcomes the sanctions adopted by the Union on those directly involved, both in Ukraine and in Russia, in de-stabilising Ukraine, as a signal of the determination of the Union to ensure such aggression shall not be accepted; in addition, calls for the preparation of further sanctions should the situation deteriorate or in response to threats to the territorial integrity, sovereignty and security of our Eastern partners; considers the interim government in Ukraine legitimate and welcomes its readiness to address the crisis through political dialogue; further appeals to all parties involved to refrain from violence and pursue a peaceful dialogue;

3. Calls on Russia to immediately de-escalate the crisis, to withdraw its troops on the border and from Ukrainian territory; furthermore, calls on Russia to recognise the interim government in Ukraine as a legitimate interlocutor and engage in direct bilateral dialogue and bona fide negotiations with a view to solving the crisis in full respect of international law and the UN Charter; urges the Council and the HR/VP to engage at the highest level to this end as well as for the safe and secure access by the OSCE monitoring mission throughout the territory of Ukraine including Crimea; rejects any negotiations about the future of Ukraine without Ukraine being at the table; calls for Russia to fulfill the above conditions in order to return to developing a Strategic Partnership with the European Union;

4. Invites national Parliaments to send, together with the European Parliament and with the support of the OSCE/ODHIR, election observation delegations to Ukraine on the occasion of the forthcoming presidential elections, in order to support the Ukrainian authorities' efforts to hold peaceful, free and fair elections which should take place on the 25th May; calls on the authorities in Ukraine to continue to take all necessary steps towards ensuring inclusiveness, transparency and respect of human rights, including the protection of minority rights;

5. Welcomes the decision of the European Council to sign the Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with Georgia and Moldova no later than June 2014 and invites the European Parliament and national Parliaments to ensure a smooth ratification process;

- **Syria**

6. Reiterates its strongest concern for the conflict in Syria that has caused over 140.000 deaths, 2 million refugees and 9.3 million Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance, half of them being children, over the past three years, which amounts to a tragic and unprecedented humanitarian crisis; calls on EU institutions and Member States as well as other international actors to further provide humanitarian assistance and to promote a reflection at the UN on establishing secure humanitarian corridors to provide vital humanitarian relief in all parts of Syria;

7. Notes with alarm the failure of the Geneva I and Geneva II talks and calls on the HR/VP to intensify efforts, together with the UN special envoy, in order to organise a further round of talks as soon as possible in order to establish a functioning framework for a political solution that brings an end to the devastating violent conflict and creates

the conditions for a democratic transition; calls for the effective implementation, with the full financial and technical support of the EU, of UNSCR (2013)2118 which demanded the destruction and removal of Syria's chemicals stockpile by mid-2014; points out, however, the need to also address the devastating flow of conventional weapons in the region and in particular the reported use of cluster munitions; recalls the pressures upon neighbouring countries caused by high levels of refugee flows as well as the fact that recent incidents serve to warn that the Syrian crisis continues to pose serious repercussions on the stability of the whole region; calls upon the EU and its Member States to step-up their active support to the countries of the region in an act of solidarity and mutual interest to counter these regional spill-over effects and to provide humanitarian support to the refugees in these countries; in light of the developments in the Arab world and the Syrian crisis, underlines the urgent need for progress in the Middle East Peace Process; in this respect reaffirms that solving the Middle East conflict is a fundamental interest of the EU;

- **Egypt**

8. Welcomes the adoption of the Egyptian Constitution but expresses serious concern at the credibility of Egypt's democratic transition and the government's commitment to the implementation of the Constitution in the light of the recent sentencing to death of over 500 representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as the crackdown on civil society and media representatives; considers the death sentences totally unacceptable and contrary to the principles established in the new Constitution; calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that the conditions for a fair trial are given and to initiate a serious dialogue with all democratic political forces in the country, including the moderate forces within the Muslim Brotherhood;

Current priorities for the Common Security and Defence Policy

- **Follow-up the Defence Council**

9. Considers that the European Council on Defence in December 2013 was an essential, much awaited step to provide further impetus and strategic input for a coordinated approach to European defence, which has been in serious decline in recent years and needs a decisive boost; recognises that the European Council conclusions, as well as Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of November 2013, have established an agenda that needs to be implemented effectively and as a matter of priority, and is determined to continue closely monitoring progress in this respect, as stated at previous inter-parliamentary conferences; calls for a timely implementation of the "Follow-up on objectives and taskings" in order to achieve tangible results on European defence ahead of the next European Council dedicated to this topic in June 2015; considers that an annual meeting of the European Council to discuss this topic as well as regular meetings of a Council on Defence could further support progress in this area;

10. Underlines that recent developments in international politics highlight the need for the EU to carry out a thorough reflection on the future of CFSP and CSDP; takes note of the neighbouring regional realities and expresses its concern for the emergence of an arch of instability stretching from Ukraine across north Africa; reminds that all Member States of the EU should enjoy the same level of security; calls for more strategic foreign policy coordination at the Union level, in line with the commitments in the Lisbon Treaty, for the EU to address the growing number of threats and challenges on the

periphery of the EU's external borders; remains convinced that the mandate from the Council to the HR/VP and the Commission in consultation with the Member States, is an essential step forward towards defining a common EU vision of strategic interests and objectives as well as of threats and challenges, and is determined to provide input to this exercise; calls for such an assessment to lead to a review of the European Security Strategy, to be conducted in full discussion with the national Parliaments and the European Parliament; is of the opinion that the IPC CFSP-CSDP shall discuss this question as soon as possible;

- **Comprehensive Approach**

11. Welcomes the adoption by the Commission and the HR/VP of the Joint Communication on an EU Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises and calls for its swift implementation; underlines that further improving efficiency and effectiveness under a Comprehensive Approach should be a priority and requires first and foremost leadership by the Union in setting common strategies and priorities in foreign affairs, political and financial coherence from across the institutions and for the Member States to meet their Treaty commitment to pursue the CFSP/CSDP in a spirit of loyalty and solidarity; calls for a strategically coherent and effective use of EU instruments through the Comprehensive Approach across all areas, in particular to conflict prevention, crisis management and resolution; underlines the importance of civilian and defence capabilities as a key pillar in such a Comprehensive Approach and therefore encourages the incorporation of pooling and sharing into national defence planning, as an essential step to further develop the culture of cooperation and deliver enduring results; underlines the need to ease the application of the Berlin Plus agreement; reiterates the essential role of national Parliaments and the European Parliament in carrying out their roles of political control, as legislators and as budgetary authorities and thereby ensuring the successful pursuit of a more cost-effective and efficient EU Comprehensive Approach,

- **EU Maritime Security Strategy**

12. Welcomes the adoption by the Commission and the HR/VP of the joint communication on elements for an EU maritime security strategy and calls on the Council to proceed with the adoption of the strategy as soon as possible; underlines the importance of reflecting the Lisbon Treaty innovations, including the provisions on the “solidarity clause” throughout the EU Maritime Security Strategy; is convinced that the highest priority should be its implementation and operationalisation in order to comprehensively address all maritime security aspects, including *inter alia* early warning and the timely prevention of crises as well as the tackling of threats and risks that have been identified; stresses the responsibility of the EU and its Member States to protect their common vital and strategic interests in the maritime domain; highlights that the maritime security challenges can only be effectively addressed by better coordination between all maritime actors, civilian and military, both at the Union level and in the Member States, together with international and regional partners;

13. Underlines that such a strategy should have a broad scope both operational as well as geographical in order to deal with problems ranging from piracy and terrorist threats to critical infrastructure, to trafficking and illegal immigration, as well as to unregulated fishing and environmental disasters; highlights that such a scope demands overall coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of existing policies, tools and means, as well as

using the full spectrum of the EU's capabilities and structures and proposing solutions ranging from prevention to engagement; calls for establishing principles to guide the implementation of the strategy, including by introducing elements of interoperability, strategic governance arrangements, transversal tools and intervention protocols;

14. Deeply concerned by the case of the two Italian marines and EU citizens; considers it not only a bilateral issue between Italy and India but also a matter of concern to the EU and the broader international community; stresses the need to recognise the principle of immunity for all active servicemen deployed on international missions;

- **CSDP in Africa**

15. Welcomes the launch of the EU Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) and the fact that for the first time the French-German Brigade is deployed under an EU flag; regrets the delays in the deployment of the EU Mission in the CAR, despite the fact that a clear EU mandate was adopted several weeks ago; emphasises that the local population is currently in great danger and that the stability of the transitional authorities is threatened; calls to step-up the deployment of this Mission, taking account its urgency and as requested by the CAR authorities;

16. Underlines that the crisis in the Sahel and in the Sub-Saharan Africa endangers the interests and the security of European citizens and, having regard to the declarations adopted at the fourth EU-Africa Summit in Brussels on 3 to 4 April 2014; stresses that peace and security are essential for development and prosperity and strongly supports African aspirations and commitment to ensure peace, security and stability;

The role of parliaments and the deployment of civilian and military forces under CSDP

17. Takes note of the conclusions of the December European Council relating to effective decision-making for CSDP and the rapid deployment of civilian and military assets, including Battlegroups, and reiterates the call for their swift implementation; calls on the Member States to address the serious gap whereby political decisions are made to launch operations and are not backed up by the provision of civilian and military forces and capabilities; notes the need to respect national constitutions and parliamentary procedures of certain Member States prior to any decision to deploy military forces; welcomes the exchange of views on parliamentary procedures and practices during this Conference; calls for further enhancement of the cooperation among national Parliaments and the European Parliament, as budgetary authorities and legislators, to explore options for addressing the capability shortfalls in European defence that takes into account the budgetary and financial realities as well as the need for a fair system of burden-sharing; engages to ensure that in all our Member States the requirement of the deployment of EU Battlegroups within 5 to 10 days can be met; commits to a further exchange of views on this matter in order to explore the possible solutions to increase the effectiveness and readiness of EU Battlegroups and welcomes the initiative to discuss this topic at the next IPC CFSP/CSDP conference in Rome;

Cyprus

18. Welcomes the resumption of fully fledged settlement negotiations with the aim to reunite Cyprus; supports a comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus problem within the EU framework and in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, reaffirming its long-standing position that the Cyprus issue should be resolved to establish a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation with a single international legal personality, a single sovereignty and a single citizenship.

Final remarks

19. The Inter-Parliamentary conference congratulates the HR/VP for arriving at the end of her mandate by successfully managing the transition under the Lisbon Treaty towards a more coherent and effective Union approach in the area of CFSP and CSDP; in particular underlines its support for the HR/VP's leadership, under difficult circumstances, in the negotiations with Iran, and congratulates her on bringing the parties together in the EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia; believes, based on these positive developments, that the HR/VP and the EEAS should deliver a stronger Comprehensive Approach, initiate clearer proactive strategies, ensure more effective cooperation on European defence and, furthermore, that the HR/VP should take the lead in delivering effective coordination with the Commission by fully developing the role of Vice President; underlines the HR/VP's commitment to developing a dialogue with parliamentarians in this Conference and calls for this dialogue to be continued and further developed in the future.