

Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy

Bucharest, 7 – 8 March 2019

Opening session

The Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP), which took place on 7th and 8th of March 2019 in Bucharest, was attended by 119 parliamentarians from 27 EU Member States, the European Parliament, and observers. The Conference covered important topics, such as: the Eastern Partnership, the importance of the Black Sea on the EU agenda, CSDP's mechanism and instruments, as well as the EU commitment to the Western Balkan. Four workshops dealt with the future of CFSP/CSDP from Brexit perspective, EU Strategy for the Danube Region, cyber security and hybrid warfare, and military mobility.

In his welcoming address, **Mr. Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, President of the Romanian Senate**, stated that parliaments need to be more decisive players in the European eastern and southern neighbourhoods in order to assure that the European partners have the means to promote and defend democracy, freedom and human dignity. Mr. Tăriceanu welcomed the determination, perseverance and courage demonstrated by the political and civic actors that have enabled the implementation of the Prespa Agreement - an important cornerstone of peace and security in South-Eastern Europe. He called for the Western Balkan countries to overcome their differences so that the European Union's sustainable commitment to internal and external reconciliation may be reconfirmed as preconditions for EU membership. Mr. Tăriceanu emphasized that the Black Sea region is one of the most important to EU security, a reason for European institutions to increase their visibility in policies and adopt a clearer and better-articulated regional approach. He stated that the militarisation of the Azov Sea is an aspect of aggression and violation of international law that threatens the security of the entire region. He highlighted that Romania has consistently acted to influence positively the course of the Republic of Moldova towards EU accession also by supporting national efforts to bring the Moldovan institutions up to European standards, as well as by strengthening cultural, economic and social interconnections. Furthermore, Mr Tăriceanu called for the group of friends of the Republic of Moldova to continue to be active in the changing post-electoral political context. He also underlined that cyber-attacks and threats of hybrid war are important challenges that has to be met in common and for which appropriate responses should be prepared through the Common Security and Defence Policy.

Mr. Florin Iordache, Vice-President of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies, stated that during the presidency of the EU Council, Romania took important steps to support and strengthen the EU global role: promoting the enlargement policy and EU's action in the neighbourhood, continuing to support the implementation of the EU's Global Strategy, as well as supporting actions in the field of defence capacity

building and security of the EU, in close complementarity with similar NATO processes.

Mr. Ioan Mircea Pașcu, Vice-President of the European Parliament, underlined that the future elections could represent the milestone in European history and will define the future direction of the European continent in regards to the CFSP. He expressed his deep conviction that the EU should strengthen the CFSP, by protecting its principles and by promoting its values on the world stage. Mr. Pașcu called for Member States to stand firm together by not allowing Russia's moves to intimidate MS and to undermine European unity. The EU has to reform its decision-making process in the field of foreign policy. Moreover, Mr. Pașcu stressed that EU and UK should cooperate in all the possible domains. Finally, he stressed the importance of supporting the Western Balkan states as well as those of the Eastern Partnership. The Prespa Agreement is a victory and should be an inspiration for all.

Mr. Cristian Dumitrescu, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Romanian Senate, highlighted the need to strengthen the EU's role as a global actor by ensuring peace and strengthening the European continent's security, work that needs to be continued by the new European Commission and the new European Parliament.

Session I

The first session, moderated by **Mr Dan Dungaciu, President of the Black Sea University Foundation**, was dedicated to the **Eastern Partnership - 10 years of European aspirations**.

Mr Teodor Meleșcanu, Romania's Minister of Foreign Affairs, presented an overview of the Romanian Presidency focus on the Eastern Partnership (EaP), 10 years after its launching: preparing the next level of commitments that should be confirmed politically at the upcoming EaP Summit in 2020; the implementation of the Association Agreements/ Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements and of the visa free regimes signed 5 years ago with the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine; the innovative Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (CEPA) concluded with Armenia; negotiations on a new framework Agreement for further deepening cooperation with Azerbaijan - the progress gives hopes for a successful conclusion rather soon; the negotiations on EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities - a proof of an increased and constructive engagement with Belarus. Mr Meleșcanu underlined that Romania, as EU Council Presidency, is keenly engaged in promoting the global role of the EU, including a robust European action in the Eastern Neighbourhood - by a series of sectoral ministerial meetings, aimed to mark concrete results in response to concrete needs of the citizens, notably by promoting interconnection projects in priority area, such as: telecom, energy, transport, business. He emphasized that the European joint effort for advancing the Eastern Partnership objectives while also offering tailor-made approaches does pay off to all of the European partners. The Eastern Partnership is not only a priority of the Romanian Presidency of the Council; it is a priority of the EU.

Mr. Thomas Mayr Harting, Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia, European External Action Service (EEAS) emphasised that the achievement of the EaP in the past 10 years was the contribution in strengthening the resilience of the region. He presented an overview of the key principles that guide EU in the region and the achievements in strengthening the economic sectors, i.e. promoting SMEs, connectivity - energy security and energy efficiency, people-to-people contacts, strengthening governance. He stated that, while more-for-more is one of the key principles of the EaP, there are discussions for less-for-less: if some partners lack behind in achieving progress, if the principles they have committed to are not being fulfilled, if there are negative developments with regard the rule of law, then the discussion regarding the less-for-less is unavoidable. There is no consensus among MS in the Council for EU membership. It is in the interest of everyone for a partnership of six: three associate partners and three partners with more tailored-made ambitions - the most remarkable progress was achieved in the second group. Further work can be done with Ukraine and Georgia within the framework of association agreements: digital sector, energy, customs, roaming.

Mr Titus Corlăţean, senator and Romania`s former Minister of Foreign Affairs, made a brief overview of the EaP achievements and the next steps to undertake. He recalled that security and stability it is of equal importance for both the partners and the EU. Mr. Corlăţean stated that continuous engagement towards all partners must remain a strategic objective and 2019 should mark the beginning of a real and substantial reflexion period on the future of EaP.

The **subsequent debate** focused on the current challenges facing the region, and the need to strengthen the resilience and the societal structures of the EaP countries.

Session II

The second working session, moderated by **Iulian Chifu, President of the Conflict Prevention Centre and Early Warning**, focused on **The strategic importance of the Black Sea on the EU agenda.**

Mr Ioan Mircea Paşcu, Vice-President of the European Parliament, underlined the economic and military importance of the Black Sea and NATO's assumed role in the region in the context of the Crimean events in 2014. In his opinion, the European Union must pay more attention to this region and use the full range of instruments, such as crisis prevention and management, as well as military means to ensure the security of this area.

Mr Gabriel Benjamin Leş, Romanian Minister of National Defence, focused on the security and defence aspects of the Black Sea area. Given the severity of the threats and challenges of the region, he pointed out that the EU has a unique ability to bring together multiple instruments, emphasizing the need for a European strategic vision for the Black Sea region to overcome the fragmented approaches.

Ambassador Sorin Ducaru, future Director EU SATCEN, emphasized that EU should use all current available instruments in a coherent and coordinated approach - an EU interagency Black Sea focus framework. Furthermore, he pointed out that

EU-NATO cooperation offers great opportunity for synergies and complementarities and can come with a combination of hard, smart and soft power with the aim of achieving competitive advantages and to achieve coordination on strategic approaches, policies and operational plans, capabilities development and strategic communication.

The interventions in the **subsequent debate** highlighted the similarities between the Baltic Sea region and the Black Sea region, the enhanced cooperation EU - NATO on resilience and hybrid threats, while avoiding duplication, and the need to develop smart capabilities.

Session III

The third working session, moderated by **Ambassador Mihnea Motoc, Deputy Director General of the European Political Strategy Centre, European Commission**, focused on the **CSDP triangle: CARD-PESCO-EDF, complementary and mutually reinforcing tools supporting Member States' efforts in enhancing defence capabilities.**

Mr Jorge Domecq, the Executive Chief of the European Defence Agency, had an overview of the implementation and the coherence of the initiatives. These initiatives represent the centre of the defence planning process, and their coherence should be consolidated and integrated in the national defence planning system. Europe should implement needed projects, avoid duplication and ensure consistency. Concerning the European Defence Fund (EDF), the budgetary allocation for the next Multi-annual Financial Framework makes the EU the fourth biggest investor in European defence.

Mr Andrei Ignat, State Secretary and Chief of the Department for Armaments, Romanian Ministry of Defence, focused on the latest prioritisation instruments for defence research, technology and innovation and provided an update on the achievements of Romanian Presidency in delivering key sector legislation in the area of European defence. He highlighted the importance of using the European Defence Fund (EDF) to achieve the fusion between national and EU priorities on joint research and joint development of defence products and technologies, thus fostering synergies and cost-effectiveness. EDF contributes to the European strategic autonomy, promoting cooperation, and advocated for more use of the potential and the expertise of national research units, giving as an example of successful institutional framework, the Romanian Agency for Military Technology.

Mr Arnout MOLENAAR, Senior expert in Defence Policy Matters and Head of Division CMPD.2 "Capabilities concepts, training and exercises" within the European External Action Service (EEAS), made an overview regarding the structural deficit that Europe faces in the defence sector and the fragmentation of the defence investments. The goal of using available instruments is to ensure coherence and complementarity with NATO.

The subsequent discussions touched upon the parliamentary control of EDF, EU - NATO articulation in running European defence initiatives, the role of bilateral

agreements, European strategic autonomy, as well as establishing feasible cross-country cooperation, even with junior partner Member States.

Session IV

The fourth session, moderated by **Ms Norica Nicolai, Member of the European Parliament**, was dedicated to the theme entitled **A credible perspective for enlargement and a strengthened EU commitment to the Western Balkans.**

Mr Victor Boștinăru Member of the European Parliament underlined that in the last few years, the countries of the Western Balkans have made important progress with regard to stability and security and, in this respect, Serbia and Montenegro have registered good results in their accession negotiations, but there are still unsolved aspects. The EU must offer a credible accession perspective in order to continue internal reforms, the democratization process and the strengthening of the rule of law. Without it, an unstable political environment can affect the western Balkan states, which leads to crises, nationalism and confrontation. He concluded that the progress made by the countries in the Western Balkans should be noticed.

Ms Tanja Mišćević, Chief of the Negotiating Team for Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the EU, emphasized that the EU must appreciate the major changes which have taken place in the Western Balkan countries and their wish to consolidate the constructive dialogue among partners. In spite of the bilateral disputes, the reconciliation in the region is very important. She also made a short presentation of the current relations between Belgrade and Pristina.

Mr Konstantinos Douzinas, Chair of the Committee on defence and foreign affairs, Hellenic Parliament, expressed his anxiety towards the alarming increase of populism, nationalism, racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Euroscepticism, which threaten two fundamental pillars of the European Union, namely the prosperity based on solidarity and the settlement of the ethnic disputes. He also underlined that the EU should watch attentively the positive evolutions in place in the Western Balkan countries, should appreciate the dialogues which took place for example, between Greece and North Macedonia. The EU Member States must support the reform and the democratization of the countries of the Western Balkans for a successful EU accession. EU should concentrate on the enlargement process and should assume the role of regional actor who can unify these states and offer them a motivation, so that they may continue on the road of democratization, reforms and economic development, in order to have progress and prosperity. He underlined further underlined that, during the mandates of the three rotating Presidencies of the EU Council, respectively, of Romania, Finland and Croatia, it is necessary to set up a precise calendar of the enlargement process, for a united and prosperous Europe, a Europe of the citizens, based on cohesion.

The **interventions in the subsequent debates** highlighted the EU support for the development in the Western Balkans, and the need to maintain EU commitment to the enlargement process, as well as the need for the Western Balkan countries to fulfil the criteria of the accession framework, especially the fundamental criteria regarding the rule of law.

Workshop A

In a workshop moderated by **Ms Ana Gomes, Member of the European Parliament**, participants discussed the **Future of CFSP/CSDP from Brexit perspective**. All the speakers in the workshop underlined the important role of the UK for the future of CFSP / CSDP, given that the UK contributes significantly from the point of view of the EU's defence capability. **Mr Jean Jacques Bridey, Chair of the Committee for National Defence of the National Assembly**, stated that there is a consensus among EU member states regarding the need for the "Europe of Defence" to become functional. Mr Bridey called on all member states to have a global approach towards security matters, in the context of challenges posed by countries like Russia and China. The French MP noted the importance to associate the UK after Brexit to the Europe of Defence. The EU must use all instruments available – CARD, PESCO, EDF – in order to respond to the current security threats and challenges. Moreover, the workshop highlighted the necessity to understand the concept of strategic autonomy, and then properly implemented. For Europe, being strategically autonomous requires the ability to set a vision of its role in its neighbourhood and on the world stage, to identify desirable political goals, and to design and implement plans meant to achieve them. Finally, another important element from this workshop refers to the fact that, after Brexit, bilateral relations with EU Member States need to be restarted by signing new specific agreements or strengthening existing ones.

Workshop B - EU Strategy for the Danube Region

In the workshop moderated by **Mr Doru Claudiu Frunzulică, Member of the European Parliament**, participants debated **the EU Strategy for the Danube Region**. **Mr Doru Claudiu Frunzulică** has emphasized that the EU Strategy for the Danube Region is a priority of the Romanian Presidency at the Council of the European Union, and all the countries participating in EUSDR look forward for this cooperation as it responds to their mutual interests, goals, aims and tasks. The key-issues pursued by this cooperation are as following: mobility, energy, biodiversity, environment protection, higher social standards, safety of navigations. **Ms Audrone Perkauskienė, Head of Division for the Eastern partnership-regional cooperation and OSCE, European External Action Service (EEAS)**, has underlined the importance of developing the relations and strategic partnerships between the EU Member States and non-EU states in the Danube Region. The EUSDR contributes to peace building, ensuring security in the region, maintaining good relations with the countries in the immediate neighborhood of the European Union, developing new opportunities for quick and efficient humanitarian aid and a healthy environment. **Mr Radu Gorincioi, Romanian Coordinator for EUSDR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, specified that cohesion has deep roots in the European construction and the slogan of SUERD Presidency "*We strengthen cohesion for a common prosperity in the Danube region*" is correlated to the motto of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, "*Cohesion, a common European value*". During the debates, participants concluded that the territorial cooperation, the

coordinated increase of network activities and inter-regional exchanges would lead to a better life standing for the European citizens. In addition, they stressed the need to revise the EUSDR Action Plan in order to become a more efficient and transparent instrument, involving all relevant actors.

Workshop C

In the workshop on **Cyber Security and Hybrid Warfare**, moderated by **Ms Ramona Mănescu, Member of the European Parliament**, the first contributor, **Mr. Mihnea Costoiu, MP and the rector of Bucharest Polytechnic University**, emphasized the role of education in countering hybrid and cyber threats and advocated for cyber culture's development. **Mr. Cătălin Aramă, CERT-Ro General Manager**, explained the role of the institution in strengthening the national cyber security and called for more cooperation between national and European authorities. The consensus of the workshop was that although cyber and hybrid warfare are not a new phenomenon, the increasing digitalisation of society and infrastructure create new vulnerabilities and new threats. Education and training are crucial in tackling these threats and should not reach only the IT experts, but need to be made available to the general population, as well as to the parliamentarians. Rising awareness on the risk of disinformation as the main dimension of hybrid warfare represents an important step forward. Finally, the need to establish general rules for cyber space was stressed, as a fundamental instrument in defining global standards and ensuring accountability.

Workshop D: Military mobility a challenge to develop synergies between NATO and EU

In the workshop on **Military Mobility, a challenge to develop synergies between NATO and EU** moderated by **Mr Victor Boștinăru, Member of the European Parliament**, the speakers analysed the topic from different perspectives: national, European and NATO. The speakers of the workshop were **brigadier general Eduard Simion, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Representative in Europe – NATO**, **Aukje de Vries, Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Defence within the House of Representatives of the Netherlands** and **brigadier general Constantin Negrea, Chief of Logistics Directorate, Defence Staff, Romanian Ministry of National Defence**. Furthermore, the participants analysed the status quo, the implementation of the political arrangements agreed at the level of EU and NATO, including the progress of the national plans for military mobility that should permit cross-border movement of the troops and the equipment within 5 working days. Several challenges within the NATO-EU cooperation framework were noted, such as the exchange of classified information, and the importance of dual-use of civil infrastructure. Finally, they advocated for an active role of national Parliaments in improving the military mobility by scrutiny the implementation of the agreements and endorsement of proper regulations, along with allocating the assigned budget for fulfilling the requirements of the free movement of the forces.