Beat: Politics

European Union must boost its defence capacity, European Parliament says

Dramatic deterioration in security

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USPA NEWS - In the annual 2022 report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), European Parliament on the Foreign Affairs Committee call on the EU to increase and speed up its efforts to provide Ukraine with the necessary financial, humanitarian and military aid, including lethal weapons. Underlining the unprecedented and united EU response to Russia's war against Ukraine, including the provision of military equipment through the European Peace Facility (EPF), MEPs stress that the EU must act as one to deliver the security expected by EU citizens.

They also welcome the Council's decision to set up, after a previous call by the Parliament, a Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine. The member states should accelerate their military assistance to Ukraine, and impose further sanctions against individuals, entities and bodies responsible for the crimes committed against Ukraine. The report welcomes the new EU initiatives to enhance European security and defence, notably the Versailles declaration, the Strategic Compass, the joint communication on defence investment gaps, and the Commission's proposal for a regulation to incentivise joint procurement (EDIRPA). Member states should continue developing the EU's cyber-defence policy and capabilities, MEPs add.

MEPs also stress the need to make full use of EU initiatives and budgets to develop its capability. They urge member states to significantly increase funding for EU procurement mechanisms. The ceiling of the EPF should be significantly raised and a separate EPF envelope for Ukraine should be created, in order to guarantee adequate support for the country without systematically neglecting other priority regions, including Africa. CSDP missions and operations should have more robust and flexible mandates and the Rapid Deployment Capacity should be ready for use more quickly based on the increased readiness of member states' military forces, MEPs say.

The report calls for security and defence partnerships to be established with like-minded partners in the area of defence, to meet the EU's level of ambition as a security provider. Finally, the report stresses the need to involve Parliament more actively in CSDP decision-making, in particular with regard to the implementation of the Strategic Compass and the EPF. Reinforcing inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation with national parliaments on European security and defence are some of the proposals in the report, which has been adopted by 48 votes in favour, 5 against and 4 abstentions.

Rapporteur Tom Vandenkendelaere (EPP, Belgium) said: "Russia's war underlines that security and defence has become one of the EU's most challenging and urgent priorities. I welcome the broad support for my annual report on the implementation of the CSDP in the Foreign Affairs Committee today. It includes ambitious proposals towards a fully-fledged European Defence Union, for instance by getting a Rapid Deployment Capacity up and running quickly."

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