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Common Security and Defence Policy

Cooperate or loose it

The European Parliament adopted on 21 November 2013 a report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). This report is the most important contribution of the European Parliament to the upcoming European Council on Defence issues this December, the first Council devoted to the CSDP in the past five years.

Currently, the military CSDP is in crisis: There is no political will to make use of it, the capability development process failed and the capability shortcomings are enormous. European defence markets are fragmented, inefficient, opaque and just fuel excessive export policies. Institutionally, the CSDP is still lacking clear and efficient command and control bodies. This puts the EU's security at risk, reduces its capacity to promote the fundamental values, and diminishes its efforts to build peace and stability in the world. This report addresses most of these problems in a blunt way.

The debate on European defence is also surrounded by grave misconceptions. One is that Europeans can rely on the national defence capabilities of Member States (or the capabilities of NATO). Another misconception is that European defence can be created by simply piling up national capacities on top of each other. In fact, the European public would need to realise that their national capabilities are not the same and need to be restructured to become compatible and complimentary.

This is why the Koppa report rightly calls on the European Council to trigger much more cooperation and pooling and sharing projects between Member States. We call for more measures that create trust and complimentary between Member States.

The Greens are in favour of the introduction of strict and transparent market rules when it comes to defence procurement and other dimensions of an emerging European defence market. In this respect we support the proposals of the European Commission which aim - in the long run - at integrating national defence markets into the internal market. At the same time we reject the idea that the defence market should aim at creating jobs.

Greens/EFA spokesperson for security and defence, **Tarja Cronberg**, commented:

"Where the report falls short is the understanding that it is not the budgetary constraints - the current cuts in national defence budgets - that make the European defence so problematic but rather the very inefficient, wrong and purely national use of the resources we have. Europeans collectively spend around 200 Billion

EUR per year on defence. We are still number two worldwide, but only 10% of European armed forces (1,6-2 million soldiers) are fully operational/deployable. European national armaments agencies still spend 80% of their research and development budgets nationally."

More than 20 programmes exist in Europe which aim at producing the same kind of armoured vehicle. We have way too much duplication and a dire lack of coordination and cooperation. It would be the wrong approach to now use EU budget money for stabilizing the defence sector. The Greens reject the idea promoted in the Koppa report, to use EU funds (Horizon 2020) for defence research and for financing the European Defence Agencies running costs.

Mrs. Cronberg points out that the Greens are also against a European programme on drones. There are too many serious ethical, human rights-related and security-related questions that need political deliberation including in the European Parliament before we can endorse development and use of European drones. Unfortunately, the report also promotes this idea and it looks like the European Council in December will endorse this idea.

On the positive side we are pleased by the fact that it was possible to have strong language on the need to strengthen civilian stabilisation missions. We were also able to introduce Green concepts such as the European Civil Peace Corps, the already existing Voluntary Aid Corps, the Peace-building Partnership and the idea to go further regarding the implementation of the EU concept on mediation and dialogue which is a very important element of conflict prevention and peaceful conflict resolution for us.

Due to its call for EU level funding of defence research and the running costs of the Defence Agency, and due to the idea of developing a European drone programme, the Greens abstained in the final vote.

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