

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE
FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY
AND THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY**

2 – 4 SEPTEMBER 2016, BRATISLAVA

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The Interparliamentary 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 an 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); 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;

Aware that the evolution of international affairs calls for further strengthening the role of Parliaments as central actors of global decision making, with specific reference to conflicts and crises;

The EU as a global player: Looking for an effective multilateral diplomacy model

1. Notes with concern that the EU is faced with an unprecedented set of challenges, both internally and externally; emphasises that the EU and its Member States need to focus their efforts on restoring and maintaining peace and stability in Europe and its neighbourhood; emphasising that EU Member States are under strain by the refugee emergency and by the wars and conflicts that are afflicting neighbouring countries, highlights that none of these challenges can be dealt by one State alone and demands solidarity

from all Member States and a collective effort to develop a common agenda to overcome them, in accordance with EU principles and decisions;

2. Points out that the EU has all the means to be an influential global player if it acts together; stresses the need to enhance cooperation with other global and regional powers on global threats and challenges emphasising the importance of the transatlantic bond; underlines the important role of regional organisations in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, crisis management, peacekeeping and stabilisation; states that the EU and its Member States should make further efforts to strengthen these organisations and help them build capacities and trust necessary to rebuild the European security architecture on the basis of OSCE rules and principles;
3. Welcomes the EU Global Strategy for foreign and security policy presented by the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy on 28 June 2016; underlines the importance of promoting through this strategy the common interests of EU citizens as well as the values and principles of the EU; stresses that an effective implementation of this strategy requires strong commitment and support of the Member States; highlights that the appropriate resources need to be allocated to the implementation of this strategy; underlines the need to follow-up on the Global Strategy and break down its objectives and priorities into more concrete sectoral and regional sub-strategies, notably in the area of security;
4. Believes that the EU must step up its efforts to strengthen global governance; calls for a comprehensive reform of the UN system with a view to strengthening its legitimacy, transparency, accountability and effectiveness, including by revitalising its General Assembly; considers that the UN Security Council needs to be reformed, particularly regarding its composition and its voting procedures, so as to bring it in line with the realities of the 21st century and to increase its capacity to act decisively in tackling global security challenges, beyond the purely military, addressing issues such as refugees, sustainable development and the fight against pandemics; believes that the EU and its Member States should position themselves to influence the debate and steer action in the global fora, such as the UN, on the governance of those domains where EU strategic interests and security unfold;
5. Calls for the ratification of Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by all member states emphasising its contribution to non-proliferation and welcomes the EU's efforts in this context;
6. Notes that the distinction between internal and external security has become less clear; emphasises the need for the EU to address threats emanating from instability in the South and East through an integrated approach that connects all security policies, interior and exterior, and correlative instruments; recalls the need to accelerate the development and consolidation of the structures and processes of European intelligence coordination;

7. Believes that the EU should engage more with diplomacy that prevents escalation of conflicts; encourages, in this context, coordination between actors and institutions responsible for foreign and domestic policies within the EU, increased cooperation between the EU, NATO, UN and other international organisations and greater synergy between civil and military entities;

The Western Balkans and the EU: Cooperation and Integration

8. Stresses that EU enlargement is a driving force for modernisation, democratisation and stabilisation; considers it important that it should be locally driven and the countries should take advantage of this process to ensure that reforms are thoroughly implemented, and will not be reversed, for which it is essential that countries aspiring to become EU partners understand the absolute necessity to apply and adhere, without reserve, to the European *acquis*;
9. Encourages further regional cooperation with practical implications for improving the living standards of Western Balkan citizens; recalls that any country wishing to accede to the EU must resolve its major disputes with neighbours before it can join the Union and that these issues should be addressed in a constructive and neighbourly spirit. An active commitment to good neighbourly relations needs to be demonstrated at each stage of the integration;
10. Considers it important to keep the Western Balkan countries focused on accession preparations, even in the absence of negotiations, and to advance the process in a number of key areas, such as the functioning of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, as well as economic governance and competitiveness; encourages all EU candidate countries to progressively align with the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy; welcomes the swift continuation of accession negotiations with Montenegro and the opening of the first chapters in the negotiations with Serbia; encourages Albania to intensify reform efforts in order to be able to open EU accession negotiations; encourages Bosnia and Herzegovina to make further progress; welcomes the political agreement reached in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 20th July and calls on all parties to implement it in good faith; recommends to start accession negotiations with the country once the conditions have been met;
11. Invites the Commission and the EEAS to use all available instruments under the Stabilisation and Association Process, including the budgetary ones under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), the CFSP and the CSDP in a comprehensive, coherent and consistent manner for the benefit of strengthening the EU accession process;
12. Calls for enhancing the EU's strategic communication towards the Western Balkans, which would strengthen communication on EU policies and

objectives, foster the independence and sustainability of the media, as well as increase public awareness of externally backed disinformation attempts;

The EU's Eastern neighbourhood and beyond: Priorities, Perspectives and Challenges

13. Stresses the importance of further development of the EU's relations with its Eastern neighbours, especially in the framework of the Eastern Partnership; in particular highlights the need to support the Eastern European countries by enhancing their resilience against internal and external threats; considers the importance of enhancing the parliamentary dimension of the Eastern Partnership;
14. Is deeply concerned about the breach of international law by the Russian Federation, its occupation of Crimea, military engagement and escalation of the conflict in Donbas; recalls that the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements is fundamental for the reestablishment of cooperative relations with the Russian Federation, including the suspension of sanctions; reiterates that it will not accept the illegal annexation of Crimea; condemns the use of disinformation campaigns, propaganda activities and other tactics of hybrid warfare in the EU's neighbourhood and within the EU by the Russian Federation;
15. Recognises the importance of selective engagement and, whenever the situation allows, dialogue with Russia to ensure accountability and maintain the option to cooperate on resolving global crises where there is a clear European Union interest;
16. Supports the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine; welcomes the efforts made by Ukraine in adopting reforms, and calls on the authorities to continue on the reform path and to strengthen its fight against corruption; is committed to the implementation of the Association Agreement; stresses the importance of full implementation of the Minsk Agreements; supports the efforts aimed at building Ukrainian resilience to threats and challenges to its security and stability; welcomes the efforts by the EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine in assisting the country towards a sustainable reform of the civilian security sector;
17. Welcomes the proposal of the European Commission to lift the visa requirement for citizens of Georgia and Ukraine and calls on the European Parliament and the Council to give their green light when the suspension clause legislation is completed in September;
18. Remains concerned about the human rights situation and political freedom, as well as the free and fair organisation of the upcoming September 11 parliamentary elections in Belarus; emphasises that EU-Belarus relations should be based on common European values; suggests to engage in a dialogue for easing tensions and building deeper cooperation on the political and economic level; stresses the need to closely monitor the human rights situation and conduct of upcoming parliamentary elections in Belarus; calls

on Belarus to constructively cooperate with EU experts in order to ensure nuclear safety beyond the borders of the EU and report on the results of the accomplished missions and stress tests;

19. Calls for maintaining the differentiated and tailor-made approach to the Eastern Partnership based on the fundamental principles of democracy, human rights and rule of law with the aim to build strong and mutually beneficial relations with all six partners, irrespective of their individual level of ambition in their relations with the EU;

The EU's Southern Neighbourhood Policy: threats and challenges

20. Expresses its concern over the instability of the south and eastern Mediterranean regions, including the risk posed by failed states coming under domination of terrorist groups; stresses the fact that the risks emanating from this instability are not confined to the European coastal countries, but are increasingly spreading throughout other European countries, including in the form of terrorist attacks;
21. Emphasises that the solution of the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts must be one of the top items on the European political agenda; calls on the EU to step up the efforts to find a sustainable solution to the conflict, supporting UN efforts, using all instruments and levers at its disposal and involving all relevant regional and international actors;
22. Recognises Turkey's role as an important partner in solving the Syrian conflict and the fight against Da'esh; strongly condemns the attempted military coup against the democratically elected government of Turkey; shows its support for the constitutional and democratic legality of that country and its solidarity with the Turkish constitutional authorities; strongly encourages the Turkish government to protect the constitutional order, while underlining the importance of respect for the rule of law and independence of the judiciary in the aftermath of the coup, in cooperation with the Council of Europe; asks the EU to keep a strong position in defending their principles and values when it comes to negotiations with Turkey, especially the respect for human rights, including the rejection of the death penalty, freedom of the press, democracy and the rule of law; stresses that all benchmarks have to be fulfilled for the EU to grant visa liberalisation, as it is required for all countries wishing to benefit from visa-free access to the Schengen area;
23. Welcomes the efforts to restore stability and to install a Government of National Accord in Libya; reaffirms that the Government of National Accord is the sole legitimate authority in the country and calls on all institutions to move forward based on the provisions set out in the Libyan Political Agreement; still notes with concern that irregular migration from Libya towards Europe is not decreasing;
24. Stresses that the European Neighbourhood Policy in the South should be refocused on priorities related to economic development, employment,

particularly of young people, fair sharing of value added, mobility and migratory flows, security and sustainable management of energy resources, person-to-person contacts, institutional coherence of institutions, as well as the advancement of political and economic integration of the Mediterranean area; calls for strengthening of the security dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy also in the South, ensuring the highest level dialogue with partners from the South;

25. Reminds of the importance of an EU strategy for development, promotion of the values of peace and democracy, stability and security of the Sahel countries that are also essentials for the security of Europe and the control of migratory flows;

Sustainable Development and Migration: Towards a Comprehensive Approach

26. Acknowledges that irregular and forced migration is a complex, global fact that requires global responsibility and an effective multi-dimensional and long-term approach focused on eliminating the root causes, particularly poverty, armed conflict and bad governance; emphasises the need for a comprehensive EU approach in the spirit of fair burden sharing, including a shared responsibility for financing, combining all policy instruments available, including trade, development aid, diplomacy and crisis management, as in the case of the European Commission "new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration"; notes in particular the importance of development cooperation; is convinced that the EU should focus its development policy on creating economic opportunities, especially for the youth, promoting good governance, preventing conflicts, and fostering peaceful, inclusive societies;
27. Underlines the need to develop a new approach towards Africa, comprising a significant increase in the EU's financial commitments to the region and a thorough review of the existing trade, agricultural, fisheries and other policies that directly affect African countries; believes that the EU must above all aim to improve the living conditions in African countries, namely by providing better opportunities for trade, investment and growth and by supporting African countries in building democratic, transparent and effective institutions;
28. Welcomes the EU's cooperation with countries of transit and origin of migration flows, and stresses that this needs to place protection of the human rights of asylum seekers and war refugees at its centre; also stresses the need to work with countries of origin and transit on returns of persons who are not in need of international protection; urges the EU and Member States to step up support for all host countries and communities, so as to reduce refugees' dependency on humanitarian aid, enable them to integrate into the local labour market, and allow host countries to provide education and other basic services; underlines the need to help countries of origin and transit, including North African countries control their borders and fight smugglers' networks in order to prevent people from undertaking the

hazardous journey across the Mediterranean; welcomes the EU's civilian and military efforts in controlling migration flows which need to be more coordinated and effective; welcomes the addition of two supporting tasks to EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA, in particular concerning capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy; looks forward to the continued effective and sustainable implementation of the EU – Turkey statement of 18 March;

29. Calls for effective and coordinated international action to address the root causes of irregular and forced migration, including increased efforts at the UN level; urges the international community to provide appropriate funding for UNHCR, WFP and other UN bodies involved in providing basic services for refugees inside and outside conflict areas;
30. Welcomes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which represents a renewed international commitment to eradicating poverty, fostering peace and conserving the environment; emphasises that in the context of the upcoming mid-term review of the multiannual financial framework the EU must ensure that all Agenda 2030 commitments are reflected;

Toward a European Defence Union: A White Book as a first step

31. Calls for an appropriate investment in security and defence by Member States and the EU; stresses that the European Union should foster more systematic and efficient defence cooperation among its Member States and with our closest allies; stresses that the use of Union means should be coherent with Member States' efforts to deliver defence capabilities; is convinced that using EU funds to that end is a clear expression of European solidarity and cohesion in defence matters;
32. Recalls the need, in accordance with the EU Global Strategy for foreign and security policy, for a security and defence White Book of the EU which would build on the EU Global Strategy and would describe the ways and means of its implementation in the area of the CSDP; considers that the White Book should be binding the initiatives of the EU under each multiannual political and financial framework; is convinced that the White Book should be instrumental in building gradual convergence of Member States' security and defence planning; considers that the White Book should update both the Civilian and the Military Helsinki Headline Goals and focus on methods for reforming CSDP capability development, stepping up peer pressure, assessment and accountability; believes that a principal objective should be for the EU to move towards voluntary joint defence forces and the development of a common security and defence culture which will ultimately lead to a common defence structure for the countries wishing to participate therein, taking into account the fact that not all EU Member States are NATO member states; sees further cooperation amongst the medical services in the form of a medical command as a model for a deeper military integration; calls for closer cooperation amongst the parliaments of the Member States involved in the EU Battle Groups;

33. Stresses that the work on an initial White Book should be started now, taking into account recent developments and their implications; considers that initial measures should comprise an EU defence review, defence research funding, initiating a common European capabilities and armaments policy, complemented by a stakeholder engagement process, implementing the European defence action plan, and support to NATO initiatives in EU Member States following the Warsaw summit where this creates EU-NATO synergies, notably in the area of hybrid threats; supports fully the deepened cyber defence cooperation between NATO and the EU in order to better respond and prevent cyber-attacks; calls on the EU Member States to put into practice the instruments provided for under the Treaty on European Union, such as Article 42.6 (Permanent Structured Cooperation) and Article 44 (on the implementation of a CSDP task by a group of Member States); underlines the need to establish a permanent EU military operational headquarter for participating countries, closely coordinated with the existing civilian planning and conduct capability; takes the view that it could be established as part of a civilian-military strategic headquarter, responsible for the planning and conduct of both EU civilian missions and military operations; recalls that the CSDP will continue to develop in full complementarity with NATO and in full, reciprocal autonomy;
34. States that the CSDP should increasingly complement crisis management operations with crisis prevention and crisis resolution; calls on the HR/VP to preserve and strengthen the distinct character of civilian approaches to conflict prevention and crisis management; stresses the need to also deliver more civilian capabilities and therefore create a comprehensive EU-structure that can recruit and administer qualified personnel, including mandatory joint training programmes before CSDP missions;
35. Calls for a more active role of the EU in the field of disarmament and arms control; calls in this respect on the HR/VP and the Member States to work towards common guidelines for the use of armed drones and urges the EU Member States to fully comply with the eight criteria of Common Position on arms exports;
36. Underlines that the IPC will contribute to the work on the EU's White Book, and will regularly review its implementation; encourages all participants to promote the consideration of the White Book in the national security and defence planning, with a view to being mutually consistent; considers that this would constitute an important step towards a European Defence Union;
37. Calls on the Council of the European Union to evaluate the financial and operational consequences on the CSDP of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.