
Foreign policy, security and defence: the EU should focus on strategic alliances

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- Balancing the promotion of EU values with the defence of EU interests
 - Accelerating enlargement while reforming decision-making procedures
 - Continue supporting Kyiv with the necessary military means to end the conflict
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The EU must act decisively to define and defend its interests in the world, according to MEPs.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has sparked a series of economic shocks in the global economy and added significant destabilising pressure on countries in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership, the European Parliament warns in two reports adopted on Wednesday.

Foreign affairs

This new geopolitical context jeopardises the EU's security, according to a report assessing the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). MEPs want the EU to reform its neighbourhood policy and accelerate the enlargement process, while advancing institutional and decision-making reforms, including a roadmap for future work by the summer of 2024. They urge the EU to improve its capacity to act in response to, as well as to pre-empt, global crises and argue better crisis management requires a stronger role for the European Parliament.

With US versus China competition as a backdrop, Parliament is concerned about the increasing relevance of more exclusive formats of cooperation and emphasises that traditional multilateral

forums – in particular the UN and its agencies, should be the EU's preferred format of cooperation.

Stronger bilateral and regional partnerships enable the EU to assert its interests globally, MEPs say, who favour cooperation with partners, both in the neighbourhood and further afield, to defend the rules-based order. MEPs believe principled and selective engagement with China will constitute the most pressing challenge for the EU in the long term.

Regarding the humanitarian situation in Gaza, the resolution condemns the Israeli military's disproportionate response, which has caused a civilian death toll on an unprecedented scale, and calls for a permanent ceasefire so that aid can be provided to civilians in the Gaza Strip.

The report was adopted by 338 votes in favour, 86 against and 122 abstentions.

Quote

The rapporteur [David McAllister](#) (EPP, Germany) said: "This legislature's final CFSP report emphasises that the EU must work even harder to become a serious and independent geopolitical player. We must combine a revitalised enlargement policy with institutional reforms, closer cooperation with multilateral organisations, and strengthened bilateral partnerships. The adopted text should serve as a guide for the priorities of the next Commission and High Representative."

Security and Defence

In a report assessing developments in the [European Union's common security and defence policy](#) (CSDP), MEPs argue that in this era of significant geopolitical uncertainty, European and transatlantic consensus and close EU cooperation with like-minded partners is more necessary than ever.

With the focus on Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, the text highlights the role played by Iran, Belarus, North Korea and China in supporting the Kremlin's war machine. MEPs say Russia's war is part of a wider strategy to undermine the rules-based international order and underline that the EU will continue to support Kyiv with the necessary military means to end the conflict.

Parliament also demands an increase to and acceleration of the EU's financial and military assistance, stressing that Ukraine's military victory and the country's future integration in the EU and NATO are necessary to guarantee Europe's security, stability and sustainable peace.

The report was adopted by 350 votes in favour, 91 against and 96 abstentions.

Quote

"To have lasting security in Europe and across the globe, the Russian aggressor must be prevented from achieving victory in Ukraine. The EU must assert itself as a resilient and cohesive security entity, capable of safeguarding its member states and supporting those facing aggression. Along with its member states, the EU must allocate sufficient resources towards our collective security and defence, while also ensuring necessary institutional frameworks are established to effectively address crises in its vicinity", rapporteur [Sven Mikser](#) (S&D, Estonia) said.

Further information

[Adopted texts will be available here, 28.02.2024](#)

[Video recording of the debate, 28.02.2024](#)

[Roll call vote will be available here, 28.02.2024](#)


[EPRS European defence, strategic autonomy and NATO, 23.02.2024](#)


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