

European Parliament Resolution on the establishment of the EC's common foreign policy (18 December 1992)

Caption: On 18 December 1992, the European Parliament adopts a resolution in which it calls for the implementation of a common foreign policy by the Twelve.

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Resolution on the establishment of the European Community's common foreign policy (18 December 1992)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution by Mr Robles Piquer on behalf of the EPP Group on the urgent need for a genuine Community foreign policy (B3-0387/89),
- having regard to its resolution of 7 April 1992 on the outcome of the Intergovernmental Conferences ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the conclusions of the European Council in Lisbon,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security and the opinion of the Committee on Institutional Affairs (A3-0322/92),

A. whereas, with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty it was decided to create a Union whose objectives are considerably more ambitious than those of the Community and whereas Title V of the Treaty, containing provisions on a common foreign and security policy, replaces European Political Cooperation,

B. whereas one of the main features of the Union is the definition and implementation of a common foreign policy designed to place greater emphasis on its international dimension and make its presence felt outside the Community's frontiers in sectors beyond the commercial and economic spheres,

C. whereas the current international context requires united efforts by the Member States, particularly in international organizations such as the UN and the CSCE, the definition of common strategies and actions and a greater role in maintaining peace and international security in accordance with the objectives of the United Nations Charter,

D. whereas the definition and implementation of a common foreign policy would be an important factor in giving momentum to and developing the Union,

E. welcoming the introduction of Union citizenship, one of the consequences of which is to ensure diplomatic protection by the whole Union and not just by the diplomatic and consular services of one of the Member States,

F. whereas, however, the foreign policy provisions agreed at Maastricht will not help to improve the democratic deficit which is ultimately to the detriment of the citizens of the Member States,

G. whereas the Maastricht Treaty provisions on the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) must be applied in strict compliance and close coordination with the existing mechanisms for dealing with the external aspects of the Community's spheres of responsibility (for example, agricultural, competition, scientific and technological research, economic and social cohesion and environmental policies, etc.),

H. convinced that the CFSP must be based on the principles of the United Nations and the CSCE and be designed to promote, internationally, policies for disarmament and the peaceful settlement of conflicts,

I. expressing its criticism of the provisions of Article 228a (new) of the EC Treaty which enables the Council to take measures to interrupt economic relations with one or more third countries without having to seek Parliament's opinion,

J. having regard to the need for greater clarity in relations between Coreper and the Political Committee in order to establish clearly their respective spheres of responsibility,

- K. concerned at the fact that, within the Union, the Commission does not have powers of external representation equal to those of the Presidency, whereas, under the Treaty of Rome, such powers were mainly conferred on the Commission,
- L. deploring the fact that the Maastricht Treaty has not sufficiently clarified relations between the various Community institutions as regards external representation of the Union,
- M. recalling that most of the representations successively set up by the Commission, often at the behest of Parliament, have concentrated their efforts on administering the development cooperation provided by the Community and hence have been set up almost exclusively in capitals of the Member States of the Lomé Conventions or in Latin American, Asian or Mediterranean countries,
- N. whereas the Council must clearly define, as soon as possible and in accordance with the procedure laid down in Articles J.2, J.3 and J.4 of the Maastricht Treaty, the general principles for the adoption of common measures on the basis of criteria which are in the interests of Member States' citizens,
- O. whereas the criteria for common action as defined in Lisbon should be forwarded to Parliament for its opinion,
- P. whereas majority voting on foreign policy matters defined by the Council as concerning the Union is essential if its overall strategy is to be effective,
- Q. whereas the creation of common embassies representing either all the Member States of the Union or some of them could help to affirm the international identity of the Union and would be in accordance with its interests,
- R. determined to play an active role in clarifying and improving the definition and implementation of the procedures agreed on in respect of foreign policy, bearing in mind the ultimate objective of a federal-type Union,

General comments

1. Considers that the objectives of a common foreign policy as set out in Article J.1 of the Maastricht Treaty are in line with the interests of the peoples of the Union but points out that making foreign and security policy a Community responsibility is still a priority objective of the European Parliament, which made proposals to this effect in its resolution of 22 November 1990 on the Intergovernmental Conferences in the context of Parliament's strategy for European Union (?);
2. Believes that the current allocation of foreign policy responsibilities between the institutions of the Union may be accepted only in so far as the present phase can be considered as a transitional period leading ultimately to the full democratization of the process of defining and implementing the common foreign policy;
3. Considers that, in the current phase, there should be a clearer definition of the roles of each institution in order to clarify the substance of the Maastricht Treaty and enable Parliament to exercise effective and democratic control over the activities of the Council and the Commission in the field of foreign policy through all the instruments available to it;
4. Requests that steps be taken without delay to review fearlessly and radically the question of the presence of the Community Member States in the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council, in order to ensure that they are really represented jointly in accordance with the spirit of the European Union, and that this coincides with decisive Community action to promote a more comprehensive reform of the United Nations, to make it more democratic, representative and effective; considers that the Member States of the European Union on the UN Security Council must express the foreign policy positions of the Union

on the major international issues where the bodies of the Union have already adopted a common position;

5. Considers that the principle of solidarity between the Member States could be instrumental in consolidating the common foreign policy of the Union and averting crises and strife that might arise from the fluid, complex and frequently dangerous international situation;

The Council

6. Calls on the Council to give an immediate undertaking to consult Parliament regularly in advance of all its foreign policy measures and to take account of its opinion;

7. Calls for special channels to be set up enabling the necessary information and documents to be forwarded rapidly to Parliament to ensure that such consultation is both effective and useful;

8. Stresses that the current division of responsibilities between Coreper and the Political Committee constitutes an element of uncertainty which is detrimental to the transparency required in relations between the Council and Parliament;

9. Calls on the Council to consult Parliament, should it have to decide whether to interrupt trade relations on the basis of Article 228a of the EC Treaty, before any decisions are taken and, where this is not possible owing to proven reasons of urgency, to consult Parliament immediately afterwards and modify its position to take account of Parliament's opinions;

10. Deplores the fact that instead of a genuine common foreign and security policy, it was decided in the Maastricht Treaty to assign the essential share of responsibility for security policy to a parallel organization, the WEU, which does not include all the Member States, is not under Parliament's democratic control and is furthermore still an intergovernmental institution whose powers have been considerably extended on the basis of the Petersberg decisions and which is not subject to the control of the Community authorities;

11. Considers that the Council must give an undertaking to take part regularly in the meetings of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security and attend question time within the committee, since it is mainly in this way that the continuity of Parliament's supervision can be guaranteed;

12. Calls on the Presidency to submit its foreign policy programme, every half year, and to take account in the implementation of that programme of the opinion expressed by Parliament;

13. Calls on the Presidency to maintain the Commission's role in the external representation of the Union in order not to weaken its position with respect to the Treaty of Rome;

14. Urges the Council, in view of the new developments and the tasks envisaged in the Maastricht Treaty, to make provision for the inclusion of European Parliament delegations in the Community delegation to UN, CSCE and other conferences;

15. Considers that the basic criteria for justifying the adoption of common measures are crucial factors in shaping the foreign policy of the Union and that Parliament should therefore be consulted before such criteria are finally adopted and whenever it is necessary to modify those criteria as required by the international situation;

16. Calls on the Council to forward to Parliament, for its opinion, the Foreign Ministers' report on the probable development of the CFSP, annexed to the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council, and to amend it on the basis of the comments made by Parliament;

17. Calls on the Council to open common embassies for Member States when this seems appropriate, especially in countries where they are not now represented or where their interests can most easily be brought together;

18. Hopes that the new Common embassies will use the services of the officials employed in the diplomatic services of the Member States, so that they may acquire the habit of defending the views and interests of the Union and not only of the Member States;

19. Draws the Council's attention to the importance of the recommendation referred to in Article J.7 of the Maastricht Treaty in so far as it can deem any action undertaken by the Council to be legitimate or not;

The Commission

20. Calls on the Commission to submit its foreign policy guidelines to the Parliament before they are forwarded to the Council and to deliver at the same time an assessment of the financial implications of such proposals;

21. Considers that the Commission must ensure that any information at its disposal on foreign policy matters and information which it receives from its representatives and delegations outside the Union is forwarded to Parliament in an appropriate form, and that it must take account of Parliament's opinion;

22. Considers that Parliament should be informed of the appointments of Union ambassadors and Commission delegates when they have been made and that those appointed should supply information to Parliament's committees if the latter so request; calls on the Commission to take steps to establish, together with Parliament, the appropriate procedure for this purpose;

23. Reminds the Commission of its duty as guardian of the Treaties and calls on it, against the background of the as yet unclarified question of the status of the European Parliament in the CSCE Assembly, and in the exercise of its governmental functions, to work for full participation by Parliament in international parliamentary organizations, provided such organizations are characterized at Council and Commission level by full Community participation;

Parliament

24. Considers that at present Parliament does not have the powers and instruments it needs to play an appropriate role in a common foreign and security policy and therefore requests that the relevant powers be broadened;

25. Confirms the opinion it expressed in its resolution of 10 October 1991 on the Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union ⁽³⁾ that it should participate in formulating foreign policy and monitoring its implementation and considers that Parliament must make maximum use of the instruments at its disposal under the Maastricht Treaty;

26. Notes that the selection of areas for the implementation of joint action, as adopted at the European Council meeting in Lisbon, is merely illustrative and may be supplemented in the light of changes in the international situation; assumes that when the European Council is identifying common interests leading to joint action it will take into consideration first the priorities and initiatives of Parliament;

27. Notes that, according to the conclusions of the European Council in Lisbon, questions with implications for defence, within the meaning of Article J.4 of the Maastricht Treaty, are not subject to the process involved in common action, but reaffirms its right to be consulted in order to ensure democratic control over this important sphere of action of the governments of the Member States;

28. Believes that, given the specific nature of foreign policy, provision must be made for special procedures to guarantee the confidentiality of proceedings: otherwise the Union's activities in this sector will be seriously undermined;

29. Stresses the importance of the financial side of foreign policy activities; reserves the right to take

action under the budgetary procedure to ensure that due account is taken of its opinions;

30. Considers that, in the event of a serious, prolonged dispute with the Council and/or the Commission on foreign policy issues, it must resort to a motion of censure on the Commission, this being the only effective means of pressure at its disposal when supervising the executive and the Member States which appointed it;

31. Instructs its Committee on the Rules of Procedure, the Verification of Credentials and Immunities to define the procedures for implementing the instruments mentioned in the Maastricht Treaty, such as the consultation and recommendation processes, and to draw up the necessary rules for permanent dialogue with the Council and the Commission on foreign policy issues;

32. Considers, by extension, that the same type of measures should be adopted in respect of security matters, since it is necessary to establish with the other institutions concerned, particularly the WEU Council, a system of rules compatible with the efficient performance of the duties of representation and democratic control assigned to the European Parliament;

33. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, European Political Cooperation, the governments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the CSCE and the WEU Council.

1 OJ No C 125, 18.5.1992, p. 81.

2 OJ No C 324, 24.12.1990, p. 219.

3 OJ No C 280, 28.10.1991, p. 148.