



FOREIGN POLICY: AIMS, INSTRUMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was established in 1993 and has since been strengthened by subsequent treaties. Today, Parliament scrutinises the CFSP and contributes to its development, in particular by supporting the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) and the EU delegations. Parliament's budgetary powers shape the scale and scope of the CFSP, as well as the EU financial instruments that sustain the EU's foreign activities.

CFSP: DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TREATIES

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union was established by the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in 1993 with the aim of preserving peace, strengthening international security, promoting international cooperation and developing and consolidating democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The TEU introduced the 'three-pillar system', with the CFSP as the second pillar. The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam established a more efficient decision-making process, including constructive abstention and qualified majority voting (QMV). In December 1999, the European Council established the role of the High Representative for the CFSP. The 2003 Treaty of Nice introduced further changes to streamline the decision-making process and mandated the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which had been established under a Council decision in January 2001, to exercise political control and strategic direction of crisis management operations.

The Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1 January 2009, provided the Union with legal personality and an institutional structure for its external service. In addition, it eliminated the pillar structure introduced by the TEU in 1993. The Treaty created a range of new CFSP actors, including the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who also serves as Vice-President of the Commission (VP/HR), and the new permanent President of the European Council. Moreover, it created the European External Action Service (EEAS) and upgraded the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which forms an integral part of the CFSP. (For details [5.1.2](#))

The legal basis for the CFSP was set out in the TEU and revised in the Lisbon Treaty. Articles 21-46, Title V, of the TEU establish the 'General Provisions on the Union's External Action and Specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy



(CFSP)'. Articles 205-222, Part 5, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) cover the Union's external action. Articles 346 and 347, Part 7, also apply.

PARLIAMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY POWERS AND INSTRUMENTS

Despite its limited formal role in foreign policy decision-making, Parliament has supported the concept of the CFSP from its inception and sought to extend its scope. In view of the international challenges arising in the last decade, Parliament repeatedly pushed for the creation of an EU 'foreign minister' post and a 'European diplomatic service'. In practice, Parliament has achieved a degree of informal cooperation with the EEAS, the EU Presidency, the Council Secretariat and the Commission in the realm of foreign affairs, as well as with the national parliaments of the Member States.

Article 36 of the TEU requires the High Representative to consult Parliament regularly on the principal aspects of and choices made under the CFSP and to inform Parliament of the policy's evolution. Parliament holds twice-yearly debates on CFSP progress reports and puts questions and recommendations to the Council and the High Representative.

Parliament's right to be informed and consulted about the CFSP/CSDP was further strengthened by the High Representative's declaration of political accountability in 2010. The declaration provided, *inter alia*, for:

- Enhancing the status of the 'Joint Consultation Meetings' (JCMs), which allow a designated group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to meet counterparts from the Council's Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EEAS and the Commission to discuss planned and ongoing civilian CSDP missions;
- Affirming the right of Parliament's 'special committee' to have access to confidential information relating to the CFSP and the CSDP. This right is based on an interinstitutional agreement of 2002;
- Holding exchanges of views with heads of mission, heads of delegation and other senior EU officials during committee meetings and hearings of committees of Parliament;
- Mandating the High Representative to appear before Parliament at least twice a year to report on the current state of affairs regarding the CFSP/CSDP and to answer questions.

In addition to this political dialogue, Parliament exercises its authority through the budgetary procedure. As one arm of the EU's budgetary authority, Parliament must approve the annual CFSP budget. Parliament also helps to shape the relevant external financial instruments through a process of trilateral negotiations with the Council and the Commission.

Parliament regularly scrutinises the operations of the EEAS and provides it with suggestions on structural issues, ranging from its geographical and gender balance to its interaction with other EU institutions and the diplomatic services of the Member States. Parliament also holds regular discussions with the High Representative and the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) appointed for certain regions or issues.



Parliamentary committees, which helped to set up the EEAS, also exchange views with the EEAS's newly appointed heads of delegation.

Parliament also has a role to play in monitoring the negotiation and implementation of international agreements. Parliament's consent is required before the Council can conclude such agreements. (For more details [5.2.1](#), [5.2.3](#))

INTERNAL PARLIAMENT STRUCTURES INVOLVED IN THE CFSP

Much of Parliament's work on the CFSP is done in specialised committees, in particular the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and its two subcommittees (on Security and Defence (SEDE) and on Human Rights (DROI)), as well as in the Committee on International Trade (INTA) and the Committee on Development (DEVE). These committees shape the CFSP through the reports and opinions they issue. They also serve as Parliament's principal points of contact with global governance structures (including the United Nations), other EU institutions, the Council presidencies and Member States' national parliaments.

CFSP-related work is also undertaken by parliamentary delegations, whose role is to maintain and develop Parliament's international contacts (especially through interparliamentary cooperation), promoting the Union's founding values, including liberty, democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. There are currently 44 standing interparliamentary delegations, including joint parliamentary committees (JPCs), parliamentary cooperation committees (PCCs), other parliamentary delegations and joint parliamentary assemblies.

These inter-parliamentary delegations include:

- The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, created to bring together MEPs and the elected representatives of those African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries that have signed the Cotonou Agreement;
- EuroLat, a joint multilateral assembly originating in the Bi-Regional Strategic Association established in June 1999 between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean;
- The EuroNest parliamentary assembly (PA), the parliamentary forum of the EU's Eastern Partnership, which brings together MEPs and members of national parliaments in Eastern Partnership countries;
- The Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM), representing the parliamentary dimension of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which replaced the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the Barcelona Process).

PARLIAMENT'S IMPACT ON THE CFSP

Parliament's involvement in the CFSP helps to enhance the policy's democratic accountability. Parliament has strongly supported the post-Lisbon institutional landscape, advocating an enhanced role for the EEAS, the EU delegations and the EUSRs, as well as a more coherent policy and a more effective CFSP. It has pushed



for greater coherence among the EU's political and financial instruments for external policies, in order to avoid duplication and inefficiency.

Parliament has provided a platform for exchanges among institutional and governmental policymakers, as well as civil society and epistemic communities (such as think-tanks and academics), helping to raise public awareness of the CFSP and facilitating the participation of a wide range of partners within and beyond the EU, both governmental and non-governmental. Through its activities, Parliament has strengthened the visibility of the EU's foreign policies, and served as a bridge between the EU institutions and citizens.

GLOBAL STRATEGY AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In June 2015, the European Council tasked the High Representative with preparing an EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) by June 2016. This followed the High Representative's strategic assessment of the key changes and challenges in the global environment, which concluded that there was a need to revise the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS). The goal of the Global Strategy was to provide a broad strategic framework in which the EU would be able to understand and face today's international challenges in a strong and coherent manner, drawing on the wide range of tools and mechanisms at its disposal.

Together with Member States, national parliaments, experts and the wider public, the European Parliament was involved in the Global Strategy consultation process. Parliament organised AFET committee meetings and expert hearings dedicated to the Global Strategy, and passed a resolution on 'The EU in a changing global environment — a more connected, contested and complex world', which expressed Parliament's wishes for the future direction of EU external policy.

The High Representative presented the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy to the European Council on 28 June 2016. With its emphasis on security, its ambition for strategic autonomy and its principled yet pragmatic approach to Europe's environment, the EU Global Strategy signifies an important change of philosophy from the 2003 European Security Strategy. The EU Global Strategy identifies five priorities for EU foreign policy:

- The security of our Union;
- State and societal resilience to our East and South;
- An integrated approach to conflicts;
- Cooperative regional orders;
- Global governance for the 21st century.

In order to give effect to the new strategy, the EU will revise existing sectoral strategies, and devise and implement new thematic or geographic strategies in line with the EUGS's priorities. Among these will be a sectoral strategy specifying the EU's civil-military level of ambition, tasks, requirements and capability priorities.

To operationalise the EUGS's vision for defence and security issues, in November 2016 the VP/HR presented the Foreign Affairs Council with a CSDP implementation plan,



identifying three sets of priorities: responding to external conflicts and crises, building capacity for partners and protecting the Union and its citizens.

The Plan sets out 13 proposals for security and defence. These include a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), better EU rapid response capabilities (including by using EU battle groups), and a new single Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) for those Member States willing to undertake greater commitments in defence. On 6 March 2018, the Council adopted a roadmap for the implementation of PESCO. Currently, 34 projects are being developed under PESCO with the participation of 25 Member States (for more details see [5.1.2](#)).

To support the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the EU's defence industry, the Commission established the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) in August 2018; and in May 2019, it presented a joint action plan together with the EEAS to facilitate the implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact (CCC). In its conclusions of June 2019 on the state of the EUGS, the Council recommended the full implementation of the European Defence Fund (EDF), which will strengthen the EU's defence industry and technology.

In October 2019, to mark the third anniversary of the EUGS, the EEAS published a report on its implementation. Among other issues, the report emphasised the progress the EU had made in overcoming barriers to military mobility and the importance of EU-NATO collaboration in the fields of security and defence. During a speech in October 2019, then VP/HR Federica Mogherini stated that 'strategic autonomy and cooperation with our partners – starting with NATO – are two sides of the same coin', explaining that the EU partnership with NATO is essential for the functioning of its 'cooperative autonomy' approach^[1].

At the end of 2018, Parliament issued its annual report on the implementation of the CFSP^[2]. Reiterating its conviction that solutions to the EU's challenges can only be met collectively, Members called for a genuine common European foreign and security policy, based on strategic autonomy and its integration, including in terms of capability, in the areas of industry and operations. The report recommends, inter alia, strengthening the EU's internal resilience to external interference and establishing a common strategy with international partners; investing in the stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans; encouraging the development of ever closer relations with the Eastern Partnership by strengthening economic ties; and promoting economic and social development in the southern Mediterranean basin and in sub-Saharan Africa. The report also acknowledges the positive impact the establishment of PESCO and CARD will have on defence cooperation.

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[1]By 'cooperative autonomy', the VP/HR meant the EU's ability to cooperate with NATO, as well as other partners, without compromising its own strategic autonomy on defence and security matters.

[2]Texts adopted, [P8_TA\(2018\)0513](#).

