

## Parliamentary Update June 2007

Number 34, July 2007

*In response to the growing interest of the European Parliament in security and defence matters, the 'Parliamentary Update' provides a short report on the latest discussions of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and in particular of its Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) on these issues.*

### **1. Towards a common European foreign policy on energy?**

In the meeting of AFET on 5 June, its chairman Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (EPP) presented a draft report calling for a common European foreign policy on energy. The report recognizes that energy security is becoming an essential component of overall EU security and is also a key element in the pursuit of economic and social development. The aim is to bring substantial added value to efforts made at national level, and thereby ensure that the whole EU enjoys guaranteed energy security.

Saryusz-Wolski said it was crucial to move beyond mere declarations and called for the speedy appointment of a Special Energy Representative. The holder of this new post would act under the authority of the High Representative for CFSP and coordinate the common policy on energy, including the development of external energy infrastructure with the Nabucco and Odessa-Gdansk projects. In addition, Saryusz-Wolski underlined that the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), as the international community's most significant instrument for the promotion of cooperation in the energy sector, should form the cornerstone of the EU foreign policy on energy.

In the following discussion many questions were raised with regards to the post of a Special Energy Representative. Hannes Swoboda (PSE) queried the idea of basing such a person in the Council, preferring a more innovative joint solution that acknowledges energy as an issue of shared competence between the Council and the Commission. In contrast, Claus Hänsch (EPP) said that it is not for the European Parliament to decide how the other EU institutions make such arrangements.

According to Elmar Brok (EPP) the basic dilemma of energy foreign policy is that when national interests are at stake, countries continue to go it alone: something the EU has to dissuade its Member States from doing. Angelika Beer (Green) acknowledged that energy is an important part of external relations, but urged the EU to take a closer look at the peace and security dimension. In particular she wanted to move away from the current dependence on oil and gas and be more courageous in linking energy policy with disarmament policy. Pointing out that the EU is not implementing its human rights clause vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia, Beer said that the EU must strike a better balance between security concerns and human rights.

## 2. The European Space Council and the future of Galileo

In the SEDE meeting on 5 June, Michael Praet, head of the European Space Agency's Brussels Office, gave an overview of the outcome of the European Space Council (22 May). Referring to the framework agreement on European Space Policy, Praet highlighted that the space sector is a strategic asset contributing to the independence, security and prosperity of Europe and its role in the world. He stressed the relevance of space to ESDP and that Europe cannot afford to lose out on the benefits of space for its citizens. Although he admitted that the agreed document was "not particularly brilliant", Praet affirmed that it was certainly a solid basis for further progress which will allow Europe to develop and make the best use of its infrastructures and applications. He pointed to the increased cross-fertilization between the civilian and the military domain, and concluded by saying that for the past 40 years space policy in Europe has not been linked to the needs of the users, but that this is now about to change.

The discussion on the European Space Council was followed by an assessment of the current situation vis-à-vis Galileo by the MEPs Etelka Barsi-Pataky (EPP) and Norbert Glante (PSE), the rapporteurs of the Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. The Galileo project consists of a constellation of 30 satellites in orbit at an altitude of 24,000 km. It will provide numerous applications for everyday life, from vehicle guidance to the safety of transport, including commercial applications (banking, geology, public works, energy, etc.). Currently Galileo is facing great difficulties as the private consortium that should have funded most of the first phase of the project was unable to agree on the financing conditions.

Although the private sector is afraid of shouldering the risks involved, Barsi-Pataky pointed out that all three European institutions agree on proceeding with this first joint European infrastructure project, and on securing the necessary public funding. He signaled his preference that the EU should fund the project from the Community budget as this would give the Parliament a greater say on the matter. Glante said that although the Europeans could continue to purchase everything from the US, it was important to develop EU capacities, and he pointed out that Galileo is supposed to be more accurate than the US GPS.

The Commission representative confirmed that Galileo is in a very difficult phase and that the old assumptions about how to finance it were no longer valid. He said that the Galileo roadmap needs adaptation in order to meet the deadline of 2012 – the date by which Galileo should be fully operable. The public-private partnership set up to implement Galileo needs to be reprofiled to enable the system to be brought into service on time. The question now is to find the best model to move forward. The Commission proposes to adapt the roadmap to enable the timetable and costs to be monitored more closely and to give the satellite radio navigation service industries a greater sense of knowing exactly when Galileo signals will actually become available. According to the Commission, the most beneficial, realistic and economic option will be for the entire initial *infrastructure* to be established, piloted and financed by the public sector, while the *operation* of the system will be entrusted to a private concession holder.

### 3. Situation of the arms embargo in Sudan

A representative from Amnesty International explained that arms, ammunition and related equipment are still being transferred to Darfur for military operations in which serious violations and abuse of human rights are committed by the Sudanese government, the government-backed Janjawid militias and armed opposition groups.<sup>1</sup> Amnesty called upon the international community to strengthen the implementation of the UN arms embargo and urged a suspension of the transfer of all types of weapons, ammunition, military and paramilitary equipment and security and policing equipment to the parties to the conflict. In particular Amnesty referred to the transfer of 'dual use' equipment, such as 4x4 vehicles, which are often used to transport troops and carry heavy machine guns. The UK has exported such vehicles to Sudan under assurances from the Sudanese Government that they remain for civilian use, but "this means nothing as they can be modified easily".

Raul Romeva (Green) urged the EU to take a more active stance towards the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, and argued that the EU has not done enough on the arms trade treaty and pointed to the serious "grey zone" of dual-use goods. Asking how it is ensured that the air transport companies delivering aid to Sudan are controlled so that they do not transfer weapons as well, the representative of Amnesty stated there are no regulations in place on this issue. It is simply a matter of commercial contracts where "anybody can do anything".

### 4. Does Europe need an anti-missile shield?

On 28 June the AFET and SDE held a joint hearing addressing the question 'Does Europe need an anti-missile defence shield?'. The meeting, which was extremely well attended, heard evidence from the US Missile Defence Agency (MDA), NATO, and academic experts from the FRS in Paris and Leeds University in the UK.

Dr Patricia Sanders (MDA) said that the threat from ballistic missile proliferation was growing, manifested by the increasing number of test launches throughout the world. She feared that this threat would provide potential adversaries with an ability to coerce European countries. She told the Parliament that the planned missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic would be able to protect the vast majority of EU territory from ballistic missile attack from Iran. She further explained that those areas not protected by this particular system – those nearest to Iran itself – could not be targeted by long-range Iranian missiles in any event (only by shorter-range missiles for which other allied missile defence systems would be necessary).

Peter Flory, Assistant Secretary-General for Defence Investment at NATO, said that there was no agreed assessment within NATO of the immediacy of the threat posed by long-range ballistic missiles (although an updated assessment is expected in September), nor agreement on how missile defences might meet that threat should it arise. European countries were already providing capabilities for meeting the threat from short-range, low level ballistic missiles, but only the US has capabilities for

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<sup>1</sup> This report is available at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR540192007>.

upper level defences. NATO was continuing discussions to reassure the Russians via the NATO/Russia Council.

Francois Heisbourg (FRS) pointed out that the “criteria for success” for a missile defence system was different if its purpose was to intercept nuclear missiles compared to those armed only with conventional explosives. If just a single nuclear-armed missile penetrates to the target the outcome would be a disaster. He raised questions as to how quickly Iran would be able to develop and deploy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) (probably at least ten years after it tested a space launch vehicle), and then how easy it would be for Iran to develop a sufficiently compact warhead to be delivered effectively by such an ICBM.

He also raised the issue of command and control, wondering why dual-key arrangements would not be possible for use of the new US missile defence system (in line with Cold War practice). He also made a comparison with Israeli and Japanese missile defence systems which, although largely financed by the US, were under the control of the host government. Heisbourg believed that decisions on deployment of the new system were being made too hastily.

Dave Webb (Leeds University) was the most skeptical of the speakers about the need for, and wisdom of, the US missile defence deployments in Eastern Europe. He emphasized the importance of deploying a range of other policy instruments to meet the challenge of ballistic missiles, including especially arms control. Ultimately, the best way to ensure our security was through the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons he concluded.

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