



Parliamentary Update 23 – 26 June 2008

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Following the meetings of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) on 24 and 25 June and the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) on 25 and 26 June, this 'Parliamentary Update' includes coverage of the exchange of views with Peter Semneby, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, a workshop on the 'African Peace and Security Architecture', the 10th Joint Meeting with the Chairs of Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees of National Parliaments, and an exchange of views with DG E IX, Council; the CFSP Operations Unit, European Commission; the Crisis Response and Peacebuilding Unit, European Commission and Chair of the PSC.

Exchange of views with Peter Semneby, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus

On 24 June, Mr. Peter Semneby, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus to the Committee, gave an update on the situation in the troubled region, particularly regarding developments in Georgia. Semneby stated that a lot of progress had already been made in the South Caucasus, but that there were still two main areas of concern for the EU: conflict and democracy. He continued by warning that these problems were compounded by the fact that Russia had a deep political and military involvement in the region and that the South Caucasus was comprised of relatively new independent states where democracy was still in its infancy.

Regarding conflicts, Semneby stated that the South Caucasus remains a highly conflict prone and volatile region. He went on to note that Russia's decision to deploy peacekeepers in Georgia, pre and post-electoral violence in Nagorno-Karabakh and the tense nature of Georgian-Abkhazian relations have only worsened the security situation in the region. Nevertheless, Semneby was quick to point-out that the EU did have a strategic interest in the South Caucasus, which was highlighted recently by Javier Solana's visit to the region as a means to fostering dialogue between states.

On democracy, Semneby stated that many countries are still suffering from a huge democratic deficit. Here he cited recent parliamentary elections in Georgia which resulted in a number of political arrests, a clamp-down on the media and a majority of opposition parties stating that they would boycott the parliament altogether. Semneby remarked that while the Georgian government had made strides in reforming its economy it needed to do much more in including opposition parties into the governing process and desist from constitutional and legal amendments to the electoral process prior to elections.

MEP Charles Tannock (EPP-ED) asked what impact Kosovar independence would have on the South Caucasus region and how it would affect Georgian-Abkhazian relations. Semneby responded by stating that the independence of Kosovo had created a number of fears and expectations in the region, particularly in Russia and Georgia, but reiterated the Council's position that independence in Kosovo did not automatically guarantee independence for every state seeking secession.

MEP Karl Von Wogau (EPP-ED) asked if there was a specific action plan within the Council for the South Caucasus, and whether Semneby thought there was a possibility for the EU to send a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) mission to the region in the future. Semneby responded by suggesting that the

Council's main action plan in the region addressed pressing issues such as conflict and democratic legitimacy. He also stated that the Council had considered a mission to the region but warned that this would only happen if the security situation on the ground improved.

'The African Peace and Security Architecture' Workshop

On 24 June, Dr. Alex Vines – Head of Africa Programme, Chatham House – delivered his study to the AFET Committee entitled 'Options for the EU to Support the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)'¹. MEP Michael Gahler (EPP-ED) - Vice-Chairman of the AFET Committee - stressed the increasing importance of Africa to the EU, and welcomed the study as an important tool in the European Parliament's role in this relationship.

Vines stated that African security had evolved at a very fast pace over the last six years, especially since the establishment of the African Union (AU) in 2002. He highlighted how the AU had developed its own Political and Security Committee (PSC), a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), a Military Staff Committee (AUMS) and an African Standby Force (ASF). Such developments have, Vines continued, come to complement the EU's own strategy towards Africa, especially with regard to the European Development Fund (EDF) and the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

Vines suggested that the efficacy of the APSA was still plagued by a number of problems relating to decision-making within the AU. He cited the particular example of the AUMS' relationship with the PSC, with the AUMS meeting too infrequently and without proper coordination or leadership to offer effective analysis to the PSC. Vines warned that a lack of military resources, specifically the inability of the AU to pay its forces' salaries, means that the AU continues to lack institutional coherence.

Where the EU's involvement in the APSA was concerned, Vines suggested that the EU play a much larger role in both encouraging and interfacing with the AU's PSC, AUMS and ASF. In this sense, while the EU's decision to send a Special Representative (EUSR to the AU)² is an important step forward, the EU could do more to ensure that the AU continues to develop its forces and assist with increasing funding and coordination within the various AU bodies.

Professor Paul Collier, Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies, Oxford University, suggested that the key to security and an end to violence in Africa lay in greater economic development. He notioned that it was clear that robust economies very rarely ever descend into civil-war, and in this regard he reiterated that 'ensuring security in Africa' means succeeding in economics.

Collier suggested that the only way Africa was ever going to alleviate its security problems would be through a comprehensive international plan that focused on aid, trade liberalization, demilitarization and good governance. Collier likened this approach to one taken by the US when it was involved in developing Europe after the Second World War, where it provided aid through the Marshall Fund, liberalized its trade with Europe, sought to demilitarize states such as Germany and establish a number of global governance institutions – e.g. the Bretton Woods institutes³ - to foster a 'rules-based' environment.

Collier further suggested that the EU needs to 'get as serious' with Africa as the US did with Europe if the continent is to develop. This means, that EU development strategies should not just concentrate on aid payments alone, but should instead aim to develop structures along the lines of the European Economic Community and 'acquis communautaire' in Africa. Collier claims that if they worked for Europe, there is no reason why they cannot eventually work for Africa.

¹ See: www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2008_artrel_171_2008_artrel_170_08-05-ep-study-eu-apsa.pdf.

² Koen Vervaeke has been EUSR to the AU since December 2007 and is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

³ These institutions included the establishment of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (now the World Bank) and the International Monetary Fund.

Collier claimed that such a plan would help supply Africa with the two public goods they currently lack and desperately require – security and governance. This supply, could be offered by African governments themselves through economic reforms, greater political inclusiveness and decreasing domestic spending on security and military forces and by the international community through sustained post-conflict peacekeeping missions during elections, a continuance of aid and by demanding that African governments remain transparent to their citizens.

General Pierre-Michel Joana, Special Advisor to the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), stated that the EU is working hard to ensure that the APSA is effective and that this was important for Africa and the EU. He reiterated the importance of sending a EUSR to the AU as this would allow the EU to support and meet the needs of the AU in real-time. Joana also suggested that EU institutions, in their collective work on Africa, should be careful not to leave gaps in development strategies where a number of initiatives overlapped.

Joana continued by stating that the EU should also recognize that Africa has a number of other partnerships with other organisations and states such as the UN, US, Brazil and China and that an effective APSA would also rely on the EU's relationships with such actors. Joana made clear that the AU is currently facing a number of obstacles in its work because of a lack of resources, an excessive administrative burden – where he used the example of salaries not getting to troops on time even though the money was in the bank - and the fact that many AU organs were being run from the 'outside' by international actors and not by African's themselves. Hence, he suggested that in order to assist African ownership of the AU it is imperative that the EU look into establishing a number of 'centres of excellence' across the continent, which would help train individuals for specific AU roles. He also then went on to urge the EU PSC to work more closely with their counterparts in the AU, and even suggested the creation of regular formal meetings between AU and EU bodies and greater training exchanges between European and African civil-military forces.

Ambassador Andebrhan Giorgis – Africa Advocacy Director, International Crisis Group, stated that the world had to get serious about Africa's poor socio-economic development. Most African countries, he continued, are or have been embroiled in armed conflict over the last decade and that an end to war was the only way forward for Africa. If the APSA is to be truly effective, he claimed, closer cooperation between the AU and EU was required, especially in detecting potential conflicts or disasters at an early stage.

Von Wogau asked if the EU's own inability to reach a coherent and capable CFSP hindered the assistance the EU could give to the AU. He also raised the issue of the 'Responsibility to Protect'⁴ (R2P) concept and asked how this has impacted on the APSA. Collier responded by suggesting that he was unsure if R2P is the most useful strategy for intervention, as it set the international community an incredibly 'tall order' to meet every time the word 'intervention' was mentioned. On the issue of the CFSP Collier suggested that the EU would have to increase its defence capabilities if it has any ambitions of offering peacekeeping in Africa.

MEP Christopher Beazley (EPP-ED) asked if there were any clear strategies for governance, peacekeeping and reconstruction in Africa and whether the AU or the EU was seriously capable of intervening in the future to stop genocide on the continent. Vines stated that there were a number of strategies geared towards governance and peacekeeping in Africa, but that their effectiveness was not only dependent on local or international 'action plans' but also on the political will of the general population. As a concluding remark he then stated that the AU does have the ability to intervene in trouble spots, and cited the example the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) deployment of an intervention force in Liberia.

⁴ For more information on the R2P concept see: http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2008_artrel_173_esr39-r2p.pdf.

10th Joint Meeting with the Chairs of Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees of National Parliaments

On 25 June Saryusz-Wolski commenced the ‘10th Joint Meeting of the EP with the Chairs of Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of National Parliaments’. Saryusz-Wolski recounted how the joint meeting came as a response to the events of 11 September 2001 and the need to foster common approaches to issues such as terrorism. These meetings aim to increase transparency and oversight of the CFSP and ESDP, which was especially needed in light of the Irish ‘no’ vote in their referendum of the Lisbon Treaty.

MEP Andrew Duff (ALDE) remarked that the Irish ‘no’ vote had caused serious problems for the EU of a ‘grave and complex’ type. He warned the Committee that there might not be a solution to the Irish decision and that members should refrain from indulging in wishful thinking over CFSP or ESDP. He also notified members of the national parliaments that the AFET Committee’s work with the Commission and Council over the proposed European External Action Service (EEAS) was now suspended.

Duff claimed that whatever the conclusions of the ‘Lisbon crisis’ the need to continue to develop European security and defence policies grows, especially as international affairs would not ‘stand-still’ while Europe sorts itself out.

MP Michael Woods (Irish Republican Party (Fianna Fáil) – Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Irish House of Representatives (the Dáil)), stated that the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by the Irish had come as a deep disappointment to the government. He went on to state that the EU should now respect the verdict of the Irish electorate and to give the Irish the ‘time and space’ to now find a way forward. Nevertheless, he pointed-out that national parliaments should seek closer cooperation with the EP, particularly in their respective work of informing citizens about CFSP developments.

Lord Roper (British Liberal Democratic Party in the House of Lords) – Chair of the Lords Select Subcommittee on European Union Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Policy - commended the EP on its recently adopted reports on the CFSP and ESDP⁵ and also informed the Committee that the House of Lords had also suspended its work on the EEAS. Lord Roper then continued by informing the EP that he thought more could be done to boost cooperation between national parliaments and the EP, but stated that a greater focus was now needed on the Irish ‘no’ vote and where this left the CFSP.

Von Wogau warned that more was needed to be done to stop the overlapping of EU institution work on CFSP and ESDP. He made particular reference to the lack of resources currently afforded the ESDP and stated that national parliaments could assist in boosting the EU’s defence, satellite and intelligence capabilities. He called on national parliaments to assist in the EP’s desire to establish a permanent European Defence College (EDC).

MP Mauro Del Vecchio (Italian Democratic Party (Partido Democratico)) - Member of the Permanent Committee on Defence in the Italian Senate – was quick to endorse this view and suggested that national parliaments could do more to develop a EDC and that they might also look at establishing a central EU military control centre for ESDP missions. Del Vecchio then ended by asking those present in the Committee to respect the Irish ‘no’ vote and to wait patiently for the Irish response to the situation.

MEP Colm Burke (EPP-ED) concluded the Committee meeting by making a number of comments on the Lisbon Treaty. Firstly, he suggested that the Lisbon Treaty failed in Ireland because it was too much of a legalistic text and not one easily understood by citizens. In Ireland, he continued, this fact was taken up early by the press and ‘no’ campaigners to confuse the general population. In the future, Burke remarked, it would be useful if the EU shortened or made any future treaty texts more readable for the ordinary citizen.

⁵ For more information on these reports see: www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2008_artrel_168_esr38ep-update-may08.pdf.

Exchange of views with DG E IX, Council, CFSP Operations Unit, European Commission and the Crisis Response and Peacebuilding Unit, European Commission

MEP Karl von Wogau (EPP-ED) – Chairman of Subcommittee Security and Defence (SEDE) – opened SEDE meeting of 25 June and the exchange of views on civilian crisis management with a short introduction vis-à-vis the recent creation of the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC, civilian equivalent to permanent military headquarters), proof that EU is willing to give itself comprehensive crisis management tools.

Director for Civilian Crisis Management (DG E IX) at the Council of the European Union, Mr Mika-Markus Leinonen, stated that since the launch of the first EU civilian mission 5 years ago, civilian crisis management had experienced fantastic developments: the number of missions and their geographical scope increased, the operations diversified (from police to comprehensive Rule of law and border assistance missions) as their complexity (from strictly CFSP missions to cross-pillar cooperation).

Leinonen said that this trend was to continue because there was no shortage of crises. He welcomed the creation of the CPCC, considered as a very practical tool, allowing the EU to have strong planning and mission conduct capabilities. He explained that DG E IX of the Council was a technical tool in charge of leading preparatory missions to give an overall assessment of the situation on a theatre and the necessary means (as the way they need to be used) to conduct a successful potential civilian mission. He responded to MEPs Neyts-Uyttebroeck and Hybášková (ALDE) that he had no powers over the participation of each member state in civilian crisis management, while recognising that the EU needed to find ways to convince member states to be more involved. A possible solution could be the participation of states not according to numerical capabilities but according to specialities of each (as he believed that each member state has developed good capabilities in a specific field).

Asked by MEP Angelika Beer (Greens/EFA) vis-à-vis the creation of a potential civilian peace corps, he answered that the problem was more a case of effective availability of capabilities pledged by member states (states pledge a certain number of troops and equipment but the latter are often already deployed on other theatres) than creating a peace corps.

The Head of the CSFP Operations Unit (DG RELEX European Commission), Mr. Juha Auviven underlined that the Commission had followed the recent evolutions of civilian crisis management. DG RELEX follows the Council's action on a more operational level, by bringing funds to the mission and leading related programmes in the countries concerned. An example of this increasing involvement was indicated in the annual budget of DG RELEX dedicated to CFSP, which increased from 30 million euro five years ago, to 235 millions euro for 2008. These funds are not granted to military missions and the Operations Unit was not only responsible for granting the funds but also controlling their use. He assured MEP Luis Yañes-Barnuevo García (PSE) that the Irish "no" to the Treaty of Lisbon did not stop the momentum of the Commission's involvement in civilian crisis management because there was already progress achieved within the Nice framework before dealing with the future changes to be brought by the Lisbon Treaty.

The Head of Crisis Response and Peacebuilding Unit (DG RELEX, European Commission), Christian Berger, described the different mechanisms the European Commission could use to face a conflict, underlining that each tool is designed to be used in a specific scenario. The Commission utilizes the Stability Instrument" to fund programmes and projects aimed at preventing conflicts. The Stability Instrument is a set of political and economic reform programmes and aids (macro financial assistance, transfer of technologies etc). The EU divided geographical regions into several areas of security in which the Commission acts with the Stability Instrument, adapted to the areas of the EU, European Neighbourhood Policy, Mediterranean Union. During a crisis, the Commission uses humanitarian aid (that absorbs two thirds of the 70 billion euro affected through DG RELEX for 2007-2013) and civilian protection measures (financial assistance to ESDP missions – 4 billion euro for 2007-2013). Finally, the

Commission acts in post crisis phases to help local authorities and international community to create a safe and sustainable environment through diverse programmes, such as facilitating peace talks, mine clearance campaigns, education, good governance.

During the response phase, the Commission deploys its own personnel or member states civilian staff seconded to the Commission. During the stability phase, the Commission seeks to rely on local or international NGOs and on civil society. For the prevention phase, the Commission relies on international partners and is currently seeking to create a permanent “peacebuilding partnership”: a set of 6 to 7 European cells working as permanent points of contact for the Commission in the main regions of the world.

Exchange of views with Chair of the PSC

On 26 June, Von Wogau opened the exchange of views with Ambassador Metka Ipavic, Chairwoman of the Political and Security Committee, vis-à-vis the latest developments of ESDP under the Slovenian Presidency by noting that there have been significant developments within the Nice Framework - such as creation of the EDA, increasing number of missions, and the defense package by the Commission - even if the Lisbon treaty had not entered into force.

Ipavic presented a brief overview of the ongoing missions and welcomed the launch of EULEX Kosovo and EUSSR Guinea-Bissau, both contributing good governance. She also welcomed the launch of the EUFOR Tchad/RCA. She added that the Council was currently studying the feasibility of another mission in Palestinian Occupied Territories (in addition to EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS).

MEP Tobias Pflüger (GUE/NGL) objected that the agreement between the Council of the European Union and Guinea-Bissau authorising the deployment of the mission (adopted on 10 June 2008) was not balanced: it transferred some of Guinea-Bissau’s sovereign rights to the EU and granted the mission exorbitant rights, benefits and immunities. Hence, he asked Ipavic if she perceived this mandate as normal and if these kinds of clauses were common in bilateral agreements. In response, Ipavic simply answered that there were texts framing the immunities and privileges without detailing.

Vis-à-vis Kosovo, Pflüger wanted to know the transition between the UNMIK and the EU mission would be undertaken. Ipavic informed the Subcommittee that this transition was about to start and that it would last 4 months. MEP Vytautas Landsbergis (EPP-ED) asked if EU compensation agreement could explain the fact that Russia and Serbia reactions on the independence of Kosovo had calmed. Ipavic explained that she did not know if the compensation agreement with Russia could explain such a shift. However, the victory of pro-Europe leaders in the Serbian election could be a factor of appeasement.

Ipavic applauded the adoption of the Stabilization and Association Agreement in BiH, allowing a simplification of laws pertaining to law enforcement agencies and police, thus, increasing transparency in Bosnia. MEP Michael Brejc (ALDE), argued however that police reform had only started after huge pressure from the international community and he expected the Council to lead a real reform of the police sector. Ipavic answered that the Council and the Commission had received positive indications and that criminality was decreasing.

Pflüger asked Ipavic what she thought regarding the EUFOR Operation Commander, Brigadier General Jean-Philippe Ganascia, declaring that he disagreed with the EUFOR Tchad/RCA concept and that there were too many attacks. Ipavic, responded that the Council felt that the EUFOR mandate has a sound base and that there would not be changes.

Discussing civilian capabilities, Ipavic welcomed recent developments and assured the Subcommittee that the Council was working on ways to enhance member states’ participation in missions. The Council

appreciated the long term strategy of the EDA, aiming for the EU to increase military capability. Ipavic however agreed with Brejc that the EU missions still lacked strategic lift ability. She nevertheless underlined that the problem also appeared in other international missions, whilst welcoming the French-British initiative to address the situation. She also added that the EDA and NATO were working on a solution. When asked by von Wogau if battlegroups could be contemplated as reserve task forces and not only as first-to-be-deployed forces, she answered that function of battlegroups is currently being studied and debated in the Council.

Ipavic also assured the Subcommittee that human rights protection was a paramount issue in ESDP missions and in CFSP more generally. She stated that reporting on human rights is consistently undertaken in each ESDP mission and lesson learnts are applied to other missions. Furthermore, the EU has closely collaborated with the United Nations on the issue of child soldiers and the Slovenian EU Presidency had organised seminars and conferences on children in armed conflict.

Ipavic declared that cooperation with other international organisations on security issues was working well (especially with NATO) but had to be further pursued with Mediterranean countries, the African Union and Russia. MEP Gerard Batten (ID) asked her if the 'clinical death' of the Lisbon Treaty was not an opportunity to give up ESDP and reinforce traditional loyalties of armies (national loyalties and NATO loyalties). Ipavic answered that ESDP was largely backed in Europe and that EU would continue to develop capabilities.

By Daniel Fiott and Olivier Jacquemet, ISIS Europe



international security information service, europe

Rue Archimède 50, 1000 Brussels Tel: +32 (0)2 230 7446 Fax: +32 (0)2 230 6113
E-mail: info@isis-europe.org Internet: www.isis-europe.org