

Wednesday, 18 February 2009 - Brussels

Annual Report (2007) on the main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP - European Security Strategy and ESDP - The role of NATO in the security architecture of the EU (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - (PT) I should like to thank the rapporteurs, Ari Vatanen and Karl von Wogau, for their work and efforts to achieve a consensus, particularly on the difficult issue of the nuclear policies, which must be urgently revised by the European Union and NATO at a time when President Obama is reviving the objective of freeing the world from nuclear weapons and when two European nuclear submarines almost caused a disaster.

The Vatanen and von Wogau reports highlight the need for a politically, strategically and operationally independent European Union, through an ambitious European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). We need institutional, financial and operational instruments to achieve these objectives. We therefore need close cooperation between NATO and the EU, based on respect for the political independence of each of these organisations, which are complementary. We therefore call for the setting-up of a permanent EU Operational Headquarters in Brussels, with the capacity to independently plan and conduct ESDP military operations. We therefore call on the Member States of the EU to increase efforts to spend their national defence budgets more wisely, more efficiently, and in a more European manner, which they cannot properly do separately.

The message from this Parliament is unequivocal and serves as a warning. Without a Europe of defence, defence in Europe will be threatened. Our defence industries may be threatened. The capacities that Europe needs in order to fulfil its responsibility of protecting civilian populations and preventing massacres and genocides may be threatened. Europe's role as a global player in crisis management may be threatened. The extension of European political integration to security and defence, as provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon, is urgent and needs to be speeded up. This is not only in the interests of the European Union, but also in the interest of NATO, as both organisations will reap the rewards of a Europe that is better equipped to tackle the increasing challenges to the security of Europeans and to global security.