



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2024)0013

Role of the European Parliament and its parliamentary diplomacy in the EU's foreign and security policy

European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2024 on the role of the European Parliament and its parliamentary diplomacy in the EU's foreign and security policy (2023/2105(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 14(1), 21 and 36 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to the Declaration on Political Accountability of 20 July 2010 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 28 June 2016 adopting the report entitled 'Shared Vision, Common Action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy',
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 25 March 2020 entitled 'EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024' (JOIN(2020)0005),
- having regard to the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security, adopted on 21 March 2022,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 25 November 2020 entitled 'EU Gender Action Plan (Gap) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action' (JOIN(2020)0017),

- having regard to Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service¹,
 - having regard to paragraph 34 of the Declaration of the 2023 Summit between the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States of 18 July 2023 recognising parliamentary diplomacy as an important dimension of the relationship;
 - having regard to its recommendation of 15 March 2023 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy taking stock of the functioning of the EEAS and for a stronger EU in the world²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2023 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2022³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2023 on the implementation of the common security and defence policy – annual report 2022⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2019 on building EU capacity on conflict prevention and mediation⁵,
 - having regard to its decision of 13 September 2023 on amendments to Parliament’s Rules of Procedure with a view to strengthening integrity, independence and accountability⁶,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0405/2023),
- A. whereas Parliament’s role as co-legislator and co-budgetary authority covers not only EU internal policies, but also, to a large extent, the EU’s external action;
- B. whereas Article 36 TEU requires the VP/HR to consult Parliament regularly on the principal aspects of and choices made under the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and to inform Parliament of policy evolutions;

¹ OJ L 201, 3.8.2010, p. 30.

² OJ C, C/2023/410, 23.11.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/410/oj>.

³ OJ C 214, 16.6.2023, p. 26.

⁴ OJ C 214, 16.6.2023, p. 54.

⁵ OJ C 23, 21.1.2021, p. 16.

⁶ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0316.

- C. whereas Parliament's consent is required for the entry into force of most international agreements; whereas Article 218(10) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that the European Parliament 'shall be immediately and fully informed at all stages of the procedure' for the negotiations of such agreements;
- D. whereas Parliament scrutinises and discusses the conduct of EU external affairs, in particular through the work of its Committee on Foreign Affairs and its two subcommittees on Human Rights and on Security and Defence, as well as through its Committees on International Trade and on Development; whereas this scrutiny role includes matters pertaining to the adoption, implementation and review of EU thematic, regional and country strategies and other policy documents, such as the EU Gender Action Plan, as well as financial assistance and appointments to senior positions within the EU's external representation;
- E. whereas Parliament, as the only EU institution directly elected by EU citizens, holds public debates in plenary and in committees and adopts reports and resolutions related to EU foreign and security policy and to the situation in non-EU countries, notably regarding human rights, and thus contributes to raising public awareness and spurring discussion both within the EU, but also in the countries concerned; whereas these reports and resolutions contribute to normative developments worldwide and are closely scrutinised by actors from non-EU countries, including governments, parliaments, and representatives of civil society and the media and may generate reactions and repercussions in these countries;
- F. whereas Parliament has a unique network of 45 standing delegations that maintain and deepen relations with other parliaments from non-EU countries, regions and organisations; whereas such bodies often constitute the parliamentary dimension of EU bilateral agreements with such countries;
- G. whereas Parliament's role in establishing the Union's annual budget is pivotal in supporting the countries most in need to overcome long-term development challenges through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe, as well as in addressing major humanitarian disasters and emergencies, notably by increasing humanitarian aid;
- H. whereas promoting gender equality is an objective of the EU's external policy; whereas all EU Member States and the European Parliament have committed to implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security;
- I. whereas the European Parliament has become one of the most active parliaments in terms of its parliamentary diplomatic activity and the resources devoted to it; whereas parliamentary diplomacy

contributes to the achievement of EU objectives and to the promotion of EU values, interests and policies, including at the multilateral level, thereby bringing added value by promoting more coherent and cohesive EU external action; whereas parliamentary diplomacy can enhance strategic communication and the visibility and effectiveness of decisions and implementing measures under both the EU's CFSP and common security and defence policy (CSDP);

- J. whereas by using parliamentary diplomacy, Parliament engages in dialogue with world leaders, elected officials, government representatives and diplomats, public institutions, civil society organisations and representatives, including from vulnerable and at-risk populations, and other stakeholders from non-EU countries and multilateral institutions on a continuous basis, in particular through the work of its delegations and committees, including through holding hearings, adopting reports and resolutions and carrying out country visits;
- K. whereas Article 36 TEU mandates that the VP/HR appear before Parliament at least twice a year to report on the current state of affairs regarding the CFSP/CSDP and to answer questions; whereas the Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 November 2002 between the European Parliament and the Council concerning access by the European Parliament to sensitive information of the Council in the field of security and defence policy¹ needs to be updated;
- L. whereas Parliament's Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group, which is headed by the chairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Development and includes MEPs from across the political spectrum, oversees Parliament's efforts to support democracy beyond the EU, including with regard to election observation, mediation and dialogue; whereas through the Jean Monnet Dialogue for Peace and Democracy, Parliament brings non-EU political leaders together to promote inter-party communication and consensus building; whereas MEPs may act as special envoys and mediators for conflict prevention in certain high-tension situations worldwide;
- M. whereas the European Parliament assists national parliaments and international regional assemblies beyond the EU's borders in order to improve their institutional capacity; whereas it has established an ongoing dialogue with these legislatures and regularly exchanges best practices;
- N. whereas Parliament is an internationally recognised election observer; whereas Parliament's election observation delegations are

¹ OJ C 298, 30.11.2002, p. 1.

embedded either in EU electoral observation missions or in international election observation missions;

- O. whereas political groups and individual members of Parliament enjoy a dense and wide-ranging network of contacts with political parties, parliamentarians, government officials and stakeholders from the private sector and civil society in non-EU countries, notably in EU accession countries and the EU neighbourhood;
- P. whereas in addition to the European Parliament's Liaison Offices outside the EU in London and Washington, Parliament has antenna offices to the United Nations in New York, to the African Union in Addis Ababa and to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Jakarta, which have the objective of strengthening parliamentary cooperation with these multilateral organisations;
- Q. whereas Article 5(7) of Council Decision 2010/427/EU states that 'Union Delegations shall have the capacity to respond to the needs of other institutions of the Union, in particular the European Parliament, in their contacts with the international organisations or third countries to which the Delegations are accredited';

Strengthening parliamentary diplomacy

- 1. Welcomes Parliament's growing role in the EU's external action, which has gradually evolved into a substantial one, combining its legislative, budgetary and scrutiny powers with multiple forms of public and silent engagement with international organisations, countries, societies and individuals from outside the EU;
- 2. Highlights the distinct role and value of EU parliamentary diplomacy in complementing and reinforcing the visibility and impact of EU foreign and security policy, alongside the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Commission and the diplomatic services and parliaments of the Member States, while preserving Parliament's own autonomy;
- 3. Underlines the importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a means to reach out to more diverse stakeholders in partner and non-EU countries to increase awareness about EU legislation and positions, to better understand perceptions, impacts and consequences of such legislation and positions in these countries and to forge peer-to-peer alliances and solid partnerships in an increasingly complex and multipolar international context;
- 4. Regrets the fact that, despite its distinctive contribution to the achievement of EU foreign and security policy goals, as well as the added value and complementarity of parliamentary diplomacy, Parliament has yet to be fully recognised by the Commission, the

Council and the EEAS as an integral player within the 'Team Europe' approach;

5. Believes that great untapped potential exists for Parliament to further develop its diplomatic role and contribution to the achievement of EU foreign and security policy objectives;

Tools, means and values of parliamentary diplomacy

6. Highlights Parliament's specific, dynamic and public contribution to the EU's foreign and security policy and to tackling global challenges through the work of its committees working on external affairs, including the subcommittees on Human Rights and on Security and Defence, which contribute to relations with non-EU countries, international organisations and civil society worldwide;
7. Stresses that standing delegations provide important and complementary work to that of the committees by establishing a regular and sustained forum for political dialogue with non-EU countries and international organisations, including through joint parliamentary bodies and multilateral assemblies;
8. Highlights that the standing delegations play a key role as a relay between Parliament and its partners around the world, facilitating interaction, consistently providing information to committees and other Parliament bodies, debating positions and policies of common interest, and also listening to different partners and other stakeholders and conveying their views to the competent bodies within Parliament;
9. Considers that Parliament's official missions outside the EU form an integral part of EU external policy and must therefore enjoy the full support of the EU delegations, as well as the highest level of information and security from the EEAS in this regard; calls for the EEAS Crisis Response Centre to be provided with all necessary resources; considers that better coordination, planning and priority-setting for the missions between the different Parliament bodies would increase the consistency, credibility and impact of Parliament's diplomatic role;
10. Suggests that the relevant Parliament bodies set up internal coordination by, among other actions, periodically drafting a list of priority countries with whom to engage, based on upcoming legislative files and geopolitical or strategic priorities, by holding joint exchanges of views with these priority countries on EU relations or on horizontal geopolitical or conflict issues, and by fostering synergies between Parliament's missions abroad to avoid unnecessary duplication, streamline resources and improve consistency in Parliament's messages;

11. Underlines that parliamentarians should be fully prepared on the cultural and international cultural relations dimensions of a non-EU country when going on an official mission, so that they can foster a culture of dialogue within the context of a dialogue of cultures; calls, in this regard, for the EEAS, and particularly its Strategic Communication and Foresight division, to fully support Parliament's official missions to non-EU countries;
12. Believes that the political dialogue carried out by Parliament and its individual MEPs with governmental, parliamentary and civil society actors across the world contributes to promoting EU priorities, views and values related to global standards in areas such as universal human rights and democracy, LGBTI rights, women's rights and gender equality, climate and energy diplomacy, connectivity, artificial intelligence and digital and technological policies;
13. Stresses Parliament's consistent dedication to placing human rights, the rule of law and democracy at the heart of EU external action and to providing a key forum in which to hear and amplify the voice of civil society and democratic stakeholders from around the world; highlights, in this regard, its actions in support of human rights defenders (HRDs), parliamentarians at risk and young political leaders, as well as in support of women's participation in political life and the fight against disinformation; calls for Parliament's actions to be further developed and for a voice to be given to those whose rights are at risk in the next parliamentary term;
14. Highlights the key relevance of Parliament's debates and resolutions on breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as one of its tools with the greatest impact abroad when addressing human rights situations in non-EU countries; calls, therefore, for better visibility for these debates and resolutions, including with regard to the agendas of the plenary sessions and in line with the work of the committees and other standing parliamentary bodies;
15. Underlines the importance and the unique nature of Parliament's role in election observation missions and more broadly in democracy support programmes, such as its reinforcement of parliamentary democracy in non-EU countries and in initiatives involving mediation, capacity-building facilitation, conflict prevention, the fostering of a consensual and democratic parliamentary culture and the promotion of human rights; calls for the findings from the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group's activities on specific countries, as well as those derived from EU election observation missions, to be better integrated into the relevant work of the committees and delegations, as well as in plenary sessions when focusing on those same countries;
16. Calls for strengthened coordination with the Commission, including the Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and

Enlargement Negotiations and the Directorate-General for International Partnerships, in supporting parliamentary democracy worldwide and bolstering institutional support for parliaments; suggests that the network with national parliaments on democracy support, established by Parliament, could become a regular institutional venue to coordinate activities and leverage expertise;

17. Stresses the need to achieve gender balance in all activities and missions, including at Parliament representations, when travelling outside the EU, and to expand gender equality expertise by deploying experts on gender equality as part of parliamentary assistance actions and programmes;

Parliament's contribution to the EU's foreign and security policy

18. Believes that the next parliamentary term and the establishment of the future Commission should be an opportunity to strengthen the framework of interinstitutional relations between Parliament, the EEAS and the Commission, including EU delegations, in order to enhance parliamentary diplomacy and strengthen the EU's toolbox for external action;
19. Calls, in particular, for Parliament's oversight over the work under the EU foreign and security policy activities to be reinforced by enhancing the level of accountability and the transparency of the EEAS and the Commission's external services; highlights, in this context, the necessity of updating the 2010 Declaration on Political Accountability to redefine relations between the EEAS and Parliament;
20. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to genuinely involve Parliament in the implementation and scrutiny of matters of strategic relevance in EU foreign affairs, including the application of restrictive measures, as well as in the scrutiny of external financing instruments;
21. Insists on Parliament's right to information on CFSP matters under Article 36 TEU, including timely access to reports, country strategies and other confidential information guiding the conduct of the EU CFSP; stresses, in this respect, the importance of finalising, as soon as possible, the update of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 November 2002 between the European Parliament and the Council concerning access by the European Parliament to sensitive information of the Council in the field of security and defence policy;
22. Stresses that Parliament's scrutiny function and power to monitor the negotiation and implementation of international agreements should grant it a critical role in shaping the Union's engagement with non-EU countries and international organisations, and its overall action in the international arena, which would also enable the

EU to promote gender mainstreaming and climate diplomacy in international relations; deplores, in this regard, so-called informal or ad hoc arrangements that do not require Parliament's consent and that therefore undermine Parliament's authority as co-legislator and its oversight role;

23. Takes the view that EU ambassadors in strategic countries and EU special representatives should only be confirmed after a positive evaluation from Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs;
24. Calls for the more systematic participation of the chairs of Parliament's external committees in high-level CFSP meetings and events, including the Foreign Affairs Council; calls for joint EEAS, Commission and Parliament delegations to major multilateral and regional gatherings;
25. Insists that all key strategic policy documents adopted by the Commission and the Council in relation to the conduct of EU external policy should be drafted in consultation with Parliament and should integrate Parliament's role and input therein;
26. Calls for the strengthening of Parliament's relations with the Member States' national parliaments, which are well-placed bodies to act as a relay towards Member States' executive branches; underlines therefore that the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the CFSP/CSDP and the inter-parliamentary conferences held annually by the subcommittee on Human Rights provide an important forum for the exchange of information and best practices between national parliaments and the European Parliament in the areas concerned and should be reinforced;
27. Considers that Parliament can play a unique role in bringing EU foreign policy closer to European citizens and in strengthening its democratic legitimacy, including by engaging with sub-state entities, such as regional governments and parliaments, and thus allowing multilevel diplomacy under the respective legal and institutional frameworks for EU and Member State foreign policy to feed into and build on EU-level external action;
28. Reiterates its call to develop autonomous EU diplomacy determined by a common diplomatic culture from an EU perspective and underlines Parliament's role in this regard; considers that the implementation of Parliament's pilot project on the creation of a European Diplomatic Academy, and especially its future and permanent structure, is a concrete step forward on this; calls for guarantees on Parliament's permanent participation and active involvement in the future managing or governing bodies of the European Diplomatic Academy, as well as in its training programmes and activities;

29. Takes the view that, in the context of backsliding on human rights and democracy worldwide, Parliament has a specific role to play in defending rules-based multilateralism, democracy and the rule of law, in promoting human rights and political pluralism, in countering disinformation and foreign interference in non-EU countries and in helping democratically elected parliaments globally to consolidate their institutional roles and internal working methods through targeted programmes; notes that MEPs can address more sensitive issues, such as human rights violations, make public statements, pursue public or private avenues for communication or engage with local partners when the space for traditional diplomacy is more restricted;
30. Highlights the specific role of parliamentary bodies in helping partner countries and, in particular, enlargement and potential candidate countries in the Western Balkans and the Eastern neighbourhood; calls to strengthen their role in the EU accession process, given the specific and key role national parliaments play in the required reform process through, among other things, legislative approximation, oversight and outreach to citizens; recalls the need for EU delegations to actively support such inter-parliamentary cooperation in candidate and potential candidate countries;
31. Welcomes innovative approaches such as the committee-to-committee cooperation recently launched between the European Parliament and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and encourages the development of further initiatives in this field, given the political importance of the enlargement process;
32. Reiterates its call to enhance the EU's institutional capacities for preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and mediation, and believes that Parliament can provide expertise and a substantial contribution through its bodies and actions in this area, including by engaging with early warning mechanisms and on-site visits;
33. Stresses that the wide inter-parliamentary network that Parliament has developed through its standing delegations and multilateral assemblies offers a prime vehicle to discuss and coordinate positions with international partners in multilateral forums, for example in relation to UN resolutions, gender mainstreaming, climate diplomacy or positions at the G20, as well as to clarify the intentions of the EU to partners and promote its actions; highlights Parliament's significant contribution to the work of multilateral forums through its involvement in, inter alia, G7 and G20 parliamentary summits, and in meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union;
34. Highlights the role of the European Parliament in globally advancing gender equality, including the fight against femicide and gender-based violence, and LGBTI rights in the EU's external action; points out the importance of parliamentarians in promoting gender

sensitiveness across EU external relations via awareness raising, capacity building and the sharing of good practices, including, but not limited to, the added value of ensuring gender-balanced parliaments and a gender perspective in the functioning of parliamentary bodies; calls for Parliament to further strengthen this relevant dimension of its parliamentary diplomacy in its interactions with partner countries;

35. Takes the view that, in the light of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), Parliament must play a significant role in achieving key strategic gender equality benchmarks;
36. Underlines Parliament's advocacy work for the ratification and implementation of relevant UN and other international conventions and optional protocols, such as the Paris Agreement and the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;

Team Europe: Parliament as a foreign policy partner

37. Considers that while Parliament should maintain its full autonomy in carrying out its external policy agenda, joint ad hoc visits and statements by Parliament alongside Commission and Council representatives in relation to key developments in non-EU countries offer a promising area for enacting the Team Europe approach; calls, in this regard, for an interinstitutional Team Europe pilot programme to be launched in a selected number of non-EU countries; calls for this pilot programme to ensure that Parliament's tools are fully integrated within a joined-up interinstitutional approach towards the countries concerned;
38. Denounces the decision by some countries, including some that have agreements with the EU, to ban Parliament delegations and individual MEPs from entering some or all of their territories; denounces the threats and sanctions against MEPs by non-EU countries; insists that the Council and the Member States take immediate and robust action, including sanctions if deemed necessary, when Parliament's bodies or individual MEPs are targeted by restrictive measures from non-EU countries;
39. Highlights election observation as an area where cooperation between Parliament and the EEAS is the most structured, with both institutions conducting election observation activities that are well integrated with each other in several ways;
40. Reiterates its call for more strategic coordination between EU institutions in relation to urgent individual cases that involve HRDs, journalists, or members of particularly vulnerable groups; is convinced that parliamentary diplomacy may prove an effective and

complementary mechanism for engaging with non-EU countries on such cases; calls for an interinstitutional task force on HRDs to coordinate European efforts on priority HRD cases;

41. Reiterates its request for the VP/HR, in cooperation with the Member States and Parliament, to adopt an annual list of focus countries of serious concern in relation to the plight of HRDs and democracy activists, which would, inter alia, allow for a fully coordinated Team Europe practical response on the ground; believes that Parliament could play a decisive role by using its institutional and other means in support of this targeted and joined-up approach;
42. Urges each EU delegation to publicise Parliament's work relevant to its host country, including in the local language on its website, and to follow up with local authorities and civil society groups;

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43. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.