

28 January 1999

A4-0047/99

REPORT

containing a proposal for a European Parliament recommendation to the Council

on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy

Rapporteur: Mr Per Gahrton

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PE 228.774/fin.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Procedural page	3
A. PROPOSAL FOR A RECOMMENDATION	4
B. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	6
<u>Annex</u> : Proposal for a recommendation B4-0791/98	10

At the sitting of 17 July 1998 the President of Parliament announced that he had referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy the proposal for a recommendation to the Council by Mr Spencer and 38 other Members on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps (B4-0791/98).

At its meeting of 24 September 1998 the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy considered the proposal for a recommendation and decided to draw up a report.

At the meeting of 24 September 1998 the committee appointed Mr Gahrton rapporteur.

At its meetings of 1 December 1998, 7 January and 20 January 1999 the committee considered the proposal for a recommendation drawn up by its chairman and adopted it unanimously.

The following took part in the vote: Cushnahan, third vice-chairman and acting chairman; Gahrton, rapporteur; Aelvoet, Bernard-Reymond, Burenstam Linder, Caligaris (for Bertens), Cars, Frischenschlager (for La Malfa), Galeote Quecedo, Goerens (for Andre-Léonard), Gomolka, Habsburg, Hoff, Kristoffersen, Lambrias, Oostlander, Pack (for Piha), Salafranca Sánchez Neyra, Schwaiger (for Rinsche), Schroedter (for Cohn-Bendit), Terrón i Cusi (for Wiersma), Theorin and Titley.

The proposal for a recommendation was tabled on 28 January 1999.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the part-session at which the report is to be considered.

A
PROPOSAL FOR A RECOMMENDATION

European Parliament recommendation on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps

The European Parliament

- having regard to the proposal for a recommendation to the Council by Mr Spencer and 38 other Members on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps (B4-0791/98),
- having regard to Article J7 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Rule 46(3) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy (A4-0047/99),
- A. whereas the end of the 'cold war' has been characterised, both in and out of Europe, by an increasing number of intra and inter-state conflicts with growing international, political, economic, ecological and military implications,
- B. pointing out that the manifold character of these conflicts makes them often difficult to understand and to handle because of the lack of appropriate concepts, structures, methods and instruments,
- C. considering that the military response to international conflicts often has to be combined with political efforts to reconcile belligerent parties, to put a genuine end to violent conflicts and recreate conditions of mutual confidence,
- D. believing that the potential role of civilians in situations of conflict has still to be fully evaluated,
- E. pointing out that the European Parliament has adopted several resolutions concerning the eventual establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps (ECPC),
- F. underlining that such initiative should be seen as a further instrument of the European Union to enhance its external action in the field of conflict prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts,
- G. whereas in no way should the ECPC be intended as an alternative to ordinary peace-keeping missions or give rise to overlapping with organisations already working in the field in question, such as the OSCE and UNHCR, but rather as complementary, when necessary, to conflict preventive actions of military nature in cooperation with the OSCE and the UN,
- H. emphasising that the prospect of future enlargement of the Union makes the necessity and urgency to reform and strengthen the existing common foreign and security policy even more insistent,

- I. underlining that the EU has already set up for the war in former Yugoslavia an experience like the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) that could be used as a first step on the way to establishing an ECPC,
 - J. insisting however also that the experiences of the ECMM and the Kosovo verification mission show the limitations of the concept of the ECPC,
 - K. whereas the inadequate deployment of unarmed observers, who could easily be taken hostage, may also have politically undesirable consequences,
 - L. emphasising that many specialised NGOs, many of them with detailed and extensive field experience, could give a precious contribution to such a project,
 - M. stressing that any civilians taking part in a peace corps must be properly trained,
 - N. whereas the ECPC must not become a large and inflexible organisational structure, which would entail high and unproductive costs and prevent the flexible use of resources from various sources, both governmental and non-governmental,
1. Recommends to the Council to produce a feasibility-study about the possibility to establish a ECPC within the framework of a stronger and more effective Common Foreign and Security Policy;
 2. Recommends that, in so doing, the Council should consider the possibility of practical peace-making measures such as arbitration and confidence-building between the warring parties, humanitarian aid, reintegration (inter alia by disarming and demobilising former combatants), rehabilitation, reconstruction and monitoring and improving the human rights situation;
 3. Recommends that the Council make minimum, flexible arrangements for the sole purpose of reviewing and mobilising both the resources of NGOs and those made available by States, and possibly participating in their coordination;
 4. Recommends that the Council instruct the Early Warning Unit to examine and identify cases in which an ECPC could be used;
 5. Recommends to the Council to report to the EP about the ECMM making a full evaluation of the role of this body and its future perspectives and limitations;
 6. Recommends to the Council and the Commission, in the framework of this feasibility study, to organise a hearing to evaluate in depth the role that NGOs have played for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the prevention of violence in former Yugoslavia and Caucasia;
 7. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council and, for information, to the Commission.

B **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

THE CONCEPT OF A EUROPEAN CIVILIAN PEACE CORPS (ECPC)

Introduction

The newly emerging conflict situation at the end of the 'Cold War' has been characterised by an increasing number of intra-state conflicts with growing international, political, economic, ecological and military implications. This development has led to an increasing necessity and legitimacy for outside intervention, creating an increasing challenge for international organisations like the European Union (EU) to become involved. However, they face the problem that the manifold character of these conflicts makes them very difficult to understand and to handle. There is a lack of appropriate concepts, structures, methods and instruments (including material basis and prepared manpower): it has become very obvious that a sole reliance on the traditional resources associated with diplomatic or military strategies is not adequate. There is a need, therefore, for a comprehensive peace-building approach, including humanitarian aid, development cooperation and conflict resolution. Interventions need to be co-ordinated on an international level; related to the needs of the population in the conflict area; compatible with the civil society and other actors in the field; non-violent and distinct from enforcement actions; flexible and practical; and capable of counteracting violent escalations at an early point.

The 'Bourlanges/Martin' report, adopted by the European Parliament on 17 May 1995 in its plenary session in Strasbourg, recognised for the first time this need by stating that 'a first step towards a contribution to conflict prevention could be the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps (including conscientious objectors) with training of monitors, mediators and specialists in conflict resolution'. Several times since then, the European Parliament confirmed this statement, for the last time in its latest report on the implementation of the CFSP.

Since that time the following conceptualisation of a European Civilian Peace Corps has been developed.

Goals

The first priority of an ECPC will be conflict transformation of human-made crises, e.g., the prevention of violent conflict escalation and contribution towards conflict de-escalation. In any case, the ECPC's tasks will be exclusively **civilian** in nature. Special emphasis will be given to conflict prevention, because it is more humane and less costly in comparison with post-conflict reconstruction. However, the Corps might also take up humanitarian tasks following natural disasters. ECPC involvement should not be confined to a certain area (i.e. Europe).

The ECPC will rely on a holistic approach, including, inter alia, political and economic efforts, and the enhancement of political participation and of the economic context of operations. Since conflict transformation efforts have to address all levels of protracted conflicts, the tasks of ECPC will be multifunctional. Concrete examples of ECPC's peace-building activities are mediation and confidence building among the conflict parties; humanitarian assistance (including food aid, water

and sanitation, and health); reintegration (including disarming and demobilisation of former combatants and the support of displaced persons, refugees and other vulnerable groups); rehabilitation and reconstruction; stabilisation of economic structures (including the establishment of economic linkages); monitoring and improving the human rights situation and empowerment for political participation (including election monitoring and assistance); interim administration to facilitate short-term stability; information and the establishment of educational structures and programmes designed to eliminate prejudices and enemy images; and campaigns informing and educating people about the peace-building activities at hand. Nothing of this kind can be imposed directly on the parties, however, through political support from the outside, their cooperation can be facilitated.

Success in fulfilling these tasks will depend on the degree to which the ECPC will be able to improve the relationship between humanitarian aid, confidence building and economic cooperation. None of these areas can be successfully supported without relating them to the others; e.g., the success of humanitarian aid and reconstruction after a war depends on the degree of confidence building among the conflict parties; material reconstruction, therefore has the task of involving the conflict parties in joint projects.

The ECPC is meant to be an official body, set up by the EU and functioning under the auspices of the EU. With regard to the EU bodies and the EU member states, an ECPC would ensure that:

- EU funds would be spent on projects compatible with EU interests;
- EU support would be made visible;
- EU member states would be supported in the preparation and recruitment of mission personnel;
- coordination between EU member states and other actors receiving EU funds for peace-building activities would be facilitated and redundancy prohibited; and
- EU funds would be spent efficiently.

The ECPC will function only under a mandate backed by the UN or its regional organisations: OSCE, OAU or OAS. It will contribute to the establishment of necessary links between the realm of diplomatic efforts on the one hand and the civil society on the other hand. As a peace-building body, the ECPC will differ from the peace-making efforts in the diplomatic field. ECPC missions will rely on the absence of violent military operations, some sort of a ceasefire agreement and the consent of the major parties. As an official body, the ECPC differs from NGOs. However, the ECPC's work will rely on efficient cooperation with NGOs and will strengthen and legitimate NGO work. The ECPC will be structured and organised independently of military bodies, but will rely on cooperation with the military where ECPC missions coincide with peace-keeping operations.

Personnel and structure

The ECPC will consist of two parts:

1. a core of full-time employed professionals to fulfil management tasks and ensure continuity (i.e., a secretariat for administration and management; recruitment, preparation, deployment, debriefing, and liaison); and
2. a pool of mission-specific professionals (including specialists, with or without experience, but all trained thoroughly), to be called on for specific missions, either on a part-time employment basis or as short-term field workers (including conscientious objectors on a voluntary basis and unpaid volunteers). Conscription will be based upon proportional representation among the EU Member States.

Preparation

General preparation

All personnel will be prepared with regard to the general character of mission conditions (e.g., a lack of sufficient material infrastructure, stark prejudices and enemy images, proneness to violence, inadequate health care and supply systems which challenge the personal and social abilities of the personnel who have to cooperate in a multicultural setting far away from their normal lives). The general preparation will include the development of sustainable skills usable under extreme conditions and applicable to a wide array of conflict situations. It will aim at the creation of a common understanding which will include the learning of a joint mode of communication and provide a conceptual basis for EU personnel coming from different professional and cultural backgrounds, to work in countries with peoples of different cultures. The general preparation should also provide the trainees with a fundamental knowledge about peace-building activities and the organisations involved (i.e. UN, OSCE, NGOs).

Function-specific preparation

Given that the multidimensional character of conflicts makes them very difficult to understand and handle, professional experiences have to be related to the strategies of conflict transformation and to the specifics of the various functions involved. Regardless of which mission the personnel will be assigned to, they should all receive function-specific preparation which provides them with details about at least one of the major functions of missions.

Mission-specific preparation

Mission personnel also have to be acquainted with the specific conditions that they will encounter in certain missions and the specific roles they will have to perform. Therefore, mission-specific preparation, both prior to deployment and 'on the job', is required.

Post-mission debriefing

Finally, post-mission debriefing is important for the personnel and the ECPC in order to evaluate and integrate the experiences and to improve the preparation and performance in the field.

Recruitment

To ensure that only qualified personnel will be recruited, the ECPC needs to establish:

- (a) a comprehensive database of available personnel, including rosters compatible across EU member states and training institutions;
- (b) comprehensive recruitment procedures, whereby information about qualified personnel can be transferred between relevant institutions on a regular basis; and
- (c) a basis for recruitment by member states, by publishing the benefits of ECPC involvement in peace-building efforts and taking legal and financial steps in order to provide job security and medical preparation for missions.

Deployment

A deployment has to be organised according to the mandate of a mission. The mandate has to be clear and practicable with regard to available resources. Procurement of the necessary equipment and the insurance and travel arrangements of personnel have to be taken care of.

Funding

Funding will be provided by the EU and its member states. In order to facilitate the establishment of the ECPC according to given resources on the one hand and overall needs on the other, a continuous growth of the ECPC is planned, starting with a pilot project, followed by continuous monitoring and 'fine-tuning' adjustments.

Institutional

The ECPC should be established as a specific service in the Directorate General One in the Commission with a general director accountable to the Commissioner for Foreign Affairs as well to the newly to be established Mr or Mrs. CFSP in the Council. To guarantee its necessary operational flexibility it might be structured with ECHO as a model.

Conclusions

The potential role of civilians in the field of conflict prevention and peaceful conflict resolution has still to be fully evaluated. It happens quite frequently that at the end of military peace-keeping missions conflicts start over again because the inner reasons that brought about violence have not been thoroughly addressed and solved. The military response, though necessary to stop violent confrontation, is not sufficient to bring parties to a real reconciliation. The idea of a ECPC, in this respect, should be taken into account by the EU as a further means to enhance and make its external action more effective. The facilitation of dialogue and the recreation of conditions of mutual confidence are tasks too often neglected that should be part of any peace mission. A stable peace is reached only when a real reconciliation process is pursued. Civil diplomacy is softer and more flexible and should be used to side, continue or conclude military peace-keeping actions. The EU has an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen its common foreign and security policy setting up a new practical instrument that could be made available to warring parties for the prevention of the escalation of violence and the peaceful resolution of crises.

B4-0791/98

Recommendation on the European Civilian Peace Corps

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article J7 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to Rule 46 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas the European Parliament has adopted several resolutions concerning the eventual establishment of a European Civilian Peace Corps,
 - B. convinced that such a Peace Corps should contribute positively to the Common Foreign and Security Policy and in particular strengthen the capacities of the Union to prevent conflicts in and between third countries to escalate into violence,
1. Recommends that the Council:
 - (a) follows up the expressed wish of the Parliament that the Council should without delay request the European Commission to produce a feasibility study on the European Civilian Peace Corps, this study to be finished by the end of 1999 at the latest;
 - (b) would, in the case of a positive outcome of this study, establish a pilot project as a first step to the establishment of the European Civilian Peace Corps.