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P9_TA(2020)0213

EU-African security cooperation in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa

European Parliament resolution of 16 September 2020 on EU-African security cooperation in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa (2020/2002(INI))

(2021/C 385/03)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), and in particular Articles 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 and 46 thereof,
- having regard to the OECD and Sahel and West Africa Club report of 14 February 2020 entitled ‘The Geography of Conflict in North and West Africa’,
- having regard to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute report entitled ‘Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2019’, published in April 2020,
- having regard to the Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 9 March 2020 entitled ‘Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa’ (JOIN(2020)0004),
- having regard to the Joint Declaration of the members of the European Council with the member states of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) of 28 April 2020,
- having regard to the Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/253 of 25 February 2020, amending Decision (CFSP) 2018/906 extending the mandate of the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Joint Declaration of the heads of the member states of the G5 Sahel and the President of the French Republic made at the summit of 13 January 2020 held in Pau, France (the Pau Declaration),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 20 April 2015 on the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020, of 16 March 2015 on the EU Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020 and of 25 June 2018 on the Horn of Africa/Red Sea,
- having regard to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325/1820 and its follow-up resolutions,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2013 on EU Strategy for the Horn of Africa ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 June 2016 on Peace Support Operations — EU engagement with the UN and the African Union ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2018 on Somalia ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the Strategy for the Development and Security of the G5 Sahel Countries of September 2016, the Framework for Integrated Priority Actions of February 2020, the Sahel Alliance and the Partnership for Stability and Security in the Sahel,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 54 I, 26.2.2020, p. 9.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 440, 30.12.2015, p. 38.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 86, 6.3.2018, p. 33.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 118, 8.4.2020, p. 113.

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- having regard to the Council's 'EU Concept for ESDP support for Security Sector Reform (SSR)' of 13 October 2005, the Commission communication of 24 May 2006 entitled 'A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform'(COM(2006)0253), the Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 5 July 2016 entitled 'Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform' (JOIN(2016)0031) and to the Council conclusions on an 'EU-wide strategic framework to support Security Sector Reform (SSR)' of 14 November 2016,
- having regard to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular to SDG 16, aimed at the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2017/821 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas (the 'Conflict Minerals Regulation')⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa of 14 November 2011, and to the EU Horn of Africa Regional Action Plan 2015-2020 of 26 October 2015,
- having regard to the United Nations Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire following the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19),
- having regard to the EU Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea of 17 March 2014,
- having regard to the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel of 21 March 2011 which was presented by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission, on the Council's request,
- having regard to the Annual Joint Consultative Meetings of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Political and Security Committee of the European Union,
- having regard to the Plan of Action to Enhance EU CSDP Support to UN Peacekeeping of 14 June 2012 and on Strengthening the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peacekeeping and Crisis Management: Priorities 2015-2018 of 27 March 2015,
- having regard to the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) adopted at the 2nd EU-Africa Summit held in Lisbon on 8 and 9 December 2007, and the JAES Roadmap 2014-2017 adopted at the 4th EU-Africa Summit held in Brussels on 2 and 3 April 2014,
- having regard to the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 3 entitled 'The efficiency and effectiveness of EU contributions channelled through United Nations Organisations in conflict-affected countries' of 25 May 2011,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2010 on the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security (WPS) of 10 December 2018 and its Action Plan 2019-2024 of 5 July 2019,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2012 on the role of the Common Security and Defence Policy in case of climate-driven crises and natural disasters⁽⁷⁾,

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 130, 19.5.2017, p. 1.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 56.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 419, 16.12.2015, p. 153.

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- having regard to the 2011 and 2012 reports of the United Nations Environment Programme entitled ‘Livelihood Security: Climate Change, Migration and Conflict in the Sahel’,
 - having regard to the Council’s Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities of 10 November 2009,
 - having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2019 on building EU capacity on conflict prevention and mediation ⁽⁸⁾,
 - having regard to its resolutions of 15 January 2020 on the implementation of the common security and defence policy ⁽⁹⁾ and the implementation of the common foreign and security policy ⁽¹⁰⁾,
 - having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 230/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an instrument contributing to stability and peace (COM(2016)0447),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 28 April 2015 entitled ‘The European Agenda on Security’ (COM(2015)0185),
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the letter of the Committee on Development,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0129/2020),
- A. whereas development and sustainable peace will only be achieved by addressing the root causes of poverty and hunger; whereas security is a precondition for development; whereas human security is a precondition for lasting peace and stability; whereas a strong nexus between security, development, and humanitarian intervention is essential for the sustainable development of the Sahel, West Africa and Horn of Africa regions; whereas without development and poverty eradication, there will be no sustainable peace; whereas security in the Sahel-Saharan and Horn of Africa regions has progressively worsened while European Union action has not been able to respond adequately to this crisis as a result, in particular, of limitations in mandate and operability;
- B. whereas the EU’s southern strategic environment is unstable; whereas it faces a range of challenges, particularly armed conflicts at the southern borders of the European continent and jihadist terrorism; whereas instability in this region has a direct effect on the security of Europe and its citizens, and on stability at the European external borders;
- C. whereas the security and stability of the Sahel, West Africa and Horn of Africa must be a strategic goal of the EU’s cooperation with the governments in the southern neighbourhood;
- D. whereas the mandates of the common security and defence policy (CSDP) mission are comprehensive and aim, among other things, to foster security sector reform, advance justice reform and strengthen military and police training, as well as to advance oversight;
- E. whereas the European Union has been committed to the security and development of the Sahel region as a leading partner through an integrated approach focused on political and diplomatic dialogue, and development and humanitarian support;
- F. whereas the ‘Capacity building in support of security and development’ (CBSD) initiative led to a revision of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP+) in 2017, which resulted in financing for training initiatives and the delivery of non-lethal equipment to armed forces in non-EU countries;

⁽⁸⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0158.

⁽⁹⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0009.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0008.

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- G. whereas Member States are required to provide the necessary personnel for the missions, shortfalls, exacerbated by the pandemic caused by the spread of COVID-19, mean that the number of EU staff in these missions is being reduced on health grounds;
- H. whereas from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean in the east, many African countries are struggling to contend with challenges, such as the destabilisation of the traditional agro-pastoral economy as a result of climate change, the exploitation of natural resources by external actors, food and nutrition insecurity, the lack of access to basic social services, inappropriate agricultural models, population growth and pressure on natural and environmental resources such as deforestation; whereas another major challenge is the emergence of new forms of mafia economy, including human, migrant and drug trafficking, cultural and wildlife smuggling, and the uncontrolled export of gold and mineral deposits, which, combined with institutional weakness and lack of transparency, weak governance, rising inequalities, the lack of trust in governments and corruption of many administrations, is producing a hybridisation between armed groups, traffickers and traditional community and regional conflicts, with the unacceptable phenomenon of jihadist religious extremism appearing as a false response for the societies concerned and with the rise of radicalisation;
- I. whereas the nature of security challenges, violent conflicts and political violence varies between different African regions, countries and provinces; whereas in the Sahel or the Horn of Africa regions, armed Islamist groups and terrorism, but also to a minor degree security forces, various criminal groups and militia cause major casualties, in particular, among civilians; whereas the situation is very different in most of West Africa's 19 countries, where some countries experience lasting stability and security, and others political violence or ethnic conflict;
- J. whereas 3 471 reported violent events were linked to these groups last year; whereas reported fatalities resulting from African militant Islamist group activity also increased by seven percent last year, to an estimated 10 460 deaths;
- K. whereas terrorist activities are largely concentrated in five main theatres, including Somalia, the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel — with lesser but persistent threats in North Africa and the west coast of the Indian Ocean; whereas the Sahel has seen the most rapid increase in violent extremist activity of any region in 2019; whereas each theatre has its own unique dynamics and requires a unique regional approach;
- L. whereas EU and G5 Sahel leaders have expressed their deep concern about the increase in terrorism and the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region; whereas terrorism is putting heightened pressure on the G5 Sahel countries and their neighbourhood; whereas terrorism is exacerbating local political, ethnical and religious tensions, and is fuelled by criminal and fundamentalist groupings, socio-economic grievances, weak governance, and, in some cases, by security and defence forces;
- M. whereas terrorist attacks on civilian populations, state institutions, state representatives, security and defence forces and infrastructure undermine social cohesion, and whereas terrorist groups also use existing local conflicts for this purpose;
- N. whereas all of these challenges have deeply affected the stability and peace of the local communities and the traditional order based on compromises and the moral authority of the elders and traditional leaders, which is being supplanted by the domination of armed groups of smugglers and terrorists;
- O. whereas creating the security conditions necessary for the re-establishment of basic state structures, particularly in the more remote regions where citizens may feel most abandoned, is essential;
- P. whereas terrorist and criminal attacks tend to target civilian populations, state representatives, security and defence forces, and socio-economic infrastructure, and thereby undermine social and community cohesion and integration;
- Q. whereas the Sahel is one of the regions most affected by the proliferation of illicit small arms, and whereas these undocumented and mostly illegally held arms not only threaten the safety and security of communities, but are also used by dangerous transnational criminal networks engaged in various forms of trafficking, including of weapons, human beings and illegal drugs;

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- R. whereas according to new data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute SIPRI:
- (a) the combined military expenditure of states in Africa grew by 1,5 % to an estimated USD 41,2 billion in 2019, the region's first spending increase for five years;
 - (b) Africa imported 49 % of its military equipment from Russia, 14 % from the United States and 13 % from China; whereas China has exported 20 % of its global arms sales to Africa;
- S. whereas Russia's military influence across Africa consists in arms sales, deploying of mercenaries and political advisers, security agreements and training programs for unstable countries;
- T. whereas billions of dollars' worth of gold is being smuggled out of west African countries every year through the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Middle East; whereas according to the United Nations, the Somali extremist group Al Shabaab generates millions of dollars in revenue off exports of charcoal to Iran and then on to the UAE, in violation of UN sanctions;
- U. whereas poverty, lack of education, unemployment, conflicts, crises and insecurity combined with other factors such as failed states, bad governance and corruption particularly affect young people and the opportunities given to them, pushing many to flee and leave their homes and families for safer regions or other continents, thereby risking their lives;
- V. whereas the above-mentioned challenges will be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the worsening effects of climate change; whereas the Commission has announced an additional EUR 194 million to support security, stability and resilience in Sahel;
- W. whereas the threat from militant Islamist groups in Africa is not uniform in nature, but comprises activity from a constantly shifting mix of roughly two dozen groups actively operating in 14 countries;
- X. whereas the European Union has conducted three military CSDP missions and operations to train and advise the Armed Forces of Somalia (EU training mission (EUTM) Somalia — 2010), Mali (EUTM Mali — 2013) and the Central African Republic (EUTM CAR — 2016), one naval military operation (EU naval force operation (NAVFOR) ATALANTA — 2009), and three civilian missions to train and advise the internal security forces of Mali (EU capacity-building mission (EUCAP) Sahel Mali — 2012), Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger — 2014) and Somalia (EUCAP Somalia — 2014), the GAR-SI Sahel Project, and has established and will soon launch an advisory mission (EUAM) in the Central African Republic;
- Y. whereas a number of military outposts of individual countries, such as France and the United States of America, provide security assistance to local partners, conducting counter-terrorism and other operations; whereas these, in parallel to political solutions, state building efforts and development initiatives, are crucial to defeating terrorist groups and contribute to building regional stability;
- Z. whereas sustained pressure on terrorists is needed to stop the proliferation of this threat into other regions and continents, including Europe;
- AA. whereas over the past decade, African security institutions have deployed tens of thousands of personnel in peace operations on African soil, demonstrating a genuine will to contribute to security governance on their own continent;
- AB. whereas the EU is also supporting the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, a key counter-terrorism instrument which is vital to combating terrorism, jihadist activity and security threats, and to the improvement of regional security;
- AC. whereas the continued operationalisation of key regional security actors such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) and the African Union's African Standby Force overlap with the EU's interest in assisting struggling countries to provide peace and prosperity for their citizens;

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- AD. whereas regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations between the countries of the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa are indispensable in order to maintain and strengthen stability in these regions;
- AE. whereas the African Union remains a key partner for the EU's peace and stability efforts;
- AF. whereas the African Union announced plans at its annual summit in February 2020 to send 3 000 soldiers to the Sahel to support the G5 Sahel in combating armed groups;
- AG. whereas since 2017 the EU has followed a process of regionalisation of its CSDP missions, which, alongside advancing cooperation with the G5 Sahel, is aimed at better identifying and filling gaps in cross-border cooperation in the regions;
- AH. whereas after years of specific training, the above-mentioned EU as well as the UN missions have been hampered in their sustainability and effectiveness due to restrictions on their mandate, training programmes, sustainability plans and local ownership, and the fact that they cannot supply the necessary equipment to the unit they train and to the local defence forces, including weapons, ammunition and vehicles; whereas the mandates and purpose of the EU missions need to be reviewed in order to draw up a 'lessons learned' analysis which should be used to adapt current and future missions;
- AI. whereas any training, financing, or equipping of security forces in third countries should abide by European fundamental values and help in building a reliable security sector which is first and foremost aimed at delivering security benefits to the entire local population while respecting the rule of law and, in particular, international human rights law;
- AJ. whereas these restrictions and the absence of a cohesive and strategic presence of the European Union affect the credibility of the EU's external action, while other global actors are stepping up their actions, sending mercenaries and building their own military facilities and have increased their supply of weapons and ammunitions to countries of the region with no governance stipulations and do so, in effect, to boost strictly bilateral interests;
- AK. whereas in 2017 China's Communist Party formally adopted the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) at the National Party Congress, with an announced investment as high as USD 8 trillion for a vast network of transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructure linking Europe, Africa, and Asia; whereas China is a major stakeholder in Africa's economy with a significant influence on many aspects of the continent's affairs;
- AL. whereas over the last decade, the UAE has gradually increased its presence in the Horn of Africa, using development and humanitarian projects to boost its geostrategic prominence, particularly in the Gulf of Aden; whereas Somalia has urged the United Nations Security Council to take action against the construction of a UAE military base in Somaliland;
- AM. whereas Turkey has spent years building trust in the Horn of Africa as it seeks to increase its influence, particularly in the Red Sea region; whereas Turkish companies still manage Mogadishu's main seaport and airport, and even provide military training for Somali government soldiers;
- AN. whereas the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has established its first overseas military base in Djibouti, and China holds over 70 % of Djibouti's gross domestic product in debt; whereas the BRI's loans catch vulnerable, developing countries in 'debt-traps', depleting government reserves and burdening generations of taxpayers with gigantic debts;
- AO. whereas neither the Somalian, Burkinabe, Malian nor the Central African armies have found effective responses and are struggling to fight against jihadists and armed groups or hold and secure areas with the aid of friendly international forces, the result being that the local populations feel abandoned, fearing accusations of collaborating with the government by the jihadists or the armed groups once they return and reoccupy the space from which they were expelled;

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- AP. whereas there has been a decisive drop in piracy off the coasts of both Eastern and Western Africa as a result of international maritime security efforts from both the EU and NATO that serve as a precedent for European, African and transatlantic security cooperation;
- AQ. whereas after years of involvement in the above-mentioned civil and military missions, the general situation has not improved significantly and is now showing a tendency to become worse despite the efforts made; whereas, as a result, a number of old and new challenges persist and a comprehensive strategy therefore needs to be implemented, with a particular focus on regions where vulnerabilities and tensions are the highest, to achieve the ultimate goal of regional stability and of transferring responsibility for security into the hands of Africans; whereas this strategy will satisfy an urgent need and the high expectations of both actors on the ground and local people, and should address the root causes of the crisis;
- AR. whereas the question of financing the CSDP is crucial for the continuation of the policy, and whereas the European Development Fund through the African Peace Facility (APF), and, in the future, through the European Peace Facility (EPF) provides support to the African Union, financing, among other things, the operational cost of military peacekeeping operations in Africa, in particular of AMISOM in Somalia; whereas the EPF will replace the Athena mechanism for the financing of the common costs of CSDP military operations, and the APF will endow the EU with a new tool to deploy military operations more flexibly and significantly enhance options for security assistance to partners; whereas the ultimate impact of the EPF as an instrument to sustainably address violent conflict and insecurity will depend on the extent to which it is complemented by the necessary safeguards and monitoring systems to avoid potential misuse of the aid provided, and to ensure that questions of accountability, human rights and the respect of humanitarian law are duly taken into account; whereas the future EPF that is due to take over from the APF in 2021 should extend its scope to the partner states and allow for the supply of military equipment;
- AS. whereas it is imperative that the EU support its partners in the Sahel-Saharan and Horn of Africa regions which are facing increased challenges in their struggle against armed terrorist groups, including jihadists; whereas the European Union can respond appropriately by providing the countries in the region concerned through the EPF with the necessary assistance, including arms and ammunitions; whereas the EPF should be approved without delay in order to allow for the military assistance needed;
- AT. whereas temperatures are rising 1,5 times faster in the Sahel region than in the rest of the world, and whereas, according to the United Nations, around 80 % of agricultural land in the region is degraded, with some 50 million people who depend on livestock farming in conflict over the land; whereas, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), this situation is plunging people into food insecurity and they are struggling to cope and face difficult choices;
- AU. whereas climate change effects are a risk factor for destabilisation, violence and conflict;
- AV. whereas the surge in violent attacks on public schools, murders, kidnappings, beatings and death threats against teachers and students has led to the closure of more than 9 000 schools in Central and West Africa, according to UNICEF, leaving nearly two million children without a proper education;
- AW. whereas the EU remains seriously concerned at the increased number of children that are recruited as child soldiers by extremist groups;
- AX. whereas the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has highlighted worrying new trends regarding drug trafficking in the region, with damaging effects on governance, security, economic growth and public health; whereas, according to the Office, West, Central and North Africa account for 87 % of all pharmaceutical opioids seized worldwide, and whereas UNODC recognises a close link between drug trafficking and the financing of armed groups;
- AY. whereas the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security stresses the need for the integration of a gender perspective into all fields and activities in the domain of peace and security in order to ensure the effectiveness of the EU's policies;

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- AZ. whereas attacks by extremist groups and escalating inter-communal violence over resources are affecting access to education and healthcare, with a large number of girls being most exposed to different types of abuse, physical and sexual;
- BA. whereas the European Union should strategically increase its economic presence to an even greater extent in view of the growing presence of other foreign powers;
- BB. whereas the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement proposed re-allocating, accelerating and prioritising EUR 3,25 billion from existing programmes to respond to coronavirus-related needs in Africa, including EUR 2,06 billion for sub-Saharan Africa;
- BC. whereas the EU should strengthen its cooperation with national parliaments, including security and defence committees, to improve critical oversight functions over national and external security interventions;

The action taken by the European Union and its Member States

1. Considers that the Commission, the Council and the Vice President / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) must coordinate the development, humanitarian and security strategies in which they are involved as part of an integrated strategy leading to independent African ownership in security and defence affairs; considers that the African Union and African states from the region are key partners with which the EU is meaningfully engaged in order to jointly achieve sustainable development and human security; supports the plans of the African Union to send 3 000 soldiers in support of the G5 Sahel; strongly believes that the EU and its Member States must strengthen the capacity of partners, reviewing the security and defence engagements in the regions of the Sahel, West Africa and the Horn of Africa, including through the provision of military equipment while respecting the 'do no harm' principle;
2. Recalls that the fight against terrorism depends in particular on the ability of the states concerned to maintain strong and reliable institutions, well-established basic services, including internal security capacities and a justice system in which citizens have confidence, in particular on criminal matters; considers that a security strategy for the Sahel, West Africa and Horn of Africa regions must first and foremost lie in addressing the root causes of the conflicts in the region, as poverty eradication is key to a sustainable peace;
3. Calls for the promotion of a renewed relationship between the EU and the African continent based on solidarity, mutual respect and mutual benefit, adhering always to the principles of respect for international law, national sovereignty and equality between parties;
4. Considers that in the European Union's CFSP all missions, operations and other actions must be coordinated by the VP/HR under the authority of the Council in accordance with Article 43(2) TEU, and that the Joint Support Coordination Cell should provide more advice to the Commission and the VP/HR, with an enhanced coordination role and should propose the establishment of a centralised civilian-military doctrine centre that would reinforce the capacities of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability missions and projects;
5. Strongly believes that the EU should invest to the maximum in processes aimed at conflict prevention by triggering a multitude of very concrete mediation, dialogue and reconciliation processes and projects in parallel to other security measures; underlines the need also to pursue non-state centric approaches aimed at fostering stability and security, in particular as regards inter-community tensions; strongly believes that only security assistance which puts human security at its centre will be effective in the medium and long term;
6. Underlines the urgent need to strengthen CSDP missions and operations, as well as the EU's overall strategic planning and communication policy, in order to increase the visibility of the EU's actions;
7. Welcomes the global commitment of the EU to the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa, and appreciates the contribution made by CSDP missions and operations to peace, security and international stability; underlines, however, the need to adapt the financial and administrative rules and the political decision-making process in order to increase the speed and effectiveness of the response to crises;

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8. Repeats its call for a white paper on European defence, which would design and outline very specific scenarios for possible EU military interventions and their underlying doctrines in compliance with the military tasks of Article 43(1) TEU;
9. Commends the staff of the EU missions who, in spite of very challenging conditions, have performed exceptionally and have demonstrated dedication and professionalism;
10. Stresses that in the light of the grave and profound degradation in the security conditions in the region, and in order to fill any gaps in EU missions and projects, partners' capacity building in the security sector must be strengthened in order to more adequately respond to the profound challenges and serious security conditions in the region, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories;
11. Supports the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 28 April 2015 entitled 'Capacity building in support of security and development — Enabling partners to prevent and manage crises' ⁽¹⁾;
12. Welcomes the Commission proposal and the ongoing interinstitutional negotiations aimed at establishing a regulation on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) comprising all of the tasks of the current Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP);
13. Welcomes the proposal from the VP/HR, with the support of the Commission, for the establishment under the Union's CFSP of an EPF for the financing of military and defence-related cooperation with third countries and international organisations, including equipment under the EU common military list, which will fill an important gap in EU support and together with the NDICI give the EU the ability to respond more quickly and effectively to security challenges and calls for their swift adoption; recalls that the EPF aims to incorporate the APF and establish a capacity building component which would allow the provision of military equipment to partner countries, including arms and ammunitions, with full respect for the common position, human rights and humanitarian law, and with effective transparency provisions as enumerated in its recommendation of 28 March 2019 on the establishment of the European Peace Facility to ensure that any military equipment is not given to recipients that are committing abuses, atrocities and other harms against civilian populations; notes that since June 2018 the Member States have been working on a Council decision establishing the EPF, to be created in January 2021 at the latest; in this regard, and in view of the current situation in Africa, calls on the Council to approve this proposal adopting the necessary decision without delay, establishing this new instrument to support military capabilities in African armed forces, and:
 - (a) for the EPF budget to be large enough to effectively address the current challenges relating to training, operations, missions, projects and military equipment, including weapons, munitions and transport;
 - (b) to ensure that the EPF overcomes the current limitations under the APF and the Union's budget on the acquisition of arms and munitions;
 - (c) calls for funding from the EU budget to be provided for the administrative expenditure arising from the Council decision, including for personnel;
 - (d) calls on the Council to charge the Member States for the operational expenditure arising from its implementation, including equipment and training;
 - (e) takes note that the Member States which do not participate in the funding of a specific action or part of it could abstain from the vote in the Council;
 - (f) calls for the establishment in the European External Action Service (EEAS) of a new dedicated division in charge of managing this new instrument, to oversee the supply and use of equipment and training, including proper safeguards and risk mitigation measures;

⁽¹⁾ JOIN(2015)0017.

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(g) is of the opinion that the supply and use of such equipment and training should be monitored by experts seconded by the Member States to this division to inform the VP/HR, and be subject to scrutiny by Parliament and audited by the European Court of Auditors;

14. Considers that the sustainability, effectiveness and visibility of EU civilian and military missions in Africa, in spite of the high degree of dedication and professionalism of their staff, have also been particularly hampered by the lack of local ownership, sustainability plans and basic equipment in the countries affected, as well as in their ability to strengthen the capacity of partners;

15. Calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that the use of all funding instruments is explored with a view to addressing the underlying causes of the conflicts and supporting the development of security capabilities in the affected African countries, as per Articles 209 and 212 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and in the light of the very serious security crises in the Sahel-Saharan region and East Africa;

16. Welcomes the proposal to strengthen the principle of partnership in African-EU relations laid down in the Joint Communication 'Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa' (JOIN(2020)0004); calls on the Commission, especially the VP/HR, to launch tailor-made bilateral partnerships for transformation covering a broad set of areas with security and defence as a priority; calls on the VP/HR to pay tribute to advanced countries in the area of consolidating democracy and human security and to invite them to join bilateral partnerships under the 'more for more' principle; going beyond bilateral partnerships, calls on the VP/HR to assist in consolidating the security functions of sub-regional organisations, such as ECOWAS, the East African Community or the Southern African Development Community (SADC);

17. Recommends that the EU considers contributing to the operational and logistical costs of the operations against terrorism conducted by the national armed forces of Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, within the framework of peacekeeping operations in the Sahel-Saharan area and by taking a similar approach to the one it takes to financing the G5 Sahel Joint Forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISON), and notes that the EPF should be the appropriate instrument to do so;

18. Encourages a discussion on whether it is advisable to apply to existing training programmes the same facilities for the procurement of military equipment, including weapons, as those currently provided for the deployment and training of the G5 Sahel force, including financial support if needed;

19. Recommends that any financing of capacity-building operations for African countries be conditional on the recipient country presenting a commonly agreed support plan which includes training on security sector reform, human rights, international humanitarian law and the rule of law, with reasonable deadlines and to be achieved with EU monitoring with the possibility of further adjustments depending on the evolution of the situation;

20. Is deeply concerned about the high number of cases of very serious human rights abuses committed by Malian security forces, as investigated and reported by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA);

21. Recognises the important role that Mali plays for the stability of the Sahel and shares the profound concerns of ECOWAS regarding the coup d'état in Mali on 18 August 2020; underlines that continued cooperation with and support from the international community, in particular the EU and UN, can only be successfully pursued if a number of important steps are taken, namely the setting up of a well-prepared, viable, transparent and enduring electoral system which ensures credible, free and fair elections and a genuine level playing field for political parties; endorses the need for an inclusive transitional government, which must include all political and social groups and seek to safeguard the constitutional rights and freedoms of every citizen, while never losing sight of today's pressing social, security and economic challenges, which require urgent action to respond to the people's legitimate demands for an inclusive and constructive dialogue on the future pathway of their country; supports the EEAS's efforts to help reach a peaceful and democratic solution that will ultimately restore lasting stability and the confidence of Malian citizens in their institutions and public administration, which should be truly inclusive, free from corruption and serve all citizens in their aspirations for prosperity, peace, development, stability and safety;

22. Notes the UN Evaluation Reports on Enforcement and Remedial Assistance Efforts for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by the United Nations and Related Personnel in Peacekeeping Operations; is deeply shocked by the alarming scope of these crimes and the failure to hold perpetrators to account; is equally shocked by child sexual abuse allegations against European and UN troops, in particular in the Central African Republic in 2016, and calls for justice; urges the UN, EU

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Member States and the EU's CSDP organs to investigate, prosecute and sentence any UN, national and EU personnel who have committed acts of sexual violence without delay and with firmest resolve; stresses the urgent need to reform the relevant structures in such a way as to end impunity of UN and EU personnel and by establishing functioning and transparent oversight and accountability mechanisms; finds it unacceptable that currently, legal actions regarding alleged abuses remain purely voluntary and dependent on the troop-contributing country; is convinced that such grave crimes could be reduced and prevented also via training and education; strongly recalls the urgency of preventing such crimes in the future, also in order to restore the trust of the local population in international peacekeeping;

23. Calls for the format of the EUTM Mali, EUTM CAR and EUTM Somalia training missions to be redefined to better adapt them to the real needs of the armed forces and to those of the populations of the beneficiary countries by:

- (a) harmonising training methods and rules of procedure and engagement and ensuring they are unique and tailored to the identified needs in the country and to incorporate training on gender equality and women's rights, including the Women, Peace and Security agenda;
- (b) developing and applying an overarching security sector reform policy which has human security at its centre and puts the security needs of the entire population at the heart of all components;
- (c) ensuring that EU instructors are mandated, in coordination with the local military authorities, to select soldiers from among those proposed by the local governments, to train them to enhance their skills, including through knowledge of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to supervise and accompany them on the ground once they have finished their training, in order to assess them and prevent units from disbanding and soldiers from dispersing;
- (d) supplying the training centres with both shared and individual military equipment (if the country concerned does not provide them), to make sure that appropriate training can be given after the EU has put safeguards in place which guarantee compliance with the eight criteria of Common Position 944 when transferring arms to third countries, guaranteeing post-shipment and end-use control to prevent diversion to armed groups, including terrorists;
- (e) improving the occupancy rate of staff posts in the missions in order to manage recurrent problems;
- (f) ensuring that training corresponds to the operational reality, i.e. it should include mobility and command and control capacities;
- (g) benefiting from the secondment of the required military expertise, notably in the field of strategic advice;
- (h) putting in place a human rights monitoring and protection mechanism in order to prevent human rights violations;

24. Believes that strengthening the advisory component of certain missions (EUTM Somalia) in the command structures of the local forces would allow for significant influence to be exercised on how operations are carried out and within the multilateral military assistance framework;

25. Believes that the EU should put in place proper oversight and continue conducting effective periodic assessments and strategic reviews of the EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUCAP Somalia and EUAM CAR civilian missions, reviewing their mandate, budget and human resources, and continue using the monitoring systems under the missions implementation plan and benchmarking as a comprehensive steering tool; is convinced that the missions would be better adapted to the evolving security and political situations if they were adapted to local needs and if cooperation with local partners were intensified, and that this would make them even more operational and effective, and integrate them into a wider security sector reform effort at the service of the local population's security; calls on the VP/HR and the EEAS to

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come back to Parliament regarding the CSDP annual report 2019⁽¹²⁾ and Parliament's evaluation of missions in Africa; repeats its criticism of the lack of 'suitable indicators to monitor the outcome of the EUCAP Niger and EUCAP Mali missions, and that the monitoring and assessment of the mission activities were inadequate and not geared to take account of their implications'; calls on the VP/HR and the EEAS to come back to Parliament's evaluation of the force generation of EUTM Somalia;

26. Notes that the security situation in Somalia is very worrying and is a destabilising factor throughout the Horn of Africa and even beyond; considers that the Federal Government of Somalia cannot assume all its duties and that the Somali national army, despite recent progress, remains unable to counter al-Shabaab's terrorist activities on its own; recalls that the Somali army was supposed to take over from AMISOM in December 2021; underlines that the achievement of that objective requires a new and comprehensive assistance programme, and calls for the EU to agree with the African Union and the Somali Government a position on the mechanism to be put in place once AMISOM is over;

27. Believes that the Gulf Crisis is having serious ramifications in Somalia, whereby the UAE continues to support overt actions that directly undermine the security and political gains made so far in Somalia, creating national disunity between the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States (FMSs) on security, national elections and developmental issues, and calls for such actions to cease forthwith;

28. Requires the Malian signatories to the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, resulting from the Algiers Process to abide by and implement them without further delay;

29. Believes that the European Union should continue its financial support to AMISOM during the transition period via the APF, maintain the presence of the three but revised EU military or civilian missions and operations (ATALANTA, EUTM Somalia and EUCAP Somalia), support democratic institutions, continue the training of the national army and the establishment of transparent, accountable and democratically controlled security sectors;

30. Calls for the Member States and the EU to help the joint forces of the G5 Sahel to become operational through the provision of financial assistance, as well as the provision of military equipment and training, while including adequate safeguards and mitigating measures, and advice in the field of doctrine, planned capacities and management; highlights the need for a strong and credible police component in this regard; calls on the partners who made pledges at the Brussels Donors' Conference on 22 February 2018 to implement them expeditiously;

31. Believes that the African states have to take responsibility for fulfilling their sovereign duties to stabilise all areas liberated from jihadi terrorist, criminal and armed groups, traffickers and bandits, to safeguard citizens and by providing basic services (administration, water and power supply, health, justice, education); whereas the army or security forces should provide a proper security environment and the basic services temporarily until the civil administration takes over, calls for the European Union to step up its efforts in supporting African states to provide basic services;

32. Supports the African Union request to the United Nations to have access to UN-assessed contributions for African-led missions mandated by the United Nations Security Council;

33. Stresses that coordination with the countries of North Africa is needed as well as an effective contribution to peace and reconciliation in Libya in order to prevent it from becoming a hotspot for the spread of jihadism, terrorist, criminal and armed groups, arms and human trafficking; encourages, therefore, the 5+5 peace talks and calls on all countries to abide by the spirit of the Berlin Conference; expresses the hope that the recent signals for a ceasefire and peace in Libya will materialise; welcomes, in this regard, the recent initiatives by the EEAS and by the VP/HR, notably his visit to Libya on 1 September 2020, and underlines that the EU should play a leading role in the mediation process;

34. Calls for the EU to address the consistent and growing threats to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage and clamp down on the smuggling of cultural artefacts, especially in conflict zones;

35. Considers that cooperation with the countries of North Africa should be envisaged mainly in terms of information and intelligence exchange, military training and the fight against radicalisation, taking into account the proven experience of some of them;

⁽¹²⁾ European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the implementation of the common security and defence policy — annual report (Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0009).

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36. Believes that a comprehensive and medium- to long-term security policy for these regions should also focus on fostering resilience;

37. Welcomes and supports the Mauritanian comprehensive approach, which includes a strategy built on social and development aspects, to its military and security response; expresses its solidarity with Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, countries that are deeply affected by terrorism; compliments the efforts and sacrifices of the international community, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the Multinational Joint Task Force, the G5 and the French Armed Forces (Operation Barkhane), the EU Regional Advisory Coordination Cell (RACC), EUCAP Sahel Mali and Niger, EUTM Mali, the GAR-SI Sahel and the Chadian Army, which is the essential force in the central and east sectors of the G5 requiring special support for its battalions; calls on the countries of the G5 Sahel to pursue domestic reforms and fully implement human rights, good governance and democratic accountability, respecting human rights and democratic norms;

38. Welcomes the joint declaration of the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and the President of Islamic Republic of Mauritania, President-in-office of the G5 Sahel, Mohamed Cheikh el Ghazouani of 28 April 2020, in which they renewed and increased commitment to the security, stability and development of the Sahel in close cooperation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Chair of the African Union Commission and the current Chair of ECOWAS;

39. Encourages the Member States to support and cooperate with the Barkhane and Takuba operations, and the Gazelle and New Nero missions; stresses the important human and military investment of the Member States which are already part of them; insists on the need for stronger European involvement, but that this cannot replace the obligation by countries to pursue the necessary domestic reforms aimed at ensuring sustainable development and security sectors;

40. Calls for the EU to pay particular attention to the spread of armed terrorist groups, in particular Islamist terrorism and violent Wahhabism extremism, in the regions of Sahel, West Africa and the Horn of Africa and persist in its global efforts to combat jihadism; in the light of the strategic impact of these regions on the stability and security of southern neighbourhood countries, on maritime security and the certainty of pressure on European external borders, calls for the upgrade of security cooperation and aid programmes with the countries concerned;

41. Urges the EU to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the JAES and the Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled 'Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa' of 9 March 2020, and to promote the implementation of the Council conclusions of 20 April 2015 on the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020, of 16 March 2015 on the EU-Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020, of 25 June 2018 on the Horn of Africa/Red Sea and the Sahel/Mali, and of the Pau Declaration;

42. Requires further protection and support for the education authorities, communities and organisations operating on the ground that try to find alternative learning opportunities in community centres and involve thousands of West African and Sahelian children in education and skills learning programmes;

Good governance and sustainable development

43. States that there can be no security strategy without joint sustainable development and humanitarian action; recalls the diverse root causes of terrorism and armed conflict; calls for the fostering of human capital and human development, for the needs of the most vulnerable communities to be met and for the building of people's resilience capacities;

44. Believes that the European Union should ensure that sustainable development plans are context-based and multi-sectoral and provide a global solution to the challenges of the region concerned; stresses that an integrated approach to peace, security and sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement of local civil society actors, and especially of women and young people, while recalling the role of the elders and traditional leaders in Sahel-Saharan societies; is of the opinion that these plans must be in line with the principles of aid effectiveness reaffirmed in the European Consensus on Development, be adopted by the administration in agreement with the local beneficiary communities and implemented with the participation of local civil society and humanitarian organisations to ensure effective coordination, transparency and ownership;

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45. Stresses the importance of partnership with the UN, cooperation with other international institutions, notably the African Union, and dialogue with other regional and sub-regional organisations;

46. Considers that meaningful security cooperation between the EU and Africa must be built on sustainable development, and especially focus on:

- (a) consolidating democracy by ensuring responsible democratic systems of governance through effective parliamentary scrutiny, as well as democratic institutions and the rule of law, guaranteeing all civil society liberties;
- (b) ending conflicts and preventing their recurrence while addressing their root causes in order to achieve long-lasting peace and security;
- (c) developing policies to promote economic development and job creation that focus on young people; highlighting the need to involve young people in the political, economic and peace processes;
- (d) supporting preventive stabilisation action plans;
- (e) empowering women by recognising them as agents of change in African communities, enhancing their educational and economic opportunities, promoting their participation in local and national institutions and decision-making, and fostering their role in peace-building, conflict prevention and mediation, and combating sexual violence against women and girls;
- (f) providing basic services such as health, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, social protection, housing and safety nets, mental health support and protection, education and support for the displaced population to increase people's confidence in the state;
- (g) ensuring security, administrative and legal stability;
- (h) eradicating poverty, impunity, and corruption;
- (i) tackling the effects of climate change by taking climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into account in order to ensure that livelihoods become sustainably resilient to environmental threats;
- (j) respecting the rule of law and promoting sustainable development and human rights without discrimination on any grounds, freedom of expression, media freedom, freedom of association and strengthening structural support for civil society and independent media;
- (k) promoting sustainable agricultural practices such as agro-ecology, supporting small-scale producers and farmers and implementing a nutritional nexus to address all forms of malnutrition in all contexts and continue funding for activities bridging humanitarian and development interventions to tackle the root causes;

47. Expresses its deep concern that the current security challenges in Africa, added to persistent inequalities, lack of opportunities for young people and weak governance, could encourage migration and lead to a significant displacement of people, undermining North African states and affecting Europe, and resulting in a widespread humanitarian crisis; recognises the impact of conflicts, poverty, inequalities and climate change on forced displacements, and calls for the European Union to facilitate regular, safe and dignified migration; stresses, therefore, the importance of increasing cooperation between, in particular, the EU and the Sahel region to address this important issue while recalling the accepted practice of refraining from applying conditionality to humanitarian aid linked to actions in the field of migration in the region;

48. Welcomes the EU strategy for the Horn of Africa, encompassing as it does not only security and humanitarian policy, but also longer-term development policy and the Millennium Development Goal objectives; underlines the importance of this longer-term vision of development policy, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to coordinate their policies in this respect and to employ joint programming for the various countries and the region as soon as possible;

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49. Calls for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution on youth, peace and security in EU-African security cooperation;
50. Calls for the EU to promote the effective implementation of the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda in all areas of the EU's external action, including a gender perspective on key policy areas of the EU-African Union strategic partnership on security;
51. Believes that the EU should strengthen its collaboration with national parliaments, including security and defence committees, in order to improve critical oversight functions pertaining to national and external security interventions;
52. Urges all military actors in the Sahel to respect international humanitarian law and to implement a comprehensive response focusing on alleviating the suffering of the most vulnerable sections of the population, in particular by considering the protection of civilians as a key indicator of the success of any integrated security strategy; stresses the importance of ensuring that the implementation of all security operations does not worsen the humanitarian situation; calls on all security actors to monitor the impact of their military operations and security measures on access to services — including food and nutrition, and forced displacement — with the aim of minimising their adverse effects on humanitarian needs;
53. Considers it essential to provide extraordinary and holistic assistance to the regions concerned in view of the extraordinary challenge presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, to preserve business continuity for CSDP missions and operations by supporting local armed forces with advice on how to handle this epidemic, to strengthen the development action of the EU in these regions, which can play an important role in reducing the impact of the health crisis, and to provide essential humanitarian aid, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability to the situation; welcomes the decision adopted unanimously by the G20 to suspend debt service payments to the poorest countries;
54. Recommends that the EU, together with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, intervene on a financial level to help control debt and the payment of interest; calls for all possibilities to be explored, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and its financial consequences, for debt relief, debt suspension and debt sustainability for African countries;
55. Recommends that the countries concerned fully assume their international legal responsibility and adopt all necessary measures to ensure accountability under international humanitarian law for all violations committed by all parties, that they allow free access to humanitarian aid and basic services for people in need, including those living in territories outside government control, to avoid any risk of diversion of humanitarian aid, and that they allow negotiations on humanitarian access with all parties to the conflict, and stresses the importance of the delivery of humanitarian aid being perceived as neutral and impartial, and of ensuring the safety of humanitarian workers;
56. Welcomes the proposal to strengthen the principle of multilateralism in the African — EU relations laid down in the Joint Communication entitled 'Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa'; considers that communist China and authoritarian Russia have followed different approaches in dealing with African countries and in opposing EU efforts; calls on the Commission to improve public diplomacy efforts and the dialogue with the African Union, governments, parliaments, and civil societies in order to explain EU security support in Africa more effectively as a contribution to the African development strategy 2063;

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57. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.
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