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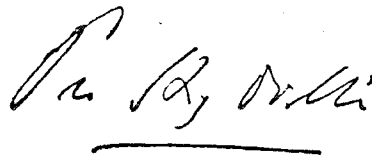
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Til underretning for Folketingets Europaudvalg vedlægges nedklassificeret rapport fra Den Høje Repræsentant og Kommissionen vedrørende effektiviteten af de fælles strategier, 5607/02.





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**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 23 January (23.01)
(OR. en)**

5607/02

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CAB 1

COVER NOTE

from : Secretary-General/High Representative and the Commission
date of receipt : 23 January 2002
to : Council

Subject : Joint report by Secretary-General/High Representative and the Commission on
the effectiveness of Common Strategies

Following the Council's conclusions of 26 February 2001, delegations will find attached the joint report by the Secretary-General/High Representative and the Commission on the effectiveness of Common Strategies.

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Brussels, 23 January 2002

JOINT REPORT TO THE GENERAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
by
SECRETARY GENERAL/HIGH REPRESENTATIVE JAVIER SOLANA
and
THE COMMISSON
on
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMON STRATEGIES

I. Introduction

1. In the framework of its debate on the effectiveness of the Union's external action, the GAC of 26 February 2001 drew conclusions on the instrument of Common Strategies on the basis of a report by the SG/HR of 21 December 2000 (cf. doc. 14871/00).
2. The GAC considered that Common Strategies could be an important instrument of EU foreign policy coherence provided their potential was developed further and their implementation improved. To that end the Council agreed specific guidelines and undertook inter alia to ensure close monitoring of their implementation through an annual review, drawing on the contributions of the SG/HR and the Commission which would include further recommendations on ways to improve the implementation of the existing Common Strategies. The SG/HR and the Commission felt that it was preferable to contribute in the form of the present joint report.

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3. This report accordingly covers the implementation of the current Common Strategies notably as regards their added value, their recourse to QMV and their contribution to the increased coherence of EU policies. It also explores the steps that should be taken to improve the implementation and development of Common Strategies in the future.

II. Review of the existing strategies

4. Based on an analysis of the recent work plans and the reports on their execution, visible, but limited progress has been achieved concerning the implementation of the three existing Strategies.

5. These improvements are in line with recommendations made in the report by the SG/HR of 21 December 2000 and the GAC conclusions of 26 February 2001:

- The overall consistency and the continuity of follow-up activities has clearly improved due to enhanced coordination of the work plans drawn up by the Swedish, Belgian and Spanish Presidencies.
- EU action in the framework of the Strategies has become more focused by concentrating the work plans on a smaller number of priority areas in line with overall EU objectives (e.g. inclusion of fight against terrorism).
- Moreover, inter-pillar cohesion of EU action vis-à-vis the countries/region concerned has been strengthened.

6. However, it remains clear that the deficiencies inherent in the scope and structure of the existing Common Strategies as identified in the report of the SG/HR of last year continue. This should not come as a surprise, as the basic documents of the Strategies have remained unchanged.

7. These deficiencies are in no small measure due to the fact that the Common Strategies have so far been used as tools of public diplomacy, rather than as internal policy instruments; that they

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are too broad in their scope, are little more than an inventory of existing policies; and their added value vis-à-vis these existing policies is rather limited.

8. Also, it has not been possible to measure progress in enhanced coherence between action by the EU and by Member States.
9. The existing Common Strategies have not led to CFSP decision making by QMV through implementing joint actions or common positions. Only one of the 20 Joint Actions adopted in 2001 refers to a Common Strategy, and that was adopted by unanimity. QMV should not be seen as an end in itself, but rather as a way to speed up and facilitate consensus decisions.
10. At the same time, the EU has made considerable progress in developing its foreign policy, its crisis management and its conflict rehabilitation capabilities in areas not covered by Common Strategies (Western Balkans, fight against terrorism, Middle East).
11. This implies that the GAC Conclusions of 26 February 2001 and the report by the SG/HR on which they are based, remain fully valid.

III. How existing Common Strategies could be improved

12. With regard to the three existing Common Strategies, all possible steps to improve their implementation should be taken.
13. Workplans can be further refined: the present system of each presidency drafting a separate work plan should be replaced by multi-presidency work plans to ensure and strengthen the continuity, coherence and scope of the present Common Strategies. These multi-presidency roll-over work plans should be drafted by the Council Secretariat with the incoming Danish Presidency, the following Greek Presidency and the Commission.
14. Important new policy issues need to be prioritized in the work plans in all three existing Strategies, including areas for potential QMV, while keeping the overall number of priorities limited.

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15. In order to improve coherence between EU and Member States action, inventories on specific issues in priority areas should be established. Such inventories should be drawn up by the Council Secretariat in co-operation with the Commission based on information from Member States.

IV. The way ahead

16. The three existing Common Strategies end their initial period of four years on 4 June 2003 (Russia), 11 December 2003 (Ukraine) and 23 July 2004 (Mediterranean). The lead times for an in-depth examination of the existing strategies, consultation within the EU, as well as drafting and processing will be considerable, and formal decisions can be taken only by the European Council on the recommendation of the Council. Therefore, the latter will need to take a view already early next year on whether to continue these Strategies, and if so, on how to overhaul them.
17. With this in mind preparatory work regarding a fundamental review of the Common Strategy with Russia will have to start soon, on the basis of the guidelines set out in the GAC Conclusions of 26 February and the recommendations of the SG/HR's report, notably concerning the nature of the Common Strategy (public diplomacy or confidential policy instrument). The decision to be taken by the European Council will have to be communicated and explained to the countries/region concerned.
18. On the basis of the experience of existing Common Strategies (and drawing on lessons learnt and applied in case of their overhaul), the Union will be in a position to consider whether Common Strategies are appropriate in other areas. Common Strategies will be more credible if used to develop a limited specific foreign policy objective with the priorities and value added identified in advance and the necessary budgetary and policy means linked directly with it. Moreover, any Common Strategy should be focused on operational aspects and give practical value by introducing the possibility of QMV decisions in an area up to now exclusively governed by unanimity.