AFET, chaired by Mr BROK (EPP, DE), held exchanges of views in an inter-parliamentary meeting with heads of delegations from the foreign affairs committees of national parliaments: with Johannes HAHN, Commissioner for ENP and Enlargement Negotiations; and with Federica MOGHERINI, High Representative for Foreign Affairs.

AFET then discussed Mr BROK’s working document on the Annual Report from the HR to the EP. MEPs/MPs agreed on the need to make EU foreign policy more coherent and emphasised their intention to participate in the HR’s reflection on a new European security strategy. Russia was also at the centre of discussions. Several MEPs considered the new European leadership represented an opportunity.
Exchanges of views were held with: Mr KHODORKOVSKY, founder of the Open Russia Movement (his views on Mr PUTIN's intentions and how to react); Foreign Ministers of the Western Balkans countries on the enlargement progress reports; Mr SALAM, Prime Minister of Lebanon; and Bernardino LEÓN, UNSR in Libya.

**Interparliamentary meeting with delegations from the Foreign Affairs Committees of the National Parliaments**

**Item 4**

**Exchange of views with Johannes HAHN, European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Enlargement Negotiations**

The discussion focused on the guiding principles of the ENP and of the enlargement negotiations within the next five years. Mr HAHN also raised the issue of the crisis in Ukraine.

**Revision of the ENP**

Mr HAHN presented the guiding principles of the revision of the ENP requested by President JUNCKER: propose tailor made solutions for each of the 16 countries concerned, focus on the European interest (security, prosperity, hope for the future for the citizens of those countries and reduction of migration pressure in the EU), enable flexible reactions to developments and ensure an equal focus on the Eastern and the Southern neighbourhood. Mr CASTALDO (IT) on behalf of EFDD called for strong EU involvement in Maghreb and in the Western Balkans, while the representative of the foreign committee of the French Parliament supported the balanced focus proposed by the Commissioner. The representative of the Latvian parliament considered the Eastern Partnership as the priority.

Mr HAHN announced the presentation of a Green Paper on a revised ENP in March 2015, of a non-paper in May 2015 with proposals and deliverables to be discussed at and following the Riga Summit, and the publication of the final communication in October-November 2015.

**Negotiations on enlargement**

Referring to President JUNCKER's statement that no further enlargement would take place in the next five years, Mr HAHN stressed that negotiations would continue at a pace determined by each aspirant country's progress on reform (co-ownership and quality before speed should prevail), especially in the area of the rule of law, while taking into account the European interest and trying to garner EU citizens' support to enlargement.
The Commissioner's message was well received by the EPP, which stressed the importance of moving towards the integration of Eastern countries and countries in the Western Balkans. The S&D and Greens/EFA groups criticised Mr JUNCKER's statement on enlargement. Together with the ALDE group, they called for greater support for the reform process in each aspirant country.

Ukraine
The Commissioner, who had just returned from Ukraine, also intervened on the situation in this country and stressed the importance of decentralisation and of the implementation of the laws against corruption. He considered that the EU should continue to criticise Russia's annexation of Crimea, maintain - and possibly harden - sanctions until Russia takes steps towards de-escalation, but keep the dialogue open. Representatives of the EPP, S&D and ECR groups, and of the Lithuanian and German parliaments, expressed concerns at Russia's actions in Ukraine and called for strong EU support to this country and to reforms.

Item 5
Exchange of views with Federica MOGHERINI, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
The High Representative welcomed the regular opportunity provided by the EP to meet with her and the Commission on a weekly basis, and reiterated her commitment to continue the dialogue with the EP. She also considered it important for her to involve the 28 national parliaments, which she would visit over the coming months. These messages were well received by parliamentarians.

Ms MOGHERINI saw potential for a strong partnership with the EP, referring to the suggestions contained in the working document of the EP on the annual report from the Council to the Parliament on the CFSP (rapporteur: Elmar BROK, EPP, DE).

She underlined specifically the importance of a shared reflection involving the European Parliament and national parliaments as part of the process of drawing up a new European security strategy. She announced her intention to present a format for this strategy at the latest at the European Council in June 2015, in the framework of an overall assessment of progress in implementing the orientations established by the European Council in December 2013.
The High Representative reiterated the need to focus on reaching a shared view of threats and priorities, and better coordination of EU internal and external policies. She would aim at achieving coherence within the Commission, using the Commissioners' group on external action chaired by her, the first official meeting of which would take place after the AFET meeting. The Chair welcomed this initiative. The HR referred also to her joint visits in the next few days to Sarajevo and Turkey, together with other Commissioners such as Johannes HAHN, to illustrate how the Commission had begun to work in a way which ensured that there was a consistent message.

As far as coordination within the Council was concerned, Ms MOGHERINI announced her intention to chair not only the meetings of the FAC and Defence Council, but also the meetings of the Council on trade and development. She indicated that she would also include issues such as migration on the agendas of one of those meetings.

The High Representative asked the members of national parliaments, in cooperation with the EP, to help her overcome any opposition at national level to her making full use of existing tools. She reiterated her intention to use fully her role as head of the European Defence Agency, and her commitment to review the functioning of the EEAS and to make better use of EU delegations.

The High representative also insisted on the importance of the EU playing a leading role in the global agenda, in particular regarding the post 2015 development agenda, and in climate change negotiations.

Although the High Representative did not enter into details on specific policies or priorities, there were a number of questions from parliamentarians, in particular with regards to Russia (with some parliamentarians calling for more dialogue and others emphasizing the importance of sanctions and for a firm EU reaction), but also on the role of NATO, the Middle East Peace Process, Serbia, and Libya. Replying on the situation in Ukraine, she stressed the need to ensure respect of international principles, while developing a strategy to give a more positive direction to relations with Russia: keeping the Minsk agreements viable, maintaining pressure through sanctions, while identifying new channels, in cooperation with the other Commissioners involved. On the other issues, Ms MOGHERINI replied in general terms by referring to official positions.
Mr BOSTINARU (S&D, RO) questioned the appropriateness of having designated Mr JACQUE as the expert to examine the allegations of corruption within EULEX Kosovo. The High Representative replied that the EP would be informed of Mr JACQUE's preliminary assessment in the first two months of 2015, and that the report and recommendations should be ready by mid-March.

Item 7
Exchange of views on the working document on the Annual Report from the High Representative to the European Parliament

Mr BROK (EPP, DE) recalled that the EP report on the HR's annual report to the Parliament was traditionally drafted by the chair of AFET. He called on the national parliaments to send written contributions to the working document. A draft report would then be prepared, with a deadline for amendment at the end of January 2015.

There was agreement among most groups (mainly EPP, S&D, ALDE) and the representatives of the national parliaments' committees on foreign affairs that the new security environment required a new security strategy and a consistent foreign policy. Representatives from national parliaments insisted on the need to be involved in the EP's reflection on the matter. Several members considered that the new European leadership represented an opportunity in this regard (Mr PASCU, S&D, RO; members of the Polish and Hungarian parliaments).

Most EP political groups generally supported the working document as a basis, except GUE which objected to the increase in "militarisation". EFDD did not take the floor. The Greens/EFA mainly supported the part referring to the need for a climate security strategy.

There was a discussion on some aspects of the document:

- Reform of the EU’s internal structures and working methods
  Mr BROK reiterated the need to reform internal structures of the EEAS and strengthen the authority of the Head of Delegation over all staff regardless of their institutional origin.
He called on the EP to support the High Representative in her efforts to achieve synergies, under her various 'hats', between intergovernmental matters such as defence and OLP matters such as trade and energy, in the framework of a consistent foreign policy. In his view, the Parliament should also support the HR in being able to use all available instruments with a view to enhancing efficiency.

Mr BROK considered that the EU's financial rules should be made more flexible for the EU to be able to react in time; otherwise, the resources concerned were wasted. He was supported by the EPP and by Ms GOMES (S&D, PT). More efficiency in that area would give the HR more room for manoeuvre.

**Preserving the European political order – Russia – Eastern neighbours**
Mr Brok considered that the EU should ensure that international law was respected, and that there were no grounds for the military occupation of Ukraine by Russia. He stressed that the EU could not function when some of its Member States felt less secure than others. He therefore advocated a policy ensuring Member States' protection, and took the view that NATO should be the basis for such collective security. The ECR group (Mr VAN ORDEN, UK; Ms FOTYGA, PL) emphasised that the EU should direct its political efforts towards revitalising NATO rather than creating a parallel structure.

Concerns regarding Russia's policy were voiced by the great majority of speakers: Mr PREDA (RO) on behalf of EPP, Mr PASCU (RO) on behalf of S&D, Ms GOMES (S&D, PT), Mr AUSTREVICIUS (SI) on behalf of ALDE, Ms FOTYGA (ECR, PL) and representatives from national parliaments (PL, HU, CZ, DE, NL, and more nuanced views being expressed by IT).

Mr PETERLE (ALDE, SI) warned that if the EU did not unblock the enlargement process with western Balkan countries, then other countries would do more to attract them.

The EPP group (Mr PREDA) supported the working document's proposal that the EU review its strategic partnership with countries.
• Adequate defence capabilities of the Member States and an effective CSDP

Mr BROK indicated that the Parliament would work towards the June 2015 European Council, which would discuss progress achieved in the area of CSDP following the European Council meeting on defence in December 2013. He criticised the lack of synergies between the defence resources (including as regards research) committed by the various Member States, which, coupled with the lack of investment, resulted in the inability to operate.

Item 8

Exchange of views with Foreign Ministers of the countries of the Western Balkans on the enlargement progress reports

During a two-hour exchange of views with the foreign ministers of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia on their enlargement progress reports, in which more than 40 speakers took the floor, AFET reiterated its support for all six western Balkan countries' accession aspirations and reform impetus.

The six foreign ministers spoke of their respective governments' commitment and adherence to the enlargement process, acknowledging the positive effect the European perspective has had in stabilising the region. They also thanked the EU for supporting them on the path to European integration and noted the positive momentum generated by the Thessaloniki Agenda in the field of regional cooperation.

However, all parties agreed that several (internal, bilateral, regional and international) issues remained unresolved, including the reconciliation process in the region, the normalisation of relations between Serbia and its neighbours, the current deadlock between BiH and the EU, separatism concerns in BiH, visa liberalisation for Kosovar citizens, and the name issue concerning FYROM.

All parties thus expressed their intention to use the next five years to overcome the various challenges faced by both the EU and the countries of the region, which range from security issues, the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law to economic development and regional cooperation.
In association with the Subcommittee on Human Rights and with the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee

Item 9
Exchange of views with Mikhail KHODORKOVSKY, founder of the Open Russia Movement

The Chair congratulated Mr KHODORKOVSKY for having resumed activism in Russia following his release from imprisonment in a labour camp 2003-2013 as a prisoner of conscience.

A change in Russia's foreign affairs policy
Mr KHODORKOVSKY criticised Russia's annexation of Crimea as a matter of principle and of international law, rather than on whether it was historically justified (he added that the majority of Russians supports annexation). This change in Russia's foreign policy was a challenge to the Yalta-Potsdam world, and would open a Pandora's box, with war being used as a way to resolve territorial disputes.

Mr PUTIN's intentions
According to Mr KHODORKOVSKY, Mr PUTIN's intention is to rebuild Russia's "foreign policy comfort zone" and return to the situation following the Helsinki Final Act, with the exception of the 3rd basket (human rights). A new cold war had now started, albeit not with Russia but rather with its political elite in power, whose policy was to build up an ultra-right and nationalistic coalition in Russia and throughout Europe ("Ultra-right international"), with values opposed to the European ones. He indicated that a growing political elite in power counted on the fall of Europe, with the collapse of the Schengen area or the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU.

Mr KHODORKOVSKY considered that Mr PUTIN had started a propagandistic and psychological war a long time ago, but that the crisis arose because he was losing popularity due to growing corruption among the political elite.
How should the EU react?

Mr KHODORKOVSKY presented his views on how to react:

- **On issues such as the situation in Ukraine, the EU would have to compromise**, as this would be the only alternative to war, which Mr PUTIN was not afraid of. There was an imbalance between the low level of political and moral accountability and the colossal military potential maintained by Russia.

- **The EU should not let Mr PUTIN control communication**, and should make a clear distinction between Mr PUTIN and Russia in its communications. For example, Russian propaganda presented EU sanctions as "sanctions against Russia", which consolidated Russian society around Mr PUTIN.

- **EU sanctions should be clever** (targeting persons rather than Russia's economy), fair (not using double standards) and selective (targeting only those, but all those, responsible).

- **The EU should support the opposition to Mr PUTIN and protect them from persecution.** Mr KHODORKOVSKY emphasised that Mr PUTIN had assets in the EU and in Switzerland, and that officials in Europe should stop giving support to the Russian elite.

- **The EU should develop ties with Russian society and prepare for relations with post-PUTIN Russia**, to attempt to ensure that that whoever succeeds Mr PUTIN is not a similar figure. Cultural, education and scientific programmes should be continued and further developed.

Questions from MEPs were particularly numerous, as this item of the meeting had attracted a large audience. Among the subjects raised were relations between the EU and Russia (Ms HARMS, Greens, DE; Mr AUSTREVICIUS, ALDE, LT; Mr LEINEN, S&D, DE; Mr VAN BAALEN, ALDE, NL; Mr BÜTIKOFER, Greens, DE), propaganda, Crimea, the threat to Baltic states (Ms GRIGULE, NI, LV), sanctions (Mr DEMESMAEKER, ECR, BE) and human rights issues (members of the DROI subcommittee).
In association with the Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries

Item 10

Exchange of views with Tammam SALAM, Prime Minister of Lebanon

Mr SALAM expressed concerns at the severe impact of the Syrian conflict in Lebanon. Considering that the influx of refugees was putting an unbearable security, social and economic burden on his country, he called for more humanitarian and financial support from the EU. He was supported mainly by the Vice-Chair of the interparliamentary delegation on Mashrek (Gilles PARGNEAUX, S&D, FR). Deploiring terrorist activity in Lebanon, he also called for support for his country's armed forces.

The EPP group focused on the political crisis in Lebanon. Mr SALAM acknowledged the urgent need to elect a President but expressed hope that a solution to the crisis could be found, as he praised the inclusive coalition system as a model for moderation in the region.

The other groups voiced concerns regarding the destabilisation of Lebanon, and its consequences in the region.

In his replies to questions from the S&D, ECR and EFDD groups on the spread of extremism in Lebanon and in the region, Mr SALAM stressed the need for a peace settlement, so that moderation would prevail over extremism. He considered that a solution needed to be found to the Palestinian problem and called on the EU to criticise violations of international law by Israel.

Regarding the situation in Syria, Mr SALAM took the view that the international community's failure to act from the beginning of the conflict had led to the current situation. He considered that the solution was political and called for more determination from the international community to that end. In his replies to questions from the S&D and GUE groups about the involvement of Hezbollah in the crisis in Syria, Mr SALAM said that the policy of Lebanon disassociating itself from this crisis had failed in certain situations.

In general, the ALDE group criticised the EU for its lack of political determination to find a solution in the region.
Item 11

Exchange of views with Bernardino LEÓN, United Nations Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Mr LEÓN expressed concern over the deteriorating situation in Libya and its repercussions on Libya's neighbouring countries and on Europe, including in the areas of security and energy. The complexity of the situation had even worsened with the Libyan Supreme Court's November 2014 ruling that the House of Representatives was unconstitutional, whereas the UN had recognised its legitimacy. He explained that the first stage of the Gadhamès process, involving members of the parliament, had been interrupted.

Mr LEÓN announced that he would convene key Libyan stakeholders in an inclusive way the following week, expressing hope for a resumption of the political process, which would be aimed at building a national unity government. He emphasised that these talks would represent a crucial opportunity to get to a political transition (from a non-state situation), which was the most viable path for Libya to chart its own future. He informed AFET on his meeting on 3 December 2014 with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom, the US Secretary of State, the HR and the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, in order to garner international support for the process.

The UN Special Representative viewed the EU as an essential partner for Libya and considered its role – and the role of its Member States acting in coordination with the UN and the EU – as important. He called on the EU to urge all Libyan parties to aim for a political solution.

The search for a political solution was mainly supported by the Greens/EFA group, while most other groups asked questions on how to determine adequate/representative interlocutors. The S&D group called on the EU Member States to effectively coordinate their initiatives. The GUE/NGL group stressed that human rights violations should be condemned.
Lastly, a substantial part of the discussion related to the involvement of MEDA countries in the conflict. The ECR group, Ms GOMES (S&D, PT) and Mr COUSO PERMUY (GUE/NGL, ES) asked questions on the involvement of Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE. The EPP group stressed the importance of involving Libya's neighbouring countries and Arab League countries in the international consultations. Mr LEÓN explained that those countries which had an influence on the parties agreed with the process led by the UN, as it was in no country's interest for Libya to fall into complete chaos. He also condemned recent air strikes, which undermined the prospects for a negotiated settlement.

**Item 12**

**Conclusion of a protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement between the EC and Tunisia, to take account of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU**

AFET/8/00038

Rapporteur: Elmar BROK (EPP, DE)

Responsible: AFET

The report was adopted by a great majority and the chair thanked the rapporteur.

**Item 14**

**Next meetings**

11 December 2014