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The consequences of the Madrid NATO summit
for the development of WEU's relations with central and
eastern European countries and Russia

REPORT

submitted on behalf of the Political Committee
by Mr Martínez Casañ, Rapporteur

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¹ Adopted unanimously by the Committee

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Associate members: MM *Akçali*, *Ataç* (Alternate: *Mutman*)

NB *The names of those taking part in the vote are printed in italics*

Draft Recommendation

on the consequences of the Madrid NATO summit for the development of WEU's relations with the central and eastern European countries and Russia

The Assembly,

- (i) Welcoming the fact that NATO, at its Madrid summit, decided to open up to central Europe and, in the first instance, invite three WEU associate partner countries to negotiate their accession to the Washington Treaty;
- (ii) Recalling that the European Union is to take the first specific decisions concerning enlargement by the end of 1997;
- (iii) Fearing that the criteria hitherto adopted by both NATO and the European Commission tend to create an arbitrary differentiation between applicant countries that will in practice give rise to discrimination;
- (iv) Pointing out nevertheless that in its "Agenda 2000" document the European Commission assessed all WEU associate partners applying for membership of the European Union as meeting the conditions required for full participation in the CFSP;
- (v) Wishing therefore for all countries applying for membership of the European Union to open accession negotiations to that effect simultaneously;
- (vi) Recalling paragraph 4(b) of Recommendation 608 on the eastern dimension of European security,
- (vii) Stressing that the purpose of enlargement of Euro-Atlantic and European structures is to create a system offering peace, stability, security and progress in Europe as a whole,
- (viii) Wishing earnestly therefore that there should be greater consistency between the policies on enlargement followed by the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union and for these first initiatives towards enlargement on the part of NATO and the European Union to be followed by others, thus opening the way for progressive integration of all applicant countries that meet the accession criteria,
- (ix) Declaring its resolve to contribute to the Baltic countries' security and defence and to their progressive integration in all European structures;
- (x) Welcoming the fact that a Charter is imminently to be signed between the United States and the three Baltic countries;
- (xi) Noting with satisfaction the signature of an agreement between Russia and Lithuania on delimitation of the maritime borders between the two countries, constituting an important contributory factor to strengthening security and stability in the region;
- (xii) Reiterating its wish for the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to join WEU at the earliest opportunity and for WEU to strengthen its relations with all the associate partner countries,
- (xiii) Wishing Romania and Slovenia to join European and Euro-Atlantic structures as soon as possible, as affirmed at NATO's Madrid summit;
- (xiv) Wishing also for the Council to clear up any doubts over Slovakia and Bulgaria being regarded as viable candidates for accession to European and Euro-Atlantic structures;
- (xv) Welcoming the Founding Act NATO signed with the Russian Federation while stressing the importance of NATO retaining full freedom of decision about its own future development and, in particular, enlargement;
- (xvi) Reiterating its wish for WEU to develop ties of cooperation with the Russian Federation and recalling in this connection the terms of Recommendation 574 on WEU's relations with Russia;

(xvii) Regretting, therefore, the lack of substance to the information provided in the first part of the 43rd annual report of the Council on the development of its relations with Russia and in particular on the content of proposals put forward in that connection by the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr Primakov, and as regards the position adopted by the Council with regard to those proposals,

(xviii) Noting that an independent and stable Ukraine is a key factor in the security of central and eastern Europe;

(xix) Welcoming, therefore, signature of the Charter between NATO and Ukraine and the agreement between WEU and Ukraine on air transport;

(xx) Concerned to note the major challenges currently posed to central and eastern European countries' security by fundamentalism, terrorism, international crime, drug trafficking and other forms of organised crime, and consequently to the security and stability of Europe as a whole,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Invite the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to accede to the modified Brussels Treaty under Article XI thereof as soon as a decision has been reached to invite them to accede to the European Union;
2. Enhance cooperation with all associate partner countries applying for entry to WEU and examine the possibility of giving them a status analogous with that of associate member under the conditions set forth in Recommendation 608;
3. Re-examine its policy on enlargement in accordance with the criteria set out in Recommendation 611, paragraph 7, so as to allow the greatest possible number of WEU associate partners to accede
4. Ask the European Union to make the necessary arrangements to enable all WEU associate partners to participate as fully as possible in CFSP activities;
5. Set up cooperation programmes with the associate partner countries, particularly with Romania and the Baltic states, in the field of security and notably border security,
6. Support, encourage and accelerate Romania's and Slovenia's accession to NATO, the European Union and WEU,
7. Make the necessary arrangements in readiness for the integration into WEU of representatives of new member countries;
8. Ensure that the fact that certain applicant countries will join Euro-Atlantic organisations more quickly than others does not lead to an undesirable discrimination against other WEU associate partner countries,
9. Support and encourage Bulgaria and Slovakia in their efforts to achieve integration into NATO, the European Union and WEU;
10. Provide information on the exchange of views it had with the Russian Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr Primakov, and any follow-up action it is prepared to take;
11. Develop a concept of establishing an system of cooperation with Russia and Ukraine over areas of mutual interest as arising and keep the Assembly informed in this regard,
12. Work towards the conclusion of an agreement between WEU and Russia similar to that already concluded with Ukraine on air transport,
13. Establish cooperation between the relevant European institutions, particularly WEU and the European Union and their member countries, and central European countries and Russia and Ukraine over terrorism, international crime, drug trafficking and other forms of organised crime

Explanatory Memorandum

(submitted by Mr Martínez Casañ, Rapporteur)

I. Introduction

1. The picture in Europe has completely altered: the break-up of the Soviet Union, the disappearance of communism and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the West's now irreversible decision to enlarge its main institutions eastwards and fresh prospects of close cooperation with countries that will not join NATO, WEU or the EU have clearly brought about radical changes in the European politico-security context. New geostrategic realities and balances have emerged and these, while they may well contribute to peace, could equally become a source of new dangers and serious misunderstanding. The essential thing now therefore, in your Rapporteur's view, is to create a new European security area that will provide a framework for close cooperation both in NATO, the EU and WEU, and also between members of those three western politico-security organisations and the other southern and eastern European countries. In so doing the role of the European Union and of its defence component, WEU, could prove vital. It might be said that membership of the European Union should of itself be sufficient to enhance the feeling of security experienced by its member countries, inasmuch as accession to the third pillar represents an initial guarantee, not sufficient in itself perhaps, but real nevertheless, for the countries involved. Moreover this security dimension of the EU is recognised by the Americans, as is clear from press statements made by Mrs Albright, who early in the year suggested accession to the European Union by the Baltic states as a means of strengthening their stability and security. Furthermore, the European Union and WEU can, by all accounts, play a crucial part in improving the West's relationship with its partners and neighbours to the east and south, given that for reasons that are essentially historical and cultural, western Europe very often has a better reception in countries that do not regard themselves as belonging to the "western" family of nations.

2. Moreover, as far as Europe's relative power within the Atlantic Alliance is concerned, it must not be forgotten that the European allies'

notorious "weakness", their feeling of being the junior partner relative to the Americans, is clearly due rather to their own disunity than to any real lack of power. A more united Europe would, in your Rapporteur's view, constitute a very powerful lobby within NATO and one that could not fail to command respect from its transatlantic allies, thereby influencing the West's decisions in favour of a European world view which, although not different from that of the Americans in any significant respect, can nevertheless boast a far longer historical tradition and, arguably, reveals a profounder awareness of the continent in which we live and of our immediate neighbours.

II. The decision taken in Madrid

3. NATO's decision, taken in Madrid on 7-8 July 1997, to enlarge and to invite three countries, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, to begin accession negotiations, accompanied by the promise that no other applicant that met given objective criteria would be ruled out and that a degree of priority would be given to applications from Romania and Slovenia, undeniably marks the end of an era, since, for the first time, countries long regarded as Soviet Union satellites are now in principle accepted for membership of the USSR's erstwhile adversary, the Atlantic Alliance. The fact that the accession process for those countries has not met with categorical opposition from the Russian Federation, the main successor state to the Soviet Union, but could rather be described as having its unspoken agreement, merely adds to the historic significance of the event. Moreover, given that the European security picture is far from final and the Madrid Declaration clearly leaves room for hoping that there may be a great deal of mileage yet in the Atlantic Alliance enlargement process, your Rapporteur feels that there are grounds for thinking that NATO's 1999 summit could prove a landmark for security and defence, just as the 1997 summit can be regarded politically as a historic turning-point.

4. It is clear nonetheless that while the new European security landscape that has emerged as

a result of NATO expansion, together with, *inter alia*, the creation of a Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, an enhanced Partnership for Peace arrangement and the signature of the NATO/Russia Founding Act and the NATO/Ukraine Charter, represents a milestone in Europe's history, such developments are still very far from providing solutions to the problems raised by the aspirations of certain European countries or the at times conflicting interests underlying them.

5. Moreover the European Commission's decision, which will almost certainly be ratified by the European Council in Luxembourg in December, to invite six countries (the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia) to begin negotiations in January 1998 on future accession to the European Union, is likely to have an impact on the shape of European security – the more so in view of the fact that, leaving aside the three central European countries that are soon to join the Atlantic Alliance, the political and economic positions of Slovenia and Estonia, which both hope to accede to NATO as soon as possible, are considerably strengthened by the prospect of their being admitted to the European Union. In short, while there is no question whatsoever of applicant countries accepting the principle of accession to the European Union as a trade-off in the short run for their not being admitted to NATO, the idea has caught on in other circles and even found outright expression in the views of no lesser person than the US Secretary of State herself³. Furthermore, it is obvious that membership of a dynamic and prosperous politico-economic organisation such as the European Union carries with it substantial diplomatic and security advantages and is, in any event, preferable to the relative isolation of non-membership of either institution.

6. The purpose of this draft document is not to make a detailed study of the current situation in Europe or even to offer an analysis of WEU's relations with eastern European countries as a whole or with the ten associate partner countries. Rather, characteristic examples of countries of major political standing, such as Russia and Ukraine, have been selected for attention, together with the highly specific case of the Baltic

states. It should be stated here that if Slovakia and Bulgaria are not discussed in this report, it is not due to any lack of recognition of their undeniable political and strategic significance, or of their prospects of in future becoming full members of the West's major security institutions. In that optic, we welcome the security agreements the WEU Council concluded in April with Bulgaria and Slovakia. While we make no attempt here even to outline the positions of these two associate partners, it is perhaps worth noting at this juncture Bulgaria's remarkable effort to restructure its economy and Slovakia's tangible progress as far as both its economy and the reorganisation of its armed forces are concerned. It should also be recalled that these two countries are active participants in the Partnership for Peace programme and keen associate partners in WEU. Furthermore, the need to grasp the nettle of the internal restructuring required of a WEU made up of 28 countries (comprising full and associate members, associate partners and observers) as a result of the imminent change in the status of a number of them and in the light of new international circumstances forms the second part of this brief overview of the vast subject of European security, and the need for Western European Union to adapt to the new political and security environment in the continent and within the Euro-Atlantic community.

III. *The chosen three*

7. True to expectation, the heads of state and of government, meeting at the Madrid summit, invited Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to begin negotiations with a view to joining the Atlantic Alliance in 1999. Given their history, geopolitical situation, the far-reaching economic reforms they have achieved and the state of their armed forces, these three countries were unanimously felt to be ready to cope with the demands associated with NATO accession. In addition to this by no means exhaustive list of positive considerations, mention should perhaps also be made of their systematic and effective endeavours to improve the political climate and promote regional cooperation in central Europe. The agreements signed between Hungary, Romania and Slovakia and between the Czech Republic and Germany, the formation of joint Polish-Lithuanian and Polish-Ukrainian peacekeeping bat-

³ *Le Monde*, 16 February 1997.

talions and the setting up of the Polish-Lithuanian Assembly can be cited as examples of praiseworthy initiatives to that effect. Some weeks later the European Union Commission acknowledged in its "Horizon 2000" document that the three nations, together with Slovenia, Estonia and Cyprus, were economically and politically ready to embark upon the long and often difficult negotiations leading to European Union entry.

8. The three "front-runners" among the countries applying for full membership of Western politico-military structures are of course required to make efforts on many different fronts. As far as the Atlantic Alliance is concerned, this first involves taking the necessary steps to ensure forces interoperability with NATO (particularly as far as communications and command systems are concerned) and gradually modernising their equipment. According to the latest and as yet unconfirmed American estimates, the total cost of essential adjustments to enable the three countries accede to the Alliance would be around 35 billion dollars over the next ten years⁴. Of that, again according to American sources, the three new members' contributions are likely to account for some 16 or 17 billion. The financial effort expected of those countries is therefore quite substantial even though, according to other estimates, those prepared by the Atlantic Alliance for instance, the direct cost could prove to be considerably less than those figures⁵. Over and above that there is the far larger and more complex adjustment needed for their integration into European Union structures – although the time allowed them in this case is much longer than for joining the Atlantic Alliance. Sceptics repeatedly make the point that although the political elites in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are unanimous in stating that they are prepared to take on the burden of their countries' integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, the wider public in the three countries, while clearly in favour of drawing closer to the West, would appear to be indifferent or ill-informed about the economic fall-out that could result in the early stages of membership of the major political and security

⁴ *International Herald Tribune*, 30 September 1997

⁵ The NATO Secretary-General's address to the North Atlantic Assembly, 13 October 1997 and *The Financial Times*, 22 October 1997

organisations of the West and hence not ready as yet for the economic sacrifices that are almost certain to prove necessary⁶. To be fair, one should add nevertheless that this seeming indifference of the wider public to the immediate consequences of Atlantic Alliance and European Union accession could well reflect a conviction, very widely held in eastern Europe, that membership of western institutions will, strategically speaking, reap an extremely positive harvest in the longer run by strengthening their political position internationally and consolidating both national and regional security, not to mention the very welcome economic spin-offs it will undoubtedly bring

9. The three future members of the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union are, like other associate partners, applying for membership of Western European Union and, since they are countries that obviously will, within a relatively short time, meet both NATO and European Union membership conditions, WEU must be ready to welcome the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland in the near future. Furthermore it is clear that bringing these three countries, with their western traditions and commitment to the West, into WEU will obviously considerably strengthen the Organisation and breathe new life into it. It is essential to consider further whether, under present circumstances, some rethinking of the "Cahen doctrine" might not be in order so as to avoid having to wait until they become full members of the European Union – a process which could take up to four or five years – before Western European Union can be enriched by their presence. Might it not rather be preferable to invite the three countries to join WEU as full members once a political decision has been reached on their entry to the European Union?

IV. Romania and Slovenia

10. An impressive diplomatic *tour de force* and the support of virtually all NATO's European members failed, in the face of American opposition, to influence the outcome of the Madrid summit in favour of a decision to include Romania in the first group of new entrants. The final communiqué, in referring to the progress the country had achieved and affirming that the Alli-

⁶ Survey published in *Le Monde*, 8 July 1997

ance might take in more members in the relatively near future, gave room for hope that Romania's efforts might be rewarded in the next wave of enlargement.

11. Since the change of government in the country, Romania has also embarked on a programme of reform designed to set up new structures, rapidly liberalise the economy and bring it into line with western standards. However, the European Commission in its landmark document "Horizon 2000", has taken the view that, from an economic point of view, Romania is not yet ready to enter into accession negotiations with the European Union, but has encouraged it to keep up the good work.

12. There is a general feeling in European and Euro-Atlantic circles that the time is almost ripe for Romania to accede to NATO membership, in view of the fact that it is the second-largest country in the region after Poland in terms of the size of its population and army, and of its active experience in the defence of the nation, its highly active involvement in the Partnership for Peace and in peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations (Bosnia and Albania being two typical examples), its skilful diplomacy and support from its friends in Europe. The United States President clearly intimated as much during his visit to Bucharest in July a few days after the Madrid summit. The NATO Secretary-General also made encouraging noises before the North Atlantic Assembly on 22 October. However Romania's accession to the European Union, a wholly realistic aim in the longer term, will require a lengthier adjustment period and more complex negotiation. This does however raise the point as to why the European Union should not convey a political message of encouragement to Romania and others by opening accession negotiations with them, making it clear nonetheless that as they represent the "tougher cases", extra effort is needed to bring them into line with European Union standards. In order to be able fully to appreciate the country's immense political and economic significance, your Rapporteur feels that mention should be made of the trilateral cooperation programmes in which Romania is involved with a number of other countries in the region (with Austria and Hungary, Bulgaria and Greece and so on), its essential role vis à vis the nations within the Black Sea regional framework, its increasing cooperation with Ukraine and its

position as a country authorising transit through its territory of oil from the Caspian Sea and central Asia, bound for central and western Europe.

13. From WEU's point of view, Romania is obviously a powerful ally and a major partner. With its commitment to Europe and the West, dominant geostrategic position to the north of the Balkans and east of central Europe, sizeable armed forces, defence industry, the Romanian armed forces' highly active participation in peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations and the Romanian delegation's equally active involvement in all aspects of the work of the Council and the Assembly, there can be no doubt that Romania, as a full member of WEU, would add to the strength of the Organisation and breathe new life into the European defence cause. The various WEU bodies should therefore, in my view, strenuously support Romania's efforts to become incorporated into European defence structures as quickly as possible and use the weight of their influence to convince the European Union and NATO to speed up its accession to those two major western politico-security organisations. Until such time as Romania becomes a full member of the EU and WEU, it would, in your Rapporteur's opinion, be most appropriate, in view of the threats to the country's security by reason of its proximity to far less stable areas to the east, for European institutions to consider cooperation with those of Romania, with the aim of strengthening security at the country's borders and especially along its coastline.

14. Slovenia, despite all efforts, has not been rewarded by being invited to join the first wave of new NATO applicants. It has however had the satisfaction of being counted among the number of countries regarded by the European Commission as ready to begin European Union accession negotiations. Slovenia, as a relatively small country, long rightly regarded as the most prosperous part of former Yugoslavia, with per capita national income on a par with that of Greece or Portugal, does not appear to present major difficulties in terms of its ability to adapt to west European structures. Moreover its geographic location, good relations with its neighbours, active involvement in the Partnership for Peace programme and peacekeeping and peace-enforcement activities portend that membership of the Atlantic Alliance would bring substantial

benefits both to the country and to the Alliance. It is therefore highly likely that it will form part of the next wave of NATO enlargement, which as all the signs suggest, will not be long in coming. As far as WEU is concerned, its task is to build a relationship with its brand-new associate partner, thus contributing to strengthening the security of a peaceful and responsible country, now bordering on a far less stable region.

V. *Russia*

15. Notwithstanding the demise of communism in eastern Europe, the end of the cold war and the break-up of the Soviet Union – not to mention Russia's transitory economic and political weakness in the post-communist period – a number of basic aspects relating to this great country have naturally not changed. The Russian Federation, given its vast geographic area, the size of its population and its awesome economic and military potential, and also because of its history, is a decisive factor for security and stability in Europe and an essential partner in any realistic attempt to organise a European or Euro-Atlantic collective security system. This great country, already engaged for a number of years in an extensive democratisation process, over and above its overriding political importance today also constitutes a wholly viable dialogue partner with the west and one that in large measure shares the political and cultural ideals the major Euro-Atlantic institutions have long proclaimed.

16. The Atlantic Alliance, aware of the major political and geostrategic influence that Russia can wield – an influence which has received a further boost in recent months from President Yeltsin's recovery from illness, his growing political strength, the rising star of supporters of reform within his government and, last but not least, the first signs of economic recovery – has, happily for Europe's future stability, adopted a policy of allaying Russian fears as much as possible and reached a decision that the initial phase of NATO enlargement should be accompanied by a series of measures substantially to strengthen the Alliance's relationship with Russia, at the same time recognising that country's specific difficulties and securing its tacit acceptance that NATO, long regarded as its prime foe, should now extend to the very borders of the former Soviet Union. Thus, when they met in Helsinki

in late March, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin drew up the broad outlines of a charter governing NATO-Russia relations and at the same time reached agreement on renegotiating the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) Treaty, and on the future conclusion of a Start III agreement, Russia's greater involvement in G7 meetings and increased economic aid to that country.

17. The NATO-Russia Founding Act signed in Paris on 27 May was the crystallisation of the new cooperative relationship at institutional level, setting forth, *inter alia*, principles of the indivisibility of the security of all the states within the Euro-Atlantic community, recognition of the primacy of the rule of law, respect for human rights and civil liberties and abstention by both parties from the threat or use of force against each other. A mechanism for consultation and close political and military cooperation was also envisaged with the creation of the NATO-Russia Permanent Council, through which Russia is involved in most major decisions taken by NATO in relation to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, but without right of veto. The document also makes provision for renegotiation of the CFE treaty and no stationing of new nuclear weapons.

18. Western European Union's political need to take account of the new realities surrounding the mammoth Russian state is not in question; nor is the necessity for some form of cooperation with that vast country. However the fact remains that, at present, contacts with Russia, important though they are, lack the systematic character that an international agreement would confer on them. It might perhaps be appropriate for WEU institutions to give immediate thought to the matter. In this optic, it might be interesting to have further information on the proposals Mr Primakov put to the WEU Council and on any follow-up to them.

VI. *The case of Ukraine*

19. Ukraine was a part of Russia from 1654, its sole period of independent statehood being from 1918-1920. For a number of years it seemed to vacillate between the pro-Russian influence that predominates mainly in the eastern part of the country and the pro-western thinking that holds sway largely in the west and in gov-

ernment. The situation was further complicated by differences between it and its vast Russian neighbour (over the status of the Crimea, the Black Sea Fleet and the arrangements over Sevastopol) which have proved a major set-back to getting initiatives off the ground on the international front. However the country now seems to have emerged from this difficult and irresolute state and the last year or so has seen a distinct improvement in Ukrainian-Russian relations with the emergence of a clear policy of rapprochement with the West imbued with political realism. Thus in March 1997, Mr Udovenko, the Ukrainian Minister for Foreign Affairs, described Ukraine's integration into European and Euro-Atlantic security structures, including NATO, as one of his country's strategic objectives⁷. At almost the same time, the Ukrainian ambassador in Athens, in an address to a colloquy organised by the WEU Assembly on the future of European security, confirmed that strategic orientation – although he also added that the issue of Ukraine joining NATO would not arise for at least another ten years and that Ukraine's immediate policy objective was to conclude a security and cooperation agreement with NATO – while stressing that the development of good relations between the Atlantic Alliance and Russia was a necessary preliminary for European security⁸. Again, in a letter to the WEU Presidency in August 1996, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister requested that relations between his country and the European Union should be strengthened – envisaging *inter alia* Ukrainian involvement in WEU-led operations or peacekeeping missions, Ukrainian observers attending training exercises, the appointment of liaison officers to the various headquarters and the setting-up of a cooperation programme between the Torrejón Satellite Centre and the Ukrainian Space Agency. A month later, during the WEU Secretary-General's visit to Kiev, Ukraine requested associate partnership status in WEU

20. Contacts in all the central European countries to whom your Rapporteur spoke appear to agree on one point at least. Ukraine holds the key to the balance of security in eastern Europe, a view repeatedly expressed at widely differing

⁷ *Le Figaro*, 21 March 1997.

⁸ WEU Assembly. Official record of the colloquy on enlarged security held in Athens

levels and for a variety of reasons. Regarded as a counterweight to Russia, by others as an example of a ex-Soviet state and by yet others simply as a valuable partner, Ukraine is an essential security factor for all – a country which, in view of its size, geographic location, political clout and population is a factor of major significance in any serious attempt to draw up a blueprint for security in central and Eastern Europe

21. The NATO-Ukraine Cooperation Charter was signed on 9 July 1997. It included, among other provisions, arrangements for consultation between the two parties in the event of an apparent threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity. It was preceded by the signature on 31 May of a partnership and cooperation agreement with Russia, governing, among other matters, the Crimea question, including the use of the port of Sevastopol by the Russian Black Sea Fleet, thus laying the basis for normalisation of relations between the two countries. In the Rapporteur's view, the virtually simultaneous conclusion of these two agreements defining the framework of Ukraine's relations with East and West alike is no coincidence, but rather attests to Ukraine's concern to establish and maintain a balanced relationship with both sides, while avoiding becoming a vast buffer state, a mere "grey area", between Russia and the West. The conclusion in late June of an agreement with WEU on long-haul air transport also marks a further step in Ukraine's constantly evolving relationship with the Organisation, in an area where, it would seem, there is still much to be done

VII. The Baltic states – the need for an imaginative solution

22. The three Baltic countries appear to be concerned about their security, on the basis both of their past history and their geographic location next to a vast country which, while it no longer presents a direct or indirect security threat to them today, has on many occasions past dominated the entire region. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania's relatively small size, their population structure, characterised, as far as the first two are concerned, by the presence of very large Russian minorities, coupled with the fact that Estonia and Latvia also have disputed borders that are not readily defensible, are additional factors contributing to the risk of destabilisation

For these reasons, the three Baltic nations are pressing to join the three Western politico-economic or politico-military organisations (NATO, the EU and WEU) and regard membership of such bodies as a major factor in achieving both international and their own internal stability. It also explains why virtually the entire population of the three countries has, according to every opinion poll, come out in favour of this pro-Western stance.

23. The case of the Baltic states is the one that has aroused most criticism of the NATO summit decision to invite only the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to join the organisation. According to a view fairly widely held among western observers, this initial enlargement involves only countries that least need a security umbrella, while others like Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which feel, perhaps with some justification, that membership of Western organisations can guarantee their independence, have been ruled out, at least for the time being. Russia's categoric opposition should be mentioned at this point. President Yeltsin, in a letter to President Clinton dated 20 June 1996, described the idea of any NATO enlargement that included the Baltic states as unacceptable, going so far as to suggest that if it were to occur it would wipe out the basic framework for stability in Europe, but at the same time proffering assurances that Russia would be prepared to offer them security guarantees. Those involved in the Madrid decision were careful not to rule out any applicant, to emphasise that the Alliance was open to all democratic countries and to make reference to Baltic aspirations to membership. Nevertheless Russian opposition, coupled with the existence of still partially unresolved bilateral differences between some Baltic countries and their vast neighbour, would appear to be at the root of the decision not to include them in the first wave of NATO enlargement.

24. However the West does have a degree of sympathy with the Baltic countries' determination to forge the closest possible ties with Western political and security structures. The European Commission's decision to support Estonia's application for European Union accession, the military cooperation programmes several western countries (Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) have set up with one or other or all three

Baltic states and, above all, the now stated intention of the United States, through an agreement with the three countries, explicitly to set out its support for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania's independence unilaterally are responses – partial maybe but substantial nevertheless – to the question of what the West could do, at least in the first instance, to make those countries feel more secure.

25. In a report adopted in June⁹, the WEU Assembly drew attention to the security needs of the Baltic states, which have been WEU associate partners since 1994, and requested the Council to strengthen cooperation between WEU and those countries and at the same time lend encouragement to the resolution of their bilateral difficulties with Russia, particularly as regards border recognition. More specifically, this would involve, *inter alia*, organising joint military exercises, strengthening the Baltic countries' presence in relevant WEU politico-military bodies and enhancing participation by Baltic armed forces in tasks undertaken by WEU. Moreover, it might perhaps also be appropriate to envisage consultations on regional issues in which the Baltic states and WEU member countries would take part. Improved relations with Russia could even make it possible to involve that great country in such a process.

VIII. WEU in the face of the new European reality

26. The enlargement of NATO, the conclusion of the Founding Act with Russia, the Atlantic Alliance's signature of a partnership charter with Ukraine, the start, in its turn, of the European Union enlargement process, and the prospect of an American security guarantee for the three Baltic states, coupled with the legitimate aspirations of the other East European and Balkan states all highly motivated to become privileged associates if not equal partners with the West, are all bound to have their effect on Western European Union, which has a very different European political and diplomatic landscape to deal with than that of a year ago. There is a need to draw the implications from this, taking the

⁹ "Enlarged security: the security problems posed by the enlargement of NATO and the European institutions", Rapporteur: Mr Urbain

necessary political decisions and adapting WEU's internal structures so as to take in the three new members, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, that together are to join both NATO and the European Union. Moreover it will be necessary to initiate a new phase of cooperation with other countries, whose status in WEU will undergo a change as a result of their accession to the EU or NATO.

27. It must of course be borne in mind that according to the principles adopted at Kirchberg in 1994, countries which become EU members without joining NATO, at least for the time being (including Cyprus, Estonia and Slovenia) should be regarded as WEU observers, while those joining NATO but not the European Union would be associate members. Although strict application of those rules does not appear for the time being to change the rationale or content of WEU's relations with its associate partners, it would seem to be desirable for Estonia and Slovenia's changed status vis-à-vis the EU to lead to a strengthening of their relationship with WEU where they have had associate partnership status since 1994. Consequently, your Rapporteur feels imagination and flexibility are essential when considering the various possible scenarios and that there is no call to shy away from departing from the rules laid down in the Kirchberg Declaration if it were the wish or in the interest of the parties concerned.

28. Developing WEU's relationship with Russia and Ukraine would appear to be a major aspect of the readjustment to – not to say change of direction in – WEU's policy towards eastern Europe. Thus as far as Russia is concerned, a highly fortuitous expansion of contacts at various levels is currently taking place (the Secretary-General's visit to Moscow, cooperation with the Torrejón Satellite Centre, exchanges of views with between the WEU Assembly and the Duma, cooperation between the WEU Institute for Security Studies and the Russian Academy of Sciences and so on). However the absence of institutionalised relations between WEU and that great country is, undeniably, a shortcoming that must be remedied in order to give the development of relations between the largest nation in Europe and the continent's sole defence organisation the impetus that circumstances seem to demand. Quite a different situation obtains with regard to Ukraine which appears to regard deep-

ening relations with WEU as a strategic objective of its policy towards Europe and which a year ago applied to become an associate partner in WEU. It is clear that although that request could not be granted for reasons unconnected with the importance WEU attaches to Ukraine (associate partner status is linked to prospective accession to the European Union), the relationship is developing apace as the recent signature (end June 1997) of the cooperation agreement on long-haul air transport serves to demonstrate.

29. This brief attempt to analyse the apparent need for internal and external adjustment by WEU to the new prevailing conditions would manifestly be lacking in balance without some mention of the need for the Organisation to institute a policy towards eastern European countries which are not associate partners (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM and possibly Belarus) but which are nonetheless trying to establish some form of cooperation with Western European Union. It is necessary at this stage to establish the criteria for such cooperation and to give immediate thought to the form it might take, especially in view of the fact that several of those countries are situated either within or immediately adjacent to areas of crisis and therefore assume major importance for an organisation whose task it is to see that Europe is secure and defended.

30. The final aspect to which I should like to draw attention here is the difficulty brewing within WEU itself over possible changes to the admission criteria for full membership. For years, simultaneous membership of NATO and the European Union has been a prior condition for full membership of WEU. However Ambassador Cahen, a former WEU Secretary-General, and the author of the doctrine that bears his name, observed, during the course of the colloquy the WEU Assembly organised in Athens in March, that under the present circumstances it might be necessary to consider amending that doctrine, in particular to enable applicant countries that have already signed up to the enhanced Partnership for Peace arrangements and are members of the European Union to become full members of WEU.

31. Clearly therefore, beyond a certain point, the criteria formerly used to define the respective statuses of the 28 WEU countries cannot con-


tinue to be applied without adjustment to take account of the new circumstances. Equally obvious is the fact that the climate internationally – and especially in Europe – has recently changed, allowing WEU, indeed placing an obligation upon it, to take new political and even institutional initiatives suited to Europe's new political and military outlook. The search for the necessary solutions calls for open-mindedness and putting them into practice requires an indomitable political will.

IX. Conclusions

32. Without claiming to forecast the future, we can confidently state that, at the time of writing, the broad framework of a new reality in terms of Europe's security seems already to be in place. Hence the enlargement by stages of NATO, the European Union and WEU does not appear to be causing any major ripples in the West's relations with its neighbours, particularly since NATO's relations with both Russia and the Ukraine are improving as a result of the conclusion of framework agreements. These, particularly in Russia's case, provide for consultations at various levels and for enhanced cooperation. Additionally, the European Commission has proposed entering into negotiations with six countries – five of them geographically part of central

Europe – with a view to their accession to the European Union. In a concern to convey a positive political message to countries wishing to join the Union, your Rapporteur feels that widening the accession negotiations to more countries so as to include all the eastern European applicants, might be an appropriate gesture – on the understanding that some countries, for entirely justifiable reasons, will join the EU much later than others.

33. In the present political context in Europe, the challenges facing WEU are clear but the list is a long one. They boil down in essence to promoting European security or rather to contributing to create a European security area by accepting new members, strengthening cooperation with countries which, notwithstanding their resolve, are not to become members and continuing to develop friendly relations with eastern neighbours such as Russia and Ukraine while taking an active interest in events taking place in other European countries, such as Albania, which might present a danger to Europe's security. Last but not least, Europe's own internal cohesion must be strengthened, so as to enable us to speak with one voice on the international stage, including within the Atlantic Alliance. United we stand divided we fall, truism though it may be, is a saying all too often overlooked where Europe is concerned

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