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The future role of WEU – reply to the annual report of the Council

REPORT

submitted on behalf of the Political Committee
by Mr Liapis, Rapporteur

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1. Adopted unanimously by the Committee.

2. *Members of the Committee* Mr de Puig (Chairman); Mr Roseta (Vice-Chairman); MM Antretter, de Assis, Bianchi, Blaauw, Sir Andrew Bowden (Alternate: Sir Anthony Durant), MM Brancati, Bratina, Brunetti, Bühler, Cusimano, Dias, Ehrmann, Eyskens, Mrs Fischer, Mr Irmer, Sir Russell Johnston (Alternate: Sir John Cope), MM Jurgens, Kaspereit, Lord Kirkhill (Alternate: Davis), MM Liapis, van der Linden, de Lipkowski, Van der Maelen, Martinez Casan (Alternate: Martinez), Mr Pottakis (Alternate: Micheliogiannis), Puche Rodríguez, Recoder, Ripinger, Rokofyllos, Seitlinger, Sir Keith Speed, MM Urbain, Vinçon, Zierer.

N.B. *The names of those taking part in the vote are printed in italics.*

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on the future role of WEU –
reply to the annual report of the Council

The Assembly,

- (i) Recalling the pivotal role WEU must play so that Europe can establish an efficient and credible security system,
- (ii) Acknowledging that sovereign states are central to the process of framing and implementing a European defence policy;
- (iii) Recalling that although the European Union's CFSP implies a decision-making process by a qualified majority, compliance with the principle of unanimity is essential for the protection of the vital security interests of every member state, wherever these may be called into question;
- (iv) Stressing that Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty implies the guarantee of the territorial integrity of the member states and solidarity among them as soon as there is any violation of the frontiers of any one of their number, and recalling that any organisation of European security requires a guarantee as to compliance with this principle;
- (v) Noting with satisfaction that the Atlantic Alliance has recognised the existence within it of a European security and defence identity (ESDI), the principal component of which is WEU,
- (vi) Stressing the need to strengthen working relations and cooperation with European states that are members or about to become members of NATO,
- (vii) Recalling that under the modified Brussels Treaty, an essential objective assigned to WEU is that of organising member countries' involvement in the Atlantic Alliance;
- (viii) Noting, moreover, that WEU is increasingly directing its efforts towards the tasks it set forth in its 1992 Petersberg Declaration;
- (ix) Stressing that any WEU action taken under Article VIII of the modified Brussels Treaty to maintain peace in the world and establish an order of peace and security in Europe cannot be confined to the execution of Petersberg tasks;
- (x) Noting that involvement in Petersberg tasks is open to countries that have not subscribed to collective defence commitments;
- (xi) Noting the progress made in making WEU more operational with a view to it.
 - (a) fulfilling its collective defence commitment under Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty, and
 - (b) carrying out Petersberg tasks using its own assets or drawing on CJTFs once they have actually been set up;

(xii) Expressing the wish that member states should continue with their endeavour to pool military and technological resources and make them available to WEU, which would enable the Organisation to:

- (a) strengthen the European security and defence identity within the Alliance, and
- (b) make a practical contribution to framing a European security policy in the framework of the CFSP,

(xiii) Noting with concern the difficulty European Union member states are having in reaching a consensus in the IGC on the working of the CFSP;

(xiv) Regretting that a year after its submission in November 1995 of the "WEU contribution to the intergovernmental conference of the European Union in 1996", the Council of Ministers has not seen fit to update its text to take account of new facts such as recognition of the need to develop the European security and defence identity within NATO.

(xv) Noting that a majority of WEU governments are in favour of the gradual integration of the Organisation in the European Union and reaffirming the Assembly's consensual view, expressed at the London extraordinary session in February 1996, that such integration cannot take place until membership of WEU and the European Union is identical;

(xvi) Stressing that for this process to work, there must be an unequivocal political and financial commitment on the part of WEU and EU Governments to clearly defined and shared common foreign and defence policy objectives.

(xvii) Considering that Europe's defence is at present primarily assured by NATO, which makes permanent consultation and dialogue on an equal footing with the United States and Canada essential on all matters relating to security and defence structures in Europe;

(xviii) Stating its willingness to continue and develop its exchanges with the European Parliament, on an equal and reciprocal basis, in areas in which they have common responsibilities, particularly the CFSP;

(xix) Stressing the need for the Council to clearly state its views on the effect European Union and NATO enlargement to include certain central European countries will have on their status in WEU and their rights and obligations in relation to it.

(xx) Taking the view that WEU should pay particular attention to its relations with those associate partners that will not be admitted in the near future to the structures of the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union, and also to its contacts with Ukraine;

(xxi) Considering that the *status quo* in Cyprus is not acceptable and that an early and just settlement of the Cyprus issue would strengthen security and peace in the Mediterranean;

(xxii) Considering further that the accession of Cyprus to the European Union, the negotiations for which are scheduled to take place within six months of completion of the work of the IGC, will have a direct impact on the institutional status of Cyprus within WEU;

(xxiii) Fervently hoping that the WEU Council will intensify its efforts regarding African issues in order to contribute to the search for a solution to the crisis taking place on the border between Zaire and Rwanda;

(xxiv) Regretting that the Council's replies to the recommendations adopted at the extraordinary session in London in February 1996 have been dilatory and lacking in substance,

(xxv) Deeply regretting that in spite of numerous requests, no specific information has been made available by the Secretary-General, the WEU Presidency or the European Union Presidency regarding discussions on those aspects of the EU intergovernmental conference which are at present the prerogative of WEU and its Parliamentary Assembly;

(xxvi) Reminding all concerned that it will be for national parliaments to ratify whatever conclusions are reached by the IGC;

(xxvii) Noting once again the delay in forwarding the first part of the Council's 42nd Annual Report, whose dispatch, within a reasonable period of time, is one of the terms of application of Article IX of the modified Brussels Treaty,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Make an inventory of every type of asset the signatory states of the modified Brussels Treaty are able to deploy in a common defence, with a view to drawing up a European programme for sharing defence costs equitably between those countries;
2. Make a similar inventory of assets that can be deployed by WEU in any Petersberg tasks, with a view to it gradually acquiring the capabilities necessary to carry out these tasks;
3. Strengthen to this end all those organs of WEU likely to be involved in such tasks;
4. Expedite the establishment of the Western European Armaments Organisation (WEAO) so as to bring together WEU activities in this field, integrate the European Armaments Agency and provide Europe with the necessary structure for a proper common armaments policy,
5. Continue to strengthen operational cooperation with NATO, starting with implementation of the decisions taken by NATO in January 1994 and June 1996 concerning the CJTF but without slackening efforts to mobilise WEU's own capabilities for independent action,
6. Promote, for this purpose, the creation of permanent representations of the United States and Canada to WEU and of WEU to those states;
7. Enhance its ability, within WEU, to implement Article VIII of the modified Brussels Treaty in order to respond to emergencies and in particular to take the necessary decisions without waiting for such requests as may come from the European Union, the United Nations or the OSCE;
8. Ensure application of the principle of the inviolability of the territorial integrity and borders of the European Union as constituting one of the objectives of the CFSP, based on criteria that are generally accepted in international relations;
9. Ensure, furthermore, that the relevant European Union authorities are fully informed about the assets WEU can make available to the Union for the purpose of carrying out tasks entrusted to it under the CFSP;
10. Ask that the body of the Treaty which is to be drafted by the IGC include the principle to which the Parliamentary Reflection Group on the 1996 intergovernmental conference referred in Athens on 4 December 1995, according to which the WEU Assembly would be invited to contribute to the work of the Conference of European Affairs Committees (CEAC) when matters concerning European security were under discussion;
11. Make clear what rights and obligations the associate member, associate partner and observer countries have in security and defence matters, prior to NATO and European Union enlargement;

- 12 Make representations to the international organisations with responsibility for the Cyprus problem, with a view to achieving an early settlement;
- 13 Ask the member states to make clear their intentions about a possible revision of the modified Brussels Treaty that would take account of the decisions taken by NATO in Berlin in June 1996, and of the results of the IGC,
- 14 Develop cooperation on security matters with those associate partners that will not be admitted in the near future to the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union;
- 15 Update, in time for the WEU May 1997 ministerial meeting, the "WEU contribution to the intergovernmental conference of the European Union in 1996" which it adopted in Madrid in November 1995, taking into account intervening developments such as the recognition by all WEU member states that the European security and defence identity should be developed within NATO";
- 16 Step up relations on both a political and practical level with the Russian Federation and with Ukraine and those CIS member states that so wish, so as to help attenuate fears and defuse tension that might result from NATO enlargement;
- 17 Urgently establish a mechanism for keeping the Assembly fully informed of discussions and developments in the EU intergovernmental conference, on subjects which are at present the prerogative of WEU,
- 18 Re-examine Recommendations 589 and 590 on the political and defence aspects of the organisation of security in Europe, adopted at the extraordinary session in London in February 1996, with a view to seeking the same consensus as the Assembly on the course to be followed for the future of WEU;
- 19 Comply with Article IX of the modified Brussels Treaty by keeping the Assembly informed, by the proper time limit, of all Council activities and all aspects of Treaty implementation

Explanatory Memorandum

(submitted by Mr Liapis, Rapporteur)

I. Introduction: WEU in a changing world

1. The three years remaining to the end of the 20th century will see a great many events whose consequences for the future of WEU no doubt present the Organisation with the greatest challenge it has had to face for 50 years. The most striking fact that emerges from any examination is that the decisions behind these events are being and will continue to be taken by two other institutions with which WEU has close links, namely, the European Union and NATO. This state of affairs may well be disconcerting to those who would like WEU to play a pivotal role in the debate on European security and defence policies but it is the result of an institutional tug-of-war that can only develop through a gradual reinforcement, in coordination with NATO, of WEU's operational capabilities and its adaptation to the new geostrategic situation in Europe and the world as a whole. The success of that process will enable WEU to play a more active role in improving security and stability on the European continent and anywhere else in the world where the interests of the member states are at stake.

2. We are currently in a crisis period marked by a great number of situations entailing conflict and armed struggle. Some experts believe these to be domestic matters for the individual states involved rather than issues concerning international relations. The causes of some of these situations are essentially domestic in that they relate to political issues (acts of terrorism, claims for independence, disputes of an ethnic or religious nature) or disrupt public order (drug trafficking, organised crime) while others are regional and international problems (Bosnia, Cyprus and the Middle East for instance). In fact there is no clear dividing line between these different cases in terms of their impact on worldwide security. The instability born of a domestic conflict in a state affects the political and regional security environment and possibly the international climate. This is the situation in central Europe with regard to former Yugoslavia where an internal war of secession within the former Federation turned into an international conflict involving first United Nations then NATO intervention, the latter through air strikes followed

by the IFOR operation. This same conflict has repeatedly given rise to differences between European states as to whether armed intervention would have been appropriate in the initial stages of the conflict and has served to highlight present deficiencies in terms of a common foreign and security policy.

3. The Mediterranean region is also the scene of an increasing number of national, regional and international flashpoints. Terrorism by Muslim fundamentalists, the proliferation of all kinds of weapons, political and economic instability and ongoing territorial conflicts such as that in the western Sahara, where no lasting solution has yet been found, are but a few examples where developments will have consequences for European security and defence. Some of these conflicts have already been extended to the territories of member states of WEU and the European Union and have revealed differences between European states in the way they perceive them. Although the conflict in former Yugoslavia has been contained over the last five years and neighbouring countries spared, it has nevertheless demonstrated the need for an appropriate security system and defence capabilities to prevent a renewed outbreak of violence on the same scale or to deal with it on the European continent or in neighbouring regions. WEU, the European Union and NATO each have a responsibility in creating the necessary conditions for establishing a security system in Europe. They cannot achieve that objective through competition but only by cooperating with one another and with other institutions and states in order to avoid a return to a policy of spheres of influence on the continent.

4. To adapt to changes in the geostrategic situation, the European Union and NATO have embarked on a series of reforms, the purpose of which in every case, similarly to that of industrial restructuring, is to do more and do it better with fewer resources. The impetus given to implementation of the CJTF concept at the NATO ministerial summit meeting in Berlin and preparations for the first wave of enlargement come at a time when budget constraints, even in the United States, are inflicting heavy cuts on defence budgets which, in their turn, entail big reductions in

the manpower and equipment employed in each country's military systems, their purpose being to concentrate resources on those areas considered most effective in strategic terms. In practice a considerable share of resources is allocated to increasingly costly high-technology items of equipment. They are available in lower quantity than equipment used previously and their use requires more specialised and better trained staff. The result of this technological constraint is a considerable reduction in manpower in the armed forces and a move towards professional armies or a high proportion of volunteers, as well as the closing down of military installations including nuclear facilities.

5. This is only one of the factors to be borne in mind in the decisions on NATO reforms. Enlarging NATO to take in new members is a highly political decision that takes account of the change in the geostrategic landscape of Europe since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was never the intention that the Alliance should be a select club and it is only natural that sovereign states applying to join should wish not only to take part in its development but also to benefit from the security and stability NATO has for almost 50 years afforded its European members and which have made a vital contribution to their economic and social progress. However, the success of NATO enlargement is yet to come and the process must be open and clear if crisis situations and the emergence of "grey areas" of security in Europe are to be avoided. Implementation of the CJTF concept meets an operational need that has arisen from the significantly lower numbers of US forces in Europe and from recognition that only the United States currently has the logistics and intelligence capabilities necessary for the effective execution of medium- or large-scale military operations of all types in a part of the European continent or elsewhere.

6. Turning to the European Union, there are three aspects in the debate going on in the IGC which will also have repercussions for WEU. The process of "deepening" appears to be based mainly on a concept of integration linked to the introduction of the euro. Adopting the single currency will have significant political consequences, in security and defence among other areas, as a result of the budget policies of the states participating in the venture. It raises many unknowns but the resolve of France and Germany, which are determined to persevere with this course of action, makes it virtually

inevitable unless either country does a major U-turn on European policy. Enlargement too would seem to be close to becoming a reality even though the European Union has only recently taken in three new countries and the debate continues as to the reforms that are needed to give it political clout equal to its economic clout. Because of their geostrategic situation, the accession of Cyprus, and then of certain central European countries requires the establishment of a genuine common foreign and security policy so that enlargement brings security and stability to those countries that are to join the Union and to those around them that do not qualify for membership for the time being.

7. The framing of the common foreign and security policy, and eventually of a European defence policy, primarily concerns WEU as the European Union's defence component which also has responsibility for defining and implementing a European defence policy in coordination with the Atlantic Alliance. The issues described above call for a revised role for the Organisation in the European political and military context. The enlargement of the European Union and NATO, implementation of the CJTF concept and the future of the CFSP will in the long run involve major changes in the composition of WEU and in its working methods both in political terms and – for the first time – in military terms with reference to the use of NATO assets for conducting its own operations (peacekeeping, humanitarian and, indeed, peace enforcement, and operations specifically intended to defend member countries' interests). By demonstrating its ability to adjust to this changing environment, WEU can prove that it is still highly relevant – even though the situation justifying its creation in 1954 has changed radically – and that the defence of its members and helping to maintain peace, security and stability on the European continent and beyond are still its main purpose.

II. The current situation of European security and defence

8. The period of change and reform the continent of Europe is experiencing at present has brought uncertainty at every level. Initiatives have burgeoned into a welter of proposals from one or more states, international organisations or pressure groups, in areas ranging from security to the economy. Stimulating debate is, in itself, a positive strategy, provided it does not lead to paralysis and the kind of entrenched political and institutional

status quo that has been all too apparent throughout the crisis and war in former Yugoslavia, to mention but one example. Today's challenges: economic integration within the European Union (the advent of the euro), the enlargement of the Union and of NATO to include the central European countries, future relations with the Russian Federation and with Ukraine, not to mention the need to frame a rational European policy – encompassing both economic cooperation and security – on the Mediterranean and the Middle East, call for practical responses that are politically visible and, most important of all, credible. Whether the choices to be made in those areas will prove correct can be judged only by the results.

9. Europe as embodied by the European Union and WEU must, if it wants to be able to mount an effective defence of its interests in the world, assume the political responsibilities that are commensurate with its economic strength. This means clarifying the respective areas of responsibility of both organisations when it comes to implementing the common foreign and security policy and ultimately developing a European defence policy. At the same time, they need to assert themselves in relation to other organisations which are taking an ever more public stand on security issues, regardless of the fact that they have no legal authority for doing so or the means of action to match their ambitions. They cannot succeed in this without the agreement of the member states of both organisations in order to avoid internal divisions which would hinder the progress of reforms, both present and future. Identification of the common interests of the member states and their political solidarity are very important when it comes to defence as this is an area which is closely linked with perceptions of nationhood, as expressed by the governments and parliaments in whom power of decision in Europe is vested.

(a) WEU and the defence of Europe

10. On the continent of Europe, two organisations, NATO and WEU, have defence responsibilities and capabilities. Both are engaged in reforms to enable them to adapt fully to changes in the European and world geopolitical context. NATO has the leading role both because it has the military means to be effective, as its action in Bosnia has served to illustrate, and because it is the embodiment of the United States' commitment to the defence of Europe. These are the plain facts and the

two considerations that will govern the types of change wrought by enlargement and reorganisation of the NATO command structures, both of which must be carried out in such a way as to preserve the delicate balance between strengthening what is termed a "European identity" in NATO and retaining the transatlantic link. WEU, in its more unobtrusive development, gives priority to enhancing its operational capabilities to enable it in due course to carry out those military operations referred to as "Petersberg-type" missions, if necessary drawing on defence assets made available to it by the Alliance within the framework of the CJTF agreement. At the same time, WEU is involved in developing a European defence policy in conjunction with the European Union.

11. Apart from having similar areas of responsibility, the two organisations have in common the fact that they are managed on an intergovernmental basis. General policies are defined by the member states on the basis of the widest possible consensus and subsequently implemented by the Secretariats-General and the military commands. This approach, which may help explain the degree of hesitation, lack of action even, in the face of crisis remains the only valid one when dealing with defence issues, given that national governments and parliaments are primarily responsible for defining the overall direction of policy and allocating the resources necessary for implementation. The primacy of the nation state does not rule out the development of bilateral cooperation or cooperation within organisations with a political and military remit, in an effort to rationalise countries' defence commitments at a time when budget cut-backs in that area are the order of the day. This is a reality all WEU members are facing and one that is concentrating minds in military and industrial circles on the need for Europe and its traditional political allies, both on the continent and across the Atlantic, to forge a true defence policy backed by credible means.

1 The framing of a defence concept for Europe

12. Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty provides that "if any of the High Contracting Parties should be the object of an armed attack in Europe, the other High Contracting parties will, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51¹ of the

¹ "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the

Charter of the United Nations, afford the Party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power". As the main justification for WEU's existence, this provision holds good even today, despite the changes that have occurred since 1954, but it has to be given a political and military content. It is in this light that it must define its place in the continent's security structures as a whole by reaffirming its aims (as set out in broad terms in Article V of the Treaty) and acquiring the means necessary for it to fulfil its obligations towards its members and, as necessary, to respond to requests for assistance from other European and international institutions. While the creation of the Satellite Centre and the conduct of military operations are clear evidence of progress at operational level, WEU has still not clearly stated what its intentions are as far as European defence policy goes and the most that can be said is that it is supposed to be the European pillar of the Alliance and be regarded as the defence component of the European Union².

13 Efforts have been made in recent years to meet expectations, in particular at the Petersberg ministerial meeting, where a range of cases were presented in which WEU might possibly intervene³, and in Madrid with the adoption of a "common concept" of European security. That document attempts to identify present and future challenges Europe and WEU may have to face, listing the main risks as potential armed conflicts, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of conveyance, international terrorism, organised crime, drug-trafficking, uncontrolled and illegal immigration and environmental risks⁴. The considerations extend to any part of the world where European interests are involved and proposals as to the means of contending with the problems referred

United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security "

2 However, at meetings between the Assembly's Presidential Committee and the WEU Permanent Council in Brussels on 15 October 1996, parliamentarians were informed that the expression "European security and defence identity" is currently being used more than "European pillar".

3. Namely, humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking, Petersberg Declaration, II.4, Bonn, 19 June 1992

4 European security a common concept of the 27 WEU countries, Chapter I I C., WEU Council of Ministers, Madrid, 14 November 1995.

to be advanced for adapting national defence forces while maintaining their effectiveness, strengthening WEU's politico-military structures, reinforcing European assets and capabilities and enhancing the European defence industrial base⁵. Details are also given of the operational needs of the Organisation, for example "a clear channel of communication between the WEU Council and WEU forces" and a "single chain of command", for efficient coordination in the theatre of operations, for access to "an adequate observation capability" and development of "an intelligence processing capability" and for appropriate transport capabilities⁶.

14. The document also lists in full WEU's inadequacies in terms of its command and control procedures, intelligence, strategic lift capabilities, interoperability and weapons policy. Nevertheless it raises at least two issues that give rise to a degree of confusion as to WEU's role in relation to its founding Treaty.

- the collective defence task, which is the very essence of the modified Brussels Treaty, is not mentioned at all,
- reference is made to the "27 WEU countries", while only ten of them are party to the Treaty and participate fully in all the Organisation's activities;

It may also be mentioned in passing that no reference is made to central Europe when listing the regions where political circumstances and risks have implications for the continent's security and no details are given of the security and defence obligations and entitlements of countries with WEU associate member, associate partner or observer status.

15. While it by no means has the scope of the Rome Declaration of 1984 or The Hague Platform of 1987, the document gives a fair indication of the political indecision and uncertainty which have until now prevented WEU from playing a key role in the European security and defence architecture. The WEU Assembly has for its part endeavoured for years to contribute to the development of a political concept of Europe's defence, having gone so far as to propose, in 1991, that the modified Brussels

5 Idem, Chapter II, II D

6. Idem, Chapter II II B.