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Enlarged security: the security problems posed by the  
enlargement of NATO and the European institutions –  
conclusions drawn from the colloquy

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## REPORT

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

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*Enlarged security: the security problems posed by the enlargement of NATO  
and the European institutions – conclusions drawn from the colloquy*

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted unanimously by the Committee.

<sup>2</sup> *Members of the Committee:* Mr Baumel (Chairman); MM Urbain, Blaauw (Vice-Chairmen); MM Antretter, de Assis, Bianchi, Sir Andrew Bowden, Mr Brancati (Alternate: Mrs Squarcialupi), MM Bratina, Brunetti, Bühler, Cusimano, Dias, Sir Anthony Durant, Mr Eyskens, Mrs Fischer, Mr Irmer, Sir Russell Johnston, Mr Kaspereit, Lord Kirkhill, MM Liapis, van der Linden, de Lipkowski, Van der Maelen, Martínez, Martínez Casañ, Puche Rodríguez (Alternate: Mrs Pulgar), MM Recoder, Rippinger, Roseta, Seitlinger, Skoularikis, Sir Keith Speed, MM Vinçon, Vrettos, Woltjer, Zierer.

*Associate members:* MM Akçali, Gürel (Alternate: Cem), Mr Kulahlı.

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

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*Draft Recommendation*

*on enlarged security: the security problems posed by the enlargement of NATO  
and the European institutions – conclusions drawn from the colloquy*

The Assembly,

- (i) Welcoming the outcome of the parliamentary colloquy held in Athens on the security problems posed by the enlargement of NATO and the European institutions;
- (ii) Reaffirming WEU's area of responsibility for security and defence matters in pursuance of the modified Brussels Treaty,
- (iii) Considering that WEU must acquire the necessary means to become involved where
  - (a) this is necessary in order to deter aggression directed at one of its member states;
  - (b) requests for its intervention are made by NATO, the United Nations, the OSCE or the European Union;
  - (c) Petersberg missions require rapid intervention,
- (iv) Reiterating Decision 18, which it adopted in Athens, and Recommendation 608 on the eastern dimension of European security,
- (v) Supporting any NATO enlargement that would enable stability and security to be effectively extended to central and eastern countries resolved to play an active part in such defence.
- (vi) Concerned nonetheless that such enlargement should not lead to any reduction in the obligations that derive from the Washington Treaty or contribute to weakening the Alliance's military means or perpetuating the present imbalance in political influence and the distribution of commands between the United States and the European members of NATO;
- (vii) Stressing at the same time the importance of creating a stronger Partnership for Peace with a view to extending stability and security to the entire continent of Europe,
- (viii) Convinced that the greater the part Europeans play within NATO, the more desirable the opening of the latter will be for all those who have an interest in ensuring that the European continent is an area of peace and stability,
- (ix) Considering that the European Union is called to make a substantial contribution to establishing an order for peace, stability and prosperity that will strengthen solidarity among states across the entire continent of Europe;
- (x) Stressing in consequence the importance of the revision of the Maastricht Treaty for European Union enlargement;
- (xi) Considering that WEU is called to play an essential role in Europe's security;
- (xii) Reaffirming that even though the territorial integrity of WEU member countries is nowadays no longer directly threatened, an absolute requirement of their security is that the modified Brussels Treaty remains the basis of a European defence policy;
- (xiii) Earnestly desiring the European Union's common foreign and security policy to succeed in drawing Europeans together in concerted action to promote peace in Europe and throughout the world, while taking the view that the fact that certain countries wishing to pursue a policy of neutrality are European Union members should not hinder or prevent decisions being made in the framework of WEU;
- (xiv) Aware that WEU has a remit to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the European Union in this sphere and considering that it is therefore essential for the European Union and WEU to continue to draw closer together;

- (xv) Convinced that such convergence implies that the European Union should in future accept as new members only those countries that are prepared to accede to the modified Brussels Treaty.
- (xvi) Fearing that the manner in which NATO and the European Union will enlarge may lead to the creation, albeit temporary, of different security zones;
- (xvii) Stressing therefore the important role WEU can play in extending and strengthening stability and security across central and eastern Europe,
- (xviii) Convinced therefore of the need for WEU to review its policy on enlargement while aiming to ensure maximum convergence in the composition of the European Union, NATO and WEU;
- (xix) Deeply desirous that measures taken by NATO and the European Union to develop their relations with countries that are not to become members, such as Russia or Ukraine, should be supplemented by drawing up arrangements for cooperation between those countries and WEU;
- (xx) Stressing again the need to keep a close watch on political developments in Belarus, Moldova, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and at the same time pay attention to the situation in Transcaucasia,

#### RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Monitor closely the NATO enlargement process and its implications for the European institutions;
2. Take the necessary steps in readiness to negotiate the accession of new states to the modified Brussels Treaty and accommodate them in WEU;
3. Assess the financial implications of Atlantic Alliance enlargement for WEU member countries and inform the Assembly accordingly;
4. Ensure that until such time as all European Union members are members of WEU, the latter should remain an autonomous organisation, and specifically that the Council should retain its powers of decision and independent action and its freedom to intervene on behalf of the United Nations or the OSCE;
5. Enhance the European security and defence identity (ESDI), which would meet with a greater degree of approval from the public at large and which might be useful, particularly where humanitarian intervention is urgently required.
6. Invite all European Union members to accede to the modified Brussels Treaty and encourage them to join the Atlantic Alliance;
7. Reassess its enlargement policy on the basis of the principle that where a member country of the Atlantic Alliance and a candidate for membership of the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance that is a member of the reinforced Partnership for Peace fulfil the conditions for European Union entry, they also have a case for becoming full members of our own Organisation, ensuring all the while that such applications do not in any way impair the close cooperation and reciprocal transparency that exist between WEU and NATO;
8. Intensify cooperation between WEU and all its associate partners, in accordance with the criteria defined in paragraph 4(b) of Recommendation 608, both by strengthening their involvement in the Organisation's activities and giving them a more prominent role in WEU operations, particularly Petersberg-type missions;
9. Strengthen cooperation with Russia and Ukraine in specific areas, particularly arms control verification procedures, humanitarian operations, the monitoring of natural disasters and military transport.

*Explanatory Memorandum*  
(submitted by Mr Urbain, Rapporteur)

*I. Introduction*

1. The collapse of the communist regimes in eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s, the reunification of Germany, the demise of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact have, not surprisingly, radically altered the political and geostrategic map of Europe. The new democracies of central and south-eastern Europe lost no time in voicing their wish to belong to these economic and politico-military institutions of the West, in the belief that, on the international front, membership would guarantee their emancipation from Russia, while at home, it would contribute to building stable, western-style, economic and political structures

2. This is the reason why, to date, ten central and eastern European countries have applied to join NATO, the European Union and Western European Union. Although the group of applicants consists of countries with a similar history, they are far from homogenous in terms of either their economic or their political development. Moreover, the fact that they include among their number some countries to whose membership of NATO structures Russia would be implacably opposed, while taking a much softer line in other cases, widens the differences in their applications still further. Furthermore, from the West's point of view, it is virtually certain that accession to NATO will be by stages, while European Union and consequently WEU enlargement will require a much longer period of negotiation. Logically, therefore, a situation might be envisaged over the next ten years or so where some of the ten countries seeking to join Western politico-military structures would not be NATO members, others would not be members of the European Union and some might not even be members of either. Completing this picture of Europe's short-term future as one of change, characterised by the assimilation of groups of new member countries by stages into western politico-military structures, will be a partnership, seemingly essential to the new security system in Europe, involving the neutral countries and countries such as Russia and Ukraine (and later Belarus) that do

not want or are unable to join western institutions. Equally, there will be a need to try and think of ways to strengthen the security of yet other countries which, for a variety of reasons, will also remain on the sidelines of this two or rather three-way enlargement, for example the successor states of former Yugoslavia or Albania

3. Strengthening security for all European countries whether members, non-members or future members of European and Euro-Atlantic politico-military organisations is no easy task. Perseverance, imagination and flexibility are all necessary in order to attain the desired goal. Western European Union has, in your Rapporteur's view, a role to play in this connection and must be willing to accept the challenge

4. The colloquy organised by the WEU Assembly on 11 and 12 March dealt, it was generally felt successfully, with this vast, important and highly topical political issue. The large number of participants, the splendid contributions by the speakers and the high level of debate were yet another demonstration of the extent to which central Europe's future security and that of the whole of our continent arouses widespread interest. The present report attempts to recreate the atmosphere of the colloquy and to draw conclusions, and at the same time to present the objective factors determining the eastward enlargement of western institutions and the implications for the future of peace on our continent and throughout the world.

*II. The ten applicant countries*

*(a) Poland*

5. Poland, the largest and most populous central European country, has been a free market economy for some years now; it is also the fastest growing in the region (+ 7% in 1996). This impression of relative strength is underpinned by active diplomacy directed principally towards the country's incorporation into western politico-military systems, chiefly NATO. Poland's foreign policy also has a strong regional emphasis,

and is characterised by realism and maturity and a care to ensure that Russia and Ukraine do not become marginalised from the new Euro-Atlantic security system

6. Hence in October 1996, its President, Mr Kwasniewski, addressing the Royal Institute of International Affairs, dispelled any notion that nuclear weapons might be deployed on Polish territory and stressed that NATO enlargement should be accompanied by a charter governing the relationship between the Atlantic Alliance and Russia and by a security agreement with Ukraine. In an address to the WEU Assembly some weeks later, the Polish leader reiterated his country's aspirations to join NATO – and Western European Union – at the earliest possible opportunity and also stated that Poland would in any event press for Russia and Ukraine to be part of the new European security system

7. The creation of the joint Polish-Lithuanian and Polish-Ukrainian peacekeeping battalions, the tripartite military cooperation agreement Poland signed with Ukraine and the United Kingdom and the creation of an area of free trade with the Baltic Sea states (agreed in Stockholm in April 1996) are typical examples of the highly active and imaginative regional policy of a country which is a founder and still an active member of the Visegrad Group.

8. Poland's efforts to restructure its armed forces, which have recently have been brought under political control to meet NATO criteria, are undoubtedly being made easier by the distinct improvement in the country's economy. Poland now feels ready to shoulder the financial burden of integration with Euro-Atlantic structures (cf the Polish Euro-Atlantic Association report quoted by Reuters on 29 January). The text of this report was presented by Mr Onyszkiewicz, former Defence Minister of Poland, at the Athens colloquy). The Polish Government moreover hopes to be in a position to proceed with the major structural reforms required if Poland is to gain entry to the European Union – particularly in view of the might of the country's agricultural sector.

9. Poland has been an associate partner of Western European Union since 1994. President Kwasniewski, recently<sup>1</sup> warned NATO against

the danger of making too many concessions to Russia when drawing up a NATO/Russia Charter. If NATO was to undertake not to station nuclear weapons in the territory of the new member countries, it would be vital for the charter to be concluded with Russia to oblige the latter to withdraw its nuclear weapons from the Kaliningrad enclave. President Kwasniewski also stressed that it was very important that Ukraine should lead an independent existence.

### *(b) Hungary*

10. Generally considered to be among the first group of countries to be admitted to NATO and also a candidate for accession to the European Union, Hungary, although long considered by the West as having the edge in the race towards integration with western economic, political and security structures, has shown little sign, since the fall of communism, of the economic growth widely expected of it by the West. The success of the programme for the reform of public finance implemented by the present leftist government and the economic liberalisation that was the legacy of its conservative predecessor nevertheless augur well for a more prosperous future. Moreover, in political terms the country is set on a resolute course of democratic stability.

11. For decades, Hungary's relations with most of its neighbours (Romania, Slovakia, Yugoslavia) have been heavily influenced by the fact that some three million Magyars live outside the country. The present government's policy consists of reconciliation of past differences and cooperation with other central European countries and this potentially destabilising factor therefore seems to have been obviated. The treaty of understanding, cooperation and good neighbourliness signed with Romania (autumn 1996) is of the highest political significance in view of the large Hungarian minority in Romania (over 1.6 million people) but also worthy of attention is the treaty with Slovakia (home to 600 000 Hungarians). These two agreements have made a vital contribution to improving the political climate in central Europe.

12. Hungary made known its wish to join NATO as early as 1994 and in the same year joined the Partnership for Peace programme. A major programme for restructuring the Hungarian army has also been set in train: this

<sup>1</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 April 1997



provides for equipment replacement, assimilation of the new western doctrine and interoperability between Hungarian and NATO forces by the year 2000

13 Hungary made an official application for accession to the European Union in April 1994. It is not keen on the idea put forward by France, and which Germany supports, of the European Union organising a standing conference of all applicant countries as it believes this will delay its accession to the Union

14 Hungary has been an associate partner of Western European Union since 1994.

#### *(c) The Czech Republic*

15. The Czech Republic came into being on 1 January 1993 following the partition of Czechoslovakia. Like Poland and Hungary it belongs to the group of countries generally considered as being in the first wave of entrants to NATO and the European Union. The country's economic success is matched by that of its transition to democracy, a process that occurred rapidly and without major upset. The absence of any differences with its neighbours, in large measure due to its extremely homogenous population and the fact that its borders are virtually unchallenged, rounds off an extremely positive picture; the Czech leadership feels its can thus realistically expect the country to become a member of western political and economic and politico-military institutions without creating serious difficulties for its future allies and partners or major objections being raised from countries that remain outside such institutions. The signature of a reconciliation agreement between Germany and the Czech Republic deploring atrocities committed by the Nazi regime and the massive expulsion of Sudetan Germans at the end of the war serves to illustrate the cordial relations that now exist between the country and its neighbours.

16 With regard to the Czech Republic's endeavours to reorganise its armed forces in order to bring them up to NATO requirements, progress has already been made in achieving interoperability between the Czech army and Atlantic Alliance forces. It is also worth noting that the Czech Republic is one of the few European countries recently to have increased its defence budget. As far as relations with the

European Union are concerned, note should be taken of an agreement signed on 1 January 1995 which provides for a progressive lowering of customs barriers

17 The Czech Republic became an associate partner country of Western European Union in 1994.

#### *(d) Slovakia*

18. Despite encouraging economic indicators for the last three years (growth: 5-7%, falling inflation, stable unemployment rate) and a satisfactory rate of progress towards a market economy, Slovakia, which became independent in early 1993, faces a threat to its plans to become a member of three western politico-security institutions (NATO, EU and WEU) because of the image it gives of a certain degree of political instability, arising mainly from the long-standing political feud between Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar and Slovakian President Michal Kovac. Slovakia's substantial Hungarian minority (568 000 people, according to Slovak sources, living in the south of the country along the borders with Hungary) is a further potential source of instability. Despite the agreement on good-neighbourly relations which Slovakia and Hungary signed in 1995, Hungarians living in Slovakia are particularly aggrieved by the adoption of a law on the country's official language recently passed by Parliament on the grounds that the legislation does not take sufficient account of the languages of ethnic minorities. To complete this overview, reference should also be made to the extremely good relations Slovakia has always maintained with the Russians, which occasionally arouse criticism in the West.

19 However, having once clearly defined its objectives, the Slovak leadership is actively setting about convincing the West that Slovakia should be included in any enlargement of western institutions. At the same time, internal measures have been introduced to bring the country's economy, government and armed forces up to the level of those of western countries. A referendum on the country's joining the Atlantic Alliance is also scheduled for the end of May. This will be the first time an associate partner country has consulted its people directly on the issue. In addition to its views on NATO accession, the Slovak people will also be asked

whether they would agree to having nuclear weapons or foreign troops on their territory

20 In his address to the WEU Assembly on 5 December 1996, the Slovak Prime Minister reiterated his country's determination to pursue its effort to gain entry to NATO and WEU, pointing to the fact that the Slovak army had been reorganised with this in view. He also argued that in the interests of stability in Europe as a whole, NATO should conduct the negotiations on enlargement in parallel with those leading to an agreement with the Russians, so as to prevent the latter from feeling marginalised, which might present a danger to European security.

21 Slovakia signed an association agreement with the European Union in 1993 and applied for membership at the European summit meeting in Cannes in June 1995. The country has been an associate partner in WEU since 1994

#### *(e) Slovenia*

22 Slovenia has had the good fortune, and the good sense, not to become involved in the armed conflict that accompanied the break-up of former Yugoslavia. Its geographical position, relatively homogenous ethnic composition and, to an extent, its history account for its having successfully come through the troubled period of the revival of its nationhood, democratisation of its political system and liberalisation of its economy, without experiencing any significant upheaval or major sacrifice

23. It now has to carve out a new niche for itself within the European security system. The security dimension of Slovenia's foreign policy hinges on the country having a firm anchorage in western politico-military institutions: specifically NATO, the European Union and WEU. Although Slovenia is not normally regarded as belonging to the first wave of chosen entrants, support for its candidacy is gaining ground, especially in view of the fact that, according to Western criteria, it is a democratic country, on good terms with its neighbours – nowadays even with Italy – and well on the way to being a free market economy, with growth at a satisfactory rate (1995 GDP + 4.8%, inflation 12.8%, unemployment 14.5%). Slovenia's application to join the European Union can be viewed in as promising a light as its accession to NATO in view of the country's small size, highly indus-

trialised nature and well-organised tertiary sector and its determination to adjust to European Union standards. Consequently, its chances of acceding to the European Union in the foreseeable future would appear to be fairly high. Chronologically speaking, Slovenia was the last country from central and eastern Europe to become an associate partner of WEU and hopes in due course to become a full member.

#### *(f) The Baltic states*

24. The security concerns of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania arise from their past history and their proximity to a very large country which has on a number of occasions exercised dominion over the whole region. Further factors for potential destabilisation are the size of the three countries, the fact that their borders – which Russia, moreover, has not yet recognised in Estonia and Latvia's case – are hard to defend and the nature of their populations which, in two Baltic states, include very large Russian minorities. The three states are consequently seeking membership of the three western political or politico-military organisations in order to safeguard their independence which, although not directly under threat at the moment, they feel cannot be regarded as secure for all time.

25 Accession to the Atlantic Alliance is clearly the main objective being pursued by the Baltic states under their security policy. It was with that in mind that they subscribed to the Partnership for Peace in 1994. NATO could offer them, among other things, a politico-military guarantee backed by the power of the United States and – something they are reluctant to admit – its nuclear umbrella. However, it seems unlikely they will be admitted to the Atlantic Alliance, at least in the first wave, in view of strong opposition from Russia which is constantly pointing to their geographic position and the fact they were formerly part of the Soviet Union (something the West does not acknowledge). The Russians make this argument an issue of principle, thus lending a tinge of sentiment to the rhetoric they employ against such an eventuality. It is clear, however, that the West cannot remain impassive to Baltic aspirations to greater security, whatever the difficulties of satisfying their claims in this respect. For this reason alternative proposals to direct NATO membership are continually being put forward. Of these,

one rather unusual suggestion is that the United States might guarantee the Baltic states' independence<sup>2</sup>.

26. The three Baltic countries are also looking to join the European Union – with which they signed association agreements in 1995 – as quickly as possible, on both economic and political grounds. Most European observers are of the view that from an economic point of view, the entry of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania could go ahead without major difficulties as they are small countries which do not have vast agricultural sectors, but do have highly educated populations. However it is essential that they rid themselves of the after-effects of their former economic dependence on Russia as quickly as possible, while completing the economic reform programmes they already have well in hand – especially in Estonia and Latvia. Furthermore Russia is not nearly as set against their entry to the European Union as it is to their joining NATO. However, major issues of border definition (particularly the delay in the signature of agreements delimiting Russia's borders with Estonia and Latvia) and the status of the large Russian minorities in Estonia and Latvia still remain; if these continue unresolved until the time those countries accede, they could soon become significant areas of dispute between the European Union and Moscow.

27. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been WEU associate partner countries since 1994 and want to become full members as soon as possible. For reasons similar to those already referred to in respect of the European Union, Russian opposition to this prospect should not prove categoric. By contrast, the WEU member states' policy of admitting as full members only those countries that are members of both the European Union and NATO means that the Baltic states could not join WEU before being admitted to NATO. However, it must be stressed that even if they cannot become full members, upgrading their status in WEU would considerably enhance the feeling of security of these three small countries.

28. As for Poland, the presence in the Kaliningrad enclave of sizeable Russian military forces,

which include nuclear weapons, creates a security problem for Lithuania which is exacerbated by the issue of Russian military transit through its territory.

### (g) Romania

29. A number of negative factors have for some time stood in the way of Romania's application to join western political and security institutions – chiefly NATO. These include the country's mediocre economic performance, the overriding influence on political life of the communist old guard and bilateral difficulties with some of the country's neighbours, particularly over ethnic minority issues.

30. However in recent months, encouraging new developments seem to have wrought considerable changes in this state of affairs. The conclusion of a treaty with Hungary in autumn 1996, the initialling of a treaty with Ukraine on 3 May 1997, the political changes that have taken place internally whose effect, *inter alia*, has been to introduce a programme of accelerated economic reform, the diplomatic efforts deployed by the new leaders in Bucharest and support from western political circles which have traditionally been friendly towards Romania have given new impetus to Romania's candidacy.

31. Hence France followed by the United Kingdom, Italy, Turkey and Greece have all openly supported Romania's inclusion among those chosen to form part of the first wave of NATO accessions. Prominent members of the United States Congress have reportedly<sup>3</sup> come out in favour of NATO taking such a decision. Moreover Romania says it is willing to bear the financial burden of its incorporation in the Atlantic Alliance, its reasoning being that its security costs would be far higher were it to remain outside<sup>4</sup>.

32. While it is true that Romania's improved chances of joining Euro-Atlantic structures is a relatively recent development, the country nevertheless registered an interest in joining right

<sup>2</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 February 1997.

<sup>3</sup> WEU Institute for Security Studies seminar on sub-regional stability in central Europe in view of EU and NATO enlargement, 13-14 February 1997.

<sup>4</sup> President Constantinescu addressing the NATO Permanent Council on 4 February 1997.

at the start of the post-communist era. Thus Romania has been a member of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council since 1991 and was the first of the former Warsaw Pact members to join NATO's Partnership for Peace initiative (in January 1994). Moreover in June 1995, it filed its application to join the European Union, having signed an Association Agreement with that organisation in February 1993. Romania is also an associate partner of Western European Union.

#### *(h) Bulgaria*

33. Of all the applicant countries striving to accede to the West's political and military structures, Bulgaria is no doubt the least likely to be admitted in the first wave of enlargement. While the main reason for this assumption is that economic reform in Bulgaria lags way behind that in other countries, another factor is the strong current of political tension in the country with the government apparently unable, for the time being, to gain control of the economy. In addition, although it is true that accession to NATO is one of Bulgaria's foreign policy objectives, it is not as high on the list of priorities as membership of the European Union, probably because of Bulgaria's traditional ties with Russia, recently renewed through cooperation agreements signed in 1993 and 1995.

34. As things stand, Bulgaria's progress to date can be described as mixed. The state of its economy and its political climate belong rather on the minus side of the equation but the country has a more positive record when it comes to its relations with its neighbours (Greece, Turkey, FYROM, Serbia and Romania) which are currently good and the political climate has been improving steadily since the fall of communism. In the particular case of Turkey, it should be noted that the dispute between the two countries over the Bulgarian authorities' attitude towards the large Turkish and Pomak minority living in the east of the country came to an end following lifting of the restrictive measures imposed in the latter years of the Livkov regime. It is also worth pointing to the special nature of relations with FYROM which Bulgaria has recognised even though it continues to deny the existence of a Macedonian nation and language, considering the latter a dialect of Bulgarian.

35. The following can be mentioned among the reforms designed gradually to restructure the country along Western lines: depoliticising the armed forces and the adoption of a programme to modernise them, reorganising them into smaller, more mobile units and the withdrawal of a large number of military units from the country's Greek and Turkish borders.

36. Bulgaria joined the Partnership for Peace and the North Atlantic Council in 1991 and officially announced that it was seeking membership of the European Union in December 1995 and of NATO in February 1997. It became a WEU associate partner in 1994.

37. It remains to be seen to what extent the convincing defeat of the ex-communist party in the recent elections in Bulgaria and the formation of a new government with a more Western-oriented outlook will speed up the necessary reforms and alter the traditionally close ties Bulgaria has until now had with Russia.

### *III. An important external factor*

#### *(a) Russia*

38. The Russian Federation is undeniably of major importance to Europe's stability and equilibrium. Its surface area, the size of its population and its huge military and economic potential, not to mention its history, are factors with a decisive influence on the security balance in Europe. The plan to enlarge NATO could even be regarded as stemming directly from the historic developments that have taken place in this huge country – the erstwhile core of the Soviet Union – and the prospect of its making a dramatic return to the international stage in the not too distant future.

39. No realistic analysis of the current security situation in central and eastern Europe or serious attempt at outlining the various scenarios of a balance of forces in Europe would therefore be complete if it failed to take account of Russia's geostrategic influence or its leaders' attitude to the new realities that are taking shape. Admittedly Russia is currently unable to prevent a group of former allies of the Soviet Union – to which it considers itself in large measure the successor – from joining the Atlantic Alliance, long regarded as its direst foe. This can be explained by the country's loss of strategic influence, eco-

conomic difficulties, internal politics disrupted by factors of instability born of nationality issues and the ambiguity surrounding some of the mechanics of a recently-established democracy, combined, needless to say, with the crisis potentially looming in the uppermost ranks of its leadership. However, there are few observers who do not subscribe to the view that although this interim period may perhaps continue for some years to come, a different reality will come to prevail in the medium term. It is therefore in the interest of everyone – Europe, the West and the world at large – not to attempt to ignore the fact that Russia is a major factor for regional balance and, still more important, not to seek to humiliate it, which could lead to a hardening of the political situation and possibly the seizure of power by forces that regard the West and NATO as traditional enemies and might respond by forming new alliances hostile to NATO, through the creation of new spheres of influence and by increasing the country's military potential in both nuclear and conventional weapons.

40 Political wisdom and long-term political interests therefore dictate that the West should handle Russian susceptibilities and fears carefully, but without losing sight of the fact that no-one has any right to prevent those countries that so wish from applying to join the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions and that no factor external to NATO, the European Union or WEU can be allowed to influence their decision to go ahead and enlarge. Nonetheless, a decision has still to be taken on how to convince Russia that enlargement, especially NATO enlargement, is not directed against it, and a new European security system must be defined in which Russia can be accommodated and work in cooperation with an enlarged NATO. In a global security system of this nature it will be of paramount importance not to give the impression that the cold war "loser" is being isolated. This could mainly be achieved if in the first instance an agreement were concluded between NATO and Russia making provision for close consultation on major decisions concerning European security. This framework agreement might be supplemented by further measures such as programmes for increased economic cooperation, the amendment of certain existing disarmament agreements (such as the CFE Treaty) to take account of changes that have taken place in the

balance of forces, a formal undertaking by NATO not to station nuclear weapons or foreign troops on the territories of the new allies and, lastly, for NATO enlargement not to extend to the territories of the former Soviet Union (with the Baltic states being a special case). A new institutional and political framework of this type would make the Russian Federation feel that, far from being excluded from the new system, it was rather an integral part of it. As well as improving the climate of relations both inside the Federation and internationally, such a framework would make it far more difficult for extremist or nationalist elements to accede to power and would thus preclude a development the West wishes and is able to avoid. A policy of this type has its merits even though the spectre of Mr Vladimir Zhirinovskiy coming to power – invoked by Mr Chernomyrdin recently on his return from Davos<sup>5</sup> – would not appear to be as imminent as some would have us believe.

#### *(b) Ukraine*

41. Having achieved independent statehood in 1991 after centuries of union with Russia, Ukraine initially appeared to vacillate between closer cooperation with the West and the pro-communist tendencies that seemingly held sway in particular in the eastern part of the country. The balance now appears to have swung the other way and pro-Western sympathies seem to have been in the ascendant for some time. Ukraine's ties with Russia are characterised by economic dependency (all Ukraine's energy is supplied by its neighbour to whom it is indebted to the tune of 4.2 billion dollars), and by the presence of major bilateral problems (the partition of the Black Sea Fleet or the fact of Crimea now being a Ukrainian possession) which, despite agreements that have been signed, and implemented – albeit imperfectly – continue to bear down heavily upon their relationship.

42. Now that it has signed a cooperation agreement with the European Union, which not all Union member states have ratified as yet, Ukraine, although not seeking full integration into Western structures, seems to be looking to closer cooperation with the West. It therefore applied for WEU associate partnership status (in

<sup>5</sup> *The International Herald Tribune*, 8-9 February 1997.

summer 1996) and envisages concluding a cooperation agreement with NATO, although it regards NATO accession as more of a long-term strategic objective. Ukraine's Defence Minister has said publicly that his country does not oppose immediate NATO enlargement towards Ukraine's borders, provided no nuclear weapons are stationed on new members' territories<sup>6</sup>. It is worth noting besides that, according to the Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister, Ukraine would prefer its links with the West to be through WEU rather than NATO. Should this indeed prove to be the case, it would be up to WEU to take the initiative in developing such relations. However, at a meeting in Brussels with the NATO Secretary-General in March, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister confirmed that his country's strategic objective for the longer term was membership of a transformed NATO.

#### *(c) Belarus*

43. Belarus is, to all intents and purposes, the European country of the CIS which is closest to Russia, and even to the former Soviet Union – an observation based on criteria of a linguistic (Russian has been reinstated as one of the country's official languages), economic (economic integration with the Russian Federation was approved in a referendum held in May 1995) and political (the Head of State has very extensive powers and wide influence over parliamentary elections – Parliament, which has limited powers, was dissolved because it disagreed with the President's plans for the country's future), not to mention symbolic nature (the old soviet emblems were reintroduced in 1995). On 2 April 1996, Russia and Belarus concluded an agreement – ratified in the meantime by both countries – providing for the creation of a Union of sovereign republics and in January 1997 the Russian President put a proposal to President Lukashenko for reunification of the two countries, provided Belarus approved this step in a referendum.

44. Relations with the West are naturally affected by the ever-increasing influence of its Russian neighbour. Belarus has demanded the creation of a denuclearised zone in central and eastern Europe, a proposal the NATO Secretary-General has rejected, while making clear none-

theless that NATO has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons on new members' territories<sup>7</sup>.

45. In April 1996, Belarus concluded various agreements with the European Union. However, because the country has fallen way behind with the reform of its economy, whose performance can hardly be deemed satisfactory (ten years of negative growth), and because of its dependence on Russia, there has been little Western investment there.

### *IV. Enlargement of western politico-military institutions*

#### *(a) NATO*

46. The now evident intention of the Atlantic Alliance to proceed with NATO enlargement in the near future coincides with applications from several former Warsaw Pact countries to be incorporated, if possible immediately, in Euro-Atlantic structures. The aim of these former Soviet Union allies is both to strengthen their own security and – their main intention in some cases – to identify themselves ever more closely with the West and reaffirm their ties with it and to disengage themselves from Russia's sphere of influence. Hence, paradoxically, some future partners whose security does not appear to be under threat in the short or medium term, are saying they are ready to make a concerted effort and the sacrifices that are necessary in order to secure Atlantic Alliance membership. It is worth mentioning at this juncture that according to American estimates, the cost of Atlantic Alliance enlargement, if only three countries join, would be some 38 billion dollars, 15% of which would be provided by the new members. Herein, to an extent, lies also the key to another paradox, namely the fact that the West is saying, unofficially but clearly, that it is prepared, at least in the initial stages, to accept precisely those applicants that have least reason to feel threatened. In central and south eastern Europe, NATO now seems more like a politico-security organisation of stable democratic countries than an alliance in the traditional sense.

47. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, which, as democratically governed, politically

<sup>6</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 17 January 1997

<sup>7</sup> *Agence France Presse*, 30 January 1997

stable market economies not involved in border disputes, are generally reckoned to be the first that will be invited to join the Alliance, are not alone in asking to be assimilated into the politico-security systems of the West. Applicants that feel they may come under pressure, such as the three Baltic countries, or whose economies are not fully liberalised, such as Bulgaria, Romania and up to a certain point, Slovenia, are also hoping to be accepted. However it is most unlikely that NATO will be able to assimilate all of these countries in one go – especially if it flies in the face of the wishes and security needs of other states like Russia and Ukraine – without disrupting the security balance in Europe and consequently endangering prospects for fruitful cooperation and mutual confidence in tomorrow's Europe.

48. The new American Secretary of State, Mrs Albright, in a series of statements released to the press before she embarked on a tour of the major European capitals (end February 1997), reaffirmed the United States' determination to expand NATO, defined the principal stages in the decision-making process and outlined the course of future relationships with countries that would not be admitted<sup>8</sup>. She stated in this connection that the list of new NATO members would be drawn up at the NATO summit meeting to be held in Madrid in July, that accession negotiations for those countries should be concluded in time for the December meeting of the Atlantic Council and that ratification of the treaty of accession by parliaments must be completed in time for the countries chosen to join NATO in 1999, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Washington Treaty. Addressing an extraordinary meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Mrs Albright made clear that the United States envisaged the creation of a NATO-Russia Council within the framework of the agreement the Alliance was to conclude with the Russians, its purpose being to promote regular dialogue on the main security issues, to take collective decisions wherever possible and to carry out joint actions. The presence of Russian planners within the Alliance's main military commands would also be advocated. To complete the new cooperation arrangements, a NATO-Russia brigade

would be created. Further proposals from the Sixteen on updating the CFE Treaty in line with Russia's wishes (large reductions in NATO forces, abandoning the concept of blocs and spheres of influence, setting limits on the quantity of weapons held by each individual country) would also contribute to a general improvement in the climate. America's determination to conclude a NATO-Ukraine security agreement before the Madrid summit was reaffirmed at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, held in Brussels on 18 February.

49. As there is no question of all the applicant countries joining NATO together, negotiations with those not admitted in the first wave will continue. Moreover, the creation of a new Atlantic Partnership Council – also envisaged for Madrid – as the joint agency of a merged Partnership for Peace and North Atlantic Cooperation Council would ensure that all countries that so wished had a presence in a Euro-Atlantic forum enabling them to enter into dialogue with the Alliance<sup>9</sup>.

50. The initial Russian reaction to this plan for the future security of Europe has been fairly encouraging, the more so as Mrs Albright has been careful to stress that the Atlantic Alliance has no intention of deploying nuclear arms on the territories of the new members. President Yeltsin, having reaffirmed Russia's opposition in principle to the plan for enlargement, said he was optimistic about the chances of reaching agreement at a meeting with his American counterpart due to take place in Helsinki on 20 and 21 March. The outcome of the talks seems to justify at least a degree of cautious optimism. Despite persistent differences of opinion over the prospect of NATO enlargement, a series of agreements on important issues has emerged. Thus a broad outline exists for a charter governing relations between NATO and Russia, agreement has been reached on renegotiating the CFE Treaty, the principle of a future SALT III agreement has been accepted as well as Russia's increased involvement in G7 meetings and the need for economic aid to Russia has been recognised.

51. It remains to be seen whether the security system envisaged above will be acceptable to

<sup>8</sup> *The Economist*, 15 February, *Le Monde*, 16 February 1997

<sup>9</sup> *Atlantic News*, 20 February 1997

countries that will very likely not form part of the first or even the second wave of enlargement – which would appear to be the case of the Baltic states – but which nevertheless appear to feel they need a security umbrella. Imaginative solutions must be found as required in order to avoid grey areas and security vacuums arising between NATO and its major partners to the east, such as Russia and Ukraine. It is therefore legitimate to raise the question of how far WEU might be able to play a stabilising role in this connection – one complementary, no doubt, to the new Atlantic Partnership Council, but no less essential.

52. In this context it is also worth studying an interesting proposal put forward by Guillaume Parmentier in an article entitled “Other ways of enlarging NATO”<sup>10</sup> in which he advocates that, at Madrid, NATO should take a decision to embark on negotiations with *all* the candidates for accession in pursuance of Article 10 of the Washington Treaty. The pace of these negotiations with each individual country would be determined by political, geographic, military, financial and other considerations. According to this proposal, new members would join the Alliance on a case-by-case basis as a result of a process whose effect would be to ensure that each accession implied that countries still in the queue would have a further chance of joining and not that they were being relegated to an inferior category of states.

#### (b) *The European Union*

53. The ten central European countries wishing to join NATO are at the same time applicants for accession to the European Union. Their desire to belong to a united Europe and their reasons for applying to join – are understandable in terms of their history, culture, democratic institutions and the fact that, geographically speaking, they form part of the same continent as the longer-standing Union members. Moreover, they feel that their entry to Europe will allow them in the longer term to modernise their economies, notwithstanding the sacrifices that will initially prove necessary, and that membership will not only help them consolidate their fledgling democ-

racies but will also have the effect of improving their security position.

54. It is worth pointing out that although it is generally accepted that a united Europe will, in the longer term, have a significant common foreign and security policy dimension, the principle of which is laid down in the Maastricht Treaty, the size and shape of that part of Europe's structure are for the present undefined. The intergovernmental conference has the responsibility of deciding, *inter alia*, what will be the future of the European Union in security terms. Various scenarios might be envisaged: among them the transformation of the Union into an alliance seems perhaps the least likely in the short or even the medium term, in view of the fact that there are several neutral countries among its membership and given the links between NATO and WEU and American rejection of the perception of the United States as automatically, if indirectly, linked to the defence of European countries which are not members of the Atlantic Alliance. Nevertheless, it is still widely considered that the European Union, both as a result of the express wishes of its member states and through force of circumstances, will – gradually perhaps, but resolutely – develop its security and defence dimension by drawing perceptibly closer to Western European Union, although the goal of a merger of the two institutions still seems a long way ahead.

55. While the summit meeting NATO is to hold in July 1997 represents the chief milestone in the decision-making process as regards the new members of the Atlantic Alliance and the form and content of the latter's relationships with other would-be members and major partners to the east such as Russia and Ukraine, in the case of the European Union the fundamental decisions in relation to Union enlargement will naturally be taken by the intergovernmental conference. Nevertheless it seems to be accepted generally that negotiations between the EU and the new applicant countries will begin six months after the close of the IGC and that they will be “judged” on a case-by-case basis, that is to say, on the basis of an objective assessment of each of their positions. Moreover, from the experience of earlier enlargements it would appear that the first accessions will not take place until after the year 2000. Thus the Polish Minister for Foreign

<sup>10</sup> See “*Elargir l'OTAN autrement*” in *Le Monde*, 22 March 1997.



Affairs acknowledged, in response to observations from western diplomats and from the commissioner responsible for enlargement to the effect that the year 2000 was an unrealistic deadline – even for the first round of accessions – that he would prefer his country to join in 2001 under more favourable terms than in 2000 under terms that were less so<sup>11</sup>

56. Enlargement of the two organisations will therefore proceed at a different pace, notwithstanding the hoped-for parallelism between the two processes, and the fact that the three most favoured candidates (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic) seem to be the same in both cases. In particular, the start of the NATO and European Union negotiations will be out of step, as will their duration and possibly also the final outcome, in other words, new members' respective entries into the institutions. In other words, the possibility now looms of another timetable slip-page, perhaps a more serious one, namely that for the countries, other than the three favourites, invited to join both these major institutions. The new American Secretary of State has already announced that she is in favour of the European Union accepting applications from the three Baltic states, to offset in part the fact that they will not be joining NATO<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, the presence among the ten applicants of a number of countries whose size, structure and state of economic advancement should facilitate their entry into community institutions but which are nevertheless not regarded as prime candidates for NATO entry (Slovakia, Slovenia) raises the possibility of such countries being accepted in principle by the European Union alone or, at any rate of their applications being likely to be accepted far earlier than their application to join NATO. The reverse is true of countries such as Romania, whose application to join NATO has latterly been gathering strength owing to political and strategic considerations, while the country's possible entry to the European Union seems, at least for the time being, to have become substantially more complicated owing to criteria relating to the effectiveness and structure of its economy.

57. To redress the balance in such cases, France recently<sup>13</sup> made a suggestion, that won a large measure of approval from the 15 EU governments, for the creation of a "European standing conference" bringing all the applicant countries around the table, irrespective of the status of their accession negotiations.

### (c) WEU

58. The enlargement of both NATO and the European Union will not only radically alter the security situation in Europe by boosting the new members' confidence and opening up new economic prospects for them but will also necessarily lead to a third enlargement – that of WEU.

59. Western European Union, itself in the process of major reorganisation, and endeavouring, especially since the NATO Council meeting in Berlin, to play a pivotal role between the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union, will thus have a further challenge to face – that of admitting and assimilating new member states, and at the same time developing new dimensions to its relationships with other European countries that do not wish to become WEU members, such as Russia and Ukraine, and with those countries which, despite their keenness to become members of the only existing European security organisation, will not be invited to do so.

60. The countries applying to WEU and the European Union are, of course, WEU associate partners involved in the working of its institutions at various levels, all of whom want to become full members of the Organisation. Furthermore, although a degree of confusion still reigns over Russian policy, it is clear that the prospect of WEU enlargement is viewed by Russia with far less suspicion than that of NATO. Consequently, in WEU's case, the process of the acceptance and assimilation of new members should not run up against either the same political obstacles as enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance or the complex economic and institutional difficulties inevitably associated with European Union enlargement. However, WEU will be obliged, by force of circumstances, to find answers to a set of problems of an entirely different order. A number of issues arise: which countries will be involved in this third enlarge-

<sup>11</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 23 January 1997.

<sup>12</sup> *Le Monde*, 16 February 1997.

<sup>13</sup> *Le Figaro*, 18 March 1997

ment? What criteria will apply? What will be the relationship with those WEU associate partners asking to become full members but which will not be invited to do so (namely, the Baltic states or Bulgaria)? What can be done, realistically, to help improve their security situation, while remaining within the framework of the treaties? All these questions are obvious. In-depth analysis of the present position, an imaginative approach to future developments and major political decisions will all be necessary in order to answer them. Your Rapporteur lays no claim to magic solutions – there are none. However there is no denying that the existing options and various scenarios are fairly clear

61. Under one possible scenario, Western European Union would continue to apply strictly the principle of requiring its members to belong to both the European Union and to NATO. Such an option, if not accompanied by measures to strengthen the security of countries not invited to join, could marginalise a group of European states prepared to make an active contribution to building a common European defence (Romania, for example, or Bulgaria) or that feel, rightly or wrongly, most in need of one (such as the Baltic states)

62. Furthermore, a scenario that envisages accession to Western European Union by countries that are not NATO members, which is fairly unrealistic for reasons external and internal to WEU – for example its rejection in the first instance by the Americans who would interpret it as an indirect commitment by virtue of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, or, in the second, the agreement of all the member states to guarantee the security of certain European countries without American aid – commands little support.

63 Thirdly, the possibility of granting full membership to new NATO allies, that, for various reasons, do not accede to the European Union does not seem realistic. Indeed, some members would regard such a decision as being incompatible with the spirit of Maastricht. Furthermore, such a solution could not be entertained politically for as long as Turkey, an ally of NATO of very long standing and an associate member of Western European Union, is not invited to join.

64 The above brief analysis consequently leads to the conclusion that one cannot stray too

far from the political objective of obtaining the closest possible overlap between NATO, European Union and WEU membership. However, it seems highly likely that new factors arising in central Europe such as the difference in the timescales for the accession of new members to NATO and the European Union and the probable non-accession to the Atlantic Alliance of countries that feel themselves to be potentially under threat, can no longer be contained in the traditional view of events to which we have long grown accustomed.

65 The above political objective should in your Rapporteur's view be the subject of a flexible approach that allows Western European Union room for imagination when taking political initiatives and enables it to adopt substantive military cooperation measures (cooperation over training and armaments production, organising joint missions or harmonising defence doctrines, for example) thereby improving the security situation in central Europe while strengthening its presence and raising its political profile in the region – something also likely to prove necessary outside the sphere of Atlantic Alliance action. WEU's European role, the development of our continent's institutions, eastern European resolve, the present balance of forces and its political acceptability to non-partner countries all contribute to making this possible. Here is a challenge that WEU must meet imaginatively, with flexibility and realism.

66 Reference should be made at this point to the important contribution to the colloquy made by Ambassador Cahen, former WEU Secretary-General and author of the doctrine bearing his name, which holds that for a country to become a member of WEU it should first be a member of both the EU and NATO. The new situation that was emerging in eastern Europe prompted him to make the following comments:

“To become a member of WEU it was and, I believe, still is necessary to be a member of the European Union and also be a serious applicant able to meet the requirements for membership; it was also necessary to belong to NATO.

That means that any state which becomes a member of NATO and the European Union or is a serious applicant, meeting

the conditions for accession to the European Union, is entitled to become a full member of WEU. I believe that many of the current states applying for membership of the European Union and NATO meet those conditions.

Many questions then arise in this context: for instance, do you have instantly to be a member of the Alliance to become a member of the European Union or is it sufficient, if you are applying for NATO membership, to be a member of a reinforced Partnership for Peace? I would be inclined to think that any applicant who belongs to a reinforced Partnership for Peace and is a member of the European Union is also entitled to full membership of our Organisation."

67. Ambassador Cahen was also in favour of strengthening ties between WEU and countries which do not fulfil all the criteria and which at present have observer, associate member or associate partner status

## *V. Additional security factors*

### *(a) Regional cooperation*

68. The eastward enlargement of the western security organisations – NATO and WEU – in the coming years, will create a twofold division within the region in terms of countries' security status. A first dividing line already exists between states wanting to join NATO and WEU and states that have not asked for full integration with those organisations – Albania, Belarus, Bosnia, Croatia, FYROM, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. After the first wave of assimilation of some of the applicants into NATO in 1999, a second dividing line threatens to open up between those central and eastern European states that have joined NATO and those that have not.

69. Regional cooperation measures, by providing the central and eastern European states with yet another security instrument, can help palliate the fact that they lack an Alliance guarantee. Initiatives already taken by Poland and the Scandinavian countries are a good example of this

70. Poland, which can fairly be regarded as being on the verge of NATO membership, is pursuing an active policy with a view to making

Lithuania, Ukraine and, to a lesser extent, Russia part of the European security area – as illustrated by the creation of joint Polish-Lithuanian and Polish-Ukrainian peacekeeping battalions, the setting-up of a free trade area with the Baltic states in April 1996, and the signature of a major trade agreement with Russia in September 1996.

71. Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden for their part have an equally committed policy approach to the assimilation of the Baltic states and Poland into Europe. They were the prime movers in the creation of the Baltic peacekeeping battalion (BALTBAT) – a multinational unit which brings together Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian forces and is supported by the West. Since 1992, Denmark, Finland and Sweden have been cooperating actively with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia within the Council of Baltic Sea States. Several bilateral agreements – mainly concerning joint military exercises, Baltic troops' participation in peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and information exchange – have either been signed or are in the process of being signed. The important role played by the Baltic Assembly to promote cooperation and regional stability should also be mentioned in this connection.

### *(b) The OSCE and the role of the neutral countries*

72. Even if the triple enlargement of the major western politico-military organisations, together with cooperation agreements with Russia and Ukraine, meant simultaneous accession by all applicant countries to NATO, the EU and WEU (which hardly seems likely), the new security system thus formed in Europe would obviously still leave a number of countries on the sidelines namely, those generally regarded as potentially unstable because of their domestic situation (like Albania or Belarus) and those whose security, specifically because of their geopolitical position, is harder to guarantee (Albania again or the successor states to former Yugoslavia). In this sense, the new partnership arrangements envisaged by the Americans as partial compensation for states not invited to join NATO represent a step in the right direction, but are not enough to reassure the countries concerned.

73. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which brings together virtually

all European countries and those in the Asian part of the former Soviet Union, is a tried and tested forum of consultation. It has, *inter alia*, a conflict-prevention mechanism and a procedure for achieving conflict settlement and seems to have both the prestige and experience necessary to play an important part in Europe in the foreseeable future. Support for such an assertion is to be found in Mr Gonzalez's recent spectacularly successful mission to Serbia and Mr Vranitzki's likewise most important visit to Albania. It would be logical therefore to expect the OSCE to play a major role in the new era Europe is about to enter.

74 Finally, the new security map of Europe would be incomplete if the stabilising role the neutral countries can play in the context of the new balance that is currently emerging were to be discounted. With a tradition of several decades behind them and now on good neighbourly, even friendly, terms with countries once regarded as enemies, armed with considerable diplomatic experience and boasting public figures of international renown, the non-aligned countries of Europe seemed destined to play an active part. This is precisely how the Foreign Ministers of Finland and Sweden in an article published in early spring<sup>14</sup> entitled *Working for European security outside the NATO structure* described the role they envisaged for the neutral countries of Europe. They threw in a further weighty consideration – regional cooperation – going so far as to identify the Baltic Sea region as an area of critical importance for Europe's stability.

## VI. Conclusions

75 Predicting the future is invariably a risky business. Nevertheless, at the time of writing, the broad outlines of an agreement between NATO and Russia are emerging, while the wave of liberal reforms seems to have well and truly won over the applicant countries to the politico-military institutions of the West. The same liberal outlook seems at last to have gained a hold in the Russian Federation. It might therefore be logical to deduce from this that enlargement of NATO, the European Union and WEU stands a good chance of being achieved without causing major upheavals in international relations. Yet such enlargements, envisaged in stages, and supple-


mented by NATO agreements with Russia and the Ukraine, together with the creation of a stronger partnership with NATO conceived by the Americans as a trade-off to countries left out when the three major institutions expand, cannot provide the whole of Europe with security guarantees.

76 The OSCE, the non-aligned countries and regional cooperation entered into at the initiative of states with the necessary political will or commitment to the task, will play an essential part in creating and maintaining a climate of confidence, cooperation and stability in tomorrow's Europe. Western European Union, for its part, faces a number of challenges: restructuring and developing its operational capabilities; defining its pivotal role between NATO and the European Union, the need to open its door to other member countries and adjust to different forms of cooperation with its new partners to the east. There is an overwhelming requirement for flexibility and an imaginative approach to these new realities. In this respect the burden of responsibility placed upon WEU is a heavy one but the chances of success are real if we are prepared to make the necessary effort. Your Rapporteur feels that one must not lose sight of the fact that WEU is made up of countries whose ties with Europe are not just a matter of political will but of history, culture and geography, factors which, by definition they could not change, even if they were minded so to do.

77 It was upon this constructive, not to say optimistic, note that the Assembly's colloquy in Athens drew to a close. Several important aspects of the discussion: the need for the West not to mislead its eastern neighbours and to be mindful of the dignity and the legitimate concerns of the Russian people and the prospects of WEU strengthening cooperation with those of the present associate partners that are not to become full members, have also been included in the present report. It goes without saying that the Assembly, which is privileged to welcome in its midst eminent representatives from central and eastern European countries and to benefit from their active involvement in its work, should continue to monitor closely developments in relation to the vast area for discussion the enlargement of European institutions represents, on which the future of Europe and world peace will largely depend.

<sup>14</sup> *The Herald Tribune*, 16 March 1997.

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