



Assembly of Western European Union

**European security and defence:
the parliamentary dimension**

Special Session of the Assembly
and the Standing Committee

Lisbon, 21 March 2000

*Chairmen of Foreign Affairs, European Union Affairs
and Defence Committees of WEU's 28 national
parliaments and members of the European Parliament,
the Russian Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary
Assembly also took part in this Special Session*

Office of the Clerk to the Assembly

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RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Office of the Clerk to the Assembly

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AGENDA

Tuesday, 21 March 2000

First sitting

Morning

09.00

1. Adoption of the draft agenda [A/WEU/SC (2000) OJ 1].
2. Ratification of credentials and nominations to committees [A/WEU/SC (2000) 1 and 2].
3. Address by Mr MEDEIROS FERREIRA, Leader of the Portuguese Delegation to the WEU Assembly.
4. Address by Mr BÜHLER, President of the WEU Assembly.
5. Address by Mr de ALMEIDA SANTOS, Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament.
6. European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension:
presentation of the report tabled by Mr BEHRENDT, Rapporteur, on behalf of the Political Committee (Document 1684).
7. Address by Mr De DECKER, President of the Belgian Senate.
8. Address by Mr WEGENER, Ambassador, Deputy Secretary-General of WEU, representing Mr SOLANA, Secretary-General of WEU and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Council of the European Union.
9. European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension:
Debate.
- 11.45** 10. Address by Mr CASTRO CALDAS, Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council, representing Mr OLIVEIRA GUTERRES, Prime Minister of Portugal and President of the European Council.
Questions and answers.

Second sitting

Afternoon

14.30

11. European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension:
resumed debate.
Vote on the draft recommendation
Vote on the draft decision
Vote on the draft order

ATTENDANCE LIST

Speakers

- MM António de ALMEIDA SANTOS (Portugal), Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament
José MEDEIROS FERREIRA (Portugal), Leader of the Portuguese Delegation and Vice-President of the Assembly
Armand DE DECKER (Belgium), President of the Senat
Roland WEGENER (Germany), Ambassador, WEU Deputy Secretary-General, representing Mr Javier SOLANA, Secretary-General of WEU and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Council of the European Union
Julio CASTRO CALDAS (Portugal), Minister for Defence, representing Mr Antonio Manuel OLIVEIRA GUTERRES, Prime Minister of the Republic of Portugal and President of the European Council

Members of the Standing Committee

- MM * Klaus BÜHLER (Germany), President of the Assembly
* Lluís Maria de PUIG (Spain), former President of the Assembly
Jan Erik ÅGREN (Sweden), representing Mr Anders BJÖRCK
* Wolfgang BEHRENDT (Germany)
* Jan Dirk BLAAUW (Netherlands)
* Jean-Marie BOCKEL (France)
* Emile CALMES (Luxembourg)
* Terry DAVIS (United Kingdom)
Mrs * Josette DURRIEU (France)
MM * Huib EVERSDIJK (Netherlands)
* Marcel GLESENER (Luxembourg)
* Fernando GONZÁLEZ LAXE (Spain)
* Ignasi GUARDANS I CAMBÓ (Spain)
Fridtjof GUNDERSEN (Norway)
Uluç GÜRKAN (Turkey)
* Jean-Pol HENRY (Belgium)
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MM * Gabino PUCHE RODRÍGUEZ (Spain)
Dick ROCHE (Ireland)
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* Dieter SCHLOTEN (Germany)
* John TOWNEND (United Kingdom)
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I

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

FIRST SITTING

Tuesday, 21 March 2000

(The sitting was opened at 09.10 with Mr Bühler, President of the Assembly, in the Chair)

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Examination of credentials and nominations to committees

The PRESIDENT noted that there were no objections to the ratification of credentials and nominations to committees.

The credentials and nominations to committees were ratified.

3. Tribute to former members of the Assembly

The PRESIDENT announced with deep regret that Mr Michael Colvin and his wife had recently died under tragic circumstances. With the death of the Chairman of the Federated Group the Assembly had lost one of its most highly esteemed and assiduous members and the news of his death had occasioned great sorrow.

In Lisbon, only the evening before, the sudden death had also occurred of Mr Michael Ferris, the Irish parliamentarian. Mr Ferris had been a member of the Assembly since Ireland had joined WEU as an observer. The President expressed his sincere condolences to Mr Ferris's wife and family and called on Mr Dick Roche, Leader of the Irish Delegation, to say a few words.

Mr ROCHE (*Ireland, observer*) attested to the strength of Mr Ferris's (member for Tipperary) conviction that no problems were insuperable if there was goodwill, sound political management and a willingness to listen to other people's views. Without doubt the world would be a less troubled place if there were more people in it like Michael Ferris. Mr Ferris had valued the Assembly's work highly and enjoyed the comradeship of the Socialist Group. Heartbroken to have lost a colleague who commanded such universal respect, Mr Roche nevertheless took comfort in the fact that Mr Ferris had died in the arms of his wife and thanked the President for having given him the opportunity to pay this last homage to his friend.

The PRESIDENT invited members to rise and observe a minute's silence in memory of their deceased colleagues.

(Members rose to observe one minute's silence)

4. Address by Mr Medeiros Ferreira, Leader of the Portuguese Delegation to the WEU Assembly

Mr MEDEIROS FERREIRA (*Leader of the Portuguese Delegation*) warmly welcomed all his colleagues and hoped they would have a successful meeting. The subject to be dealt with in Lisbon – democratic scrutiny of the Common European Security and Defence Policy was of major significance – and participants in the special session would draw on the report submitted by Mr Behrendt on behalf of the Political Committee.

The topic was therefore clearly of great importance but raised difficult issues nonetheless. Solving them would be a test of WEU and the European Union's democratic foundations. Portugal currently held the Presidency of the two organisations and the Portuguese Government had included among the priorities for its programme of work every aspect of relevance to a rational security and defence policy compatible with commitments undertaken in the Atlantic Alliance.

After the adoption of the Treaty of Amsterdam the Finnish and German Presidencies had laid down guidelines for the new common security and defence policy and already some of the interim bodies had come into being, such as the new Political and Security Committee which would work in coordination with the Military Committee. It was to be hoped that the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit would be set up without delay as this would be of considerable help to the High Representative for the CFSP, Mr Solana, who was also, as everyone knew, the Secretary-General of WEU. This would all mean a great deal of work and the Portuguese Presidency would endeavour to follow the plan drawn up by the Finnish Presidency to that end.

Particular attention needed to be paid to the fact it might be necessary to amend the Treaty on European Union, which could only be done in the framework of the Intergovernmental Conference. It was envisaged that future security and defence responsibilities would be drawn up at ministerial level.

Two bodies had therefore been established to support the Council and the CFSP High Representative/WEU Secretary-General. However, nothing had been said under the Finnish Presidency about parliamentary scrutiny of the Common European Security and Defence Policy.

This was precisely where WEU came in, to fill the gap which the speaker had himself identified before his Parliament on 5 January. To move, in terms of military and defence matters, to a concept of unity was an extremely sensitive operation which required important organisational decisions. As far as democratic scrutiny of the CESDP was concerned, it was clear that the European Parliament alone could not take on the task. In this area one had to be no less exacting when it came to the rights of states and national parliaments than in matters of international law and this was one of the main concerns of the Leader of the Portuguese Delegation. The speaker felt that WEU had to take on that parliamentary dimension and that in any event it could not be replaced willy nilly before provision had been made for some form of parliamentary monitoring of the CESDP in the European Union. A mere protocol would certainly not suffice as a legal guarantee of such scrutiny and in order to make good organisational weaknesses it would no doubt be legally advisable for the issue to be dealt with in the Intergovernmental Conference, so as to avoid any encroachment on the prerogatives of the national parliaments. In other words a formula had to be found involving joint scrutiny on the part of member states on a voluntary basis. This was a task that might fall to COSAC, had it real powers, or to the delegations of national parliaments along the lines of the present WEU Assembly. Another possibility was a European Senate but the latter could in all likelihood not be set up until the movement became irreversible and the need absolutely imperative. For the time being, therefore, a compromise seemed possible on the basis of the proposals put forward by Mr Behrendt, whose report advocated the establishment of a new European Security and Defence Assembly.

Innumerable scenarios could therefore be envisaged for the form this parliamentary scrutiny might take, but the mission in itself was crystal clear. The speaker therefore hoped that the parliamentarians present would succeed in outlining ways and means and that the Lisbon session would prove to be where the establishment of this essential parliamentary democratic scrutiny was successfully brought to fruition. The Portuguese Government would for its part work towards that end throughout its Presidency.

5. Address by the President of the Assembly

The PRESIDENT thanked the Portuguese Presidency, the Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament and the Leader of the Portuguese Delegation to the WEU Assembly, Mr Medeiros Ferreira, for all their hospitality and their excellent organisation, which had made it possible to hold the special session in Lisbon. He was pleased to see that it was so well attended, an indication that its significance had been recognised all over Europe.

Mr Bühler extended a special welcome to the President of the Belgian Senate, Mr De Decker, Mrs Lalumière, representing the European Parliament, the President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Rupérez, and the Deputy Secretary-General of WEU, Mr Wegener. He also welcomed a delegation from the new Russian Parliament and representatives of the Permanent Council and embassies in Lisbon.

With the decisions they took in Cologne and Helsinki, the governments of the 15 EU member states had taken a historic, even revolutionary, step and had embarked on one of the most ambitious projects since the beginning of the process of European integration. The European Union now had to acquire a capacity to take action in the field of security and defence and be able to act effectively in crisis situations, including when recourse to military means proved necessary. However, this project also raised a whole series of questions that required clarification such as the problem of the participation of European countries that were not members of the European Union, or the question of cooperation with NATO and the United States.

The political management of crises was a particularly sensitive issue and democratic parliamentary scrutiny of the decision-making process was therefore of crucial importance. And yet it was precisely this aspect that the governments had so far neglected. At his first meeting with Mr Solana and the Permanent Council, the President had made it very clear that in the transfer of Petersberg functions from WEU to the EU, the parliamentary aspect had to be taken into account regardless of whether the governments wished to implement their plan with or without treaty changes.

They had recently created a number of interim bodies, which had begun work on 1 March and were already doing work that had previously been done by WEU. By the end of the year they intended to take

the decisions that were necessary to transform those interim bodies into permanent structures. If the Assembly wanted to prevent a democratic deficit arising in this area it had to act quickly. Some of the governments had indicated to the Assembly that they were waiting for it to submit proposals on this issue. The Assembly had responded accordingly and asked the Political Committee to work out a concept; this was the reason for holding the special session.

Mr Bühler cautioned the governments that they could not be exonerated from the responsibility they had taken upon themselves 45 years earlier when they entrusted the WEU Assembly with the task of exercising parliamentary scrutiny over European security and defence policy. The progress that had recently been achieved made the need for such scrutiny even more acute than ever before. The Assembly's intervention in this area was justified on several counts. In the first place, it had for almost half a century been the sole institution legitimised by an international treaty to deal with security and defence matters and its experience was unique. Secondly, it submitted appropriate proposals in response to a need expressed by many governments. Thirdly, the Amsterdam Treaty had entrusted WEU with the task of assisting the European Union in the framing of the defence aspects of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Finally, the WEU Assembly had a remit to speak for all the delegations of the associate member and associate partner countries. This responsibility, which was a political one with a legal basis, made it incumbent upon the Assembly to urge that the democratic parliamentary dimension be given a solid legal basis in the EU Treaty.

The President stressed that the WEU Assembly must in future continue to scrutinise all the areas covered by the modified Brussels Treaty that were not transferred to the EU. Furthermore, in order for there to be a parliamentary dimension to the EU's new tasks in the field of Petersberg operations, what was needed was a parliamentary body along the lines of the WEU Assembly. Its nature had to be such that the representatives of the national parliaments could reach common positions and convey them to their executive. Naturally, the new parliamentary forum would have to be an EU body in which the parliamentary delegations of the 15 member states must have equal rights and obligations. But it was equally important for arrangements to be found so that the parliaments of the WEU associate members and associate partners were not neglected in the new body, especially as they had acquired participation rights in the WEU Assembly commensurate with those of their governments in the Council.

The European Parliament now recognised the need to involve an assembly made up of national parliamentarians in the European Security and Defence Policy. It was possible for the Assembly to cooperate with the European Parliament on a constructive basis provided that the Parliament did not claim an exclusive right in this area and was prepared to share parliamentary responsibility with an independent parliamentary assembly representing the collective will of the nations.

It was essential for such an assembly to have a legal basis in the EU. Subject to that condition it would be possible to establish flexible forms of cooperation with the European Parliament. Such a procedure would enhance the European Union's democratic legitimacy and allow the necessary parliamentary dimension to complement the decision-making process.

As it was not known how long the transitional phase would last, it was necessary to create an interim assembly which would ensure parliamentary involvement in the EU decision-making process throughout that phase. The EU governments should recognise the interim assembly as the precursor of the "European Security and Defence Assembly". To that end the support of the national parliaments, and in particular their relevant committees, would be needed. Following the adoption by the Standing Committee of the proposals contained in the Behrendt report, an intensive publicity campaign would need to be launched. Finally, a special Committee on Organisation would probably be set up so that the interim assembly could begin work as soon as possible.

Europe was in the throes of no less than a revolutionary process of change in the field of security and defence. Parliamentarians had to ensure that the people of Europe had a say in developments so that the process set in train resulted in a safer future for everyone.

6. Address by Mr de Almeida Santos, Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament

Mr de ALMEIDA SANTOS (*Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament*) was delighted that Portugal and the Portuguese Parliament had the honour of welcoming such an august gathering. This represented a further stage in the institutional rethink taking place within the European Union and an important contribution to stability and peace on the continent. The Amsterdam Treaty had laid down that the Common Foreign and Security Policy would cover all matters relating to the security of the Union, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy. In this framework, with its integration in prospect, WEU had been given a task. The Treaty had also provided for the European Parliament to be consulted by the Presidency and to be informed regarding the basic choices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The present developments formed part of a new world military order. In Europe, the federal dimension of the European Union was gaining ground with the transfer to it of new areas of sovereignty. In the face of globalisation and the levelling effect of trade, markets and technologies, not to mention attitudes and behaviour, regional integration was developing apace, with the European Union forming the first line of defence. Civilisation was once again in the throes of a massive upheaval, one more significant in scope than the Renaissance or the Industrial Revolution. Concepts such as states, borders and national identities were becoming less relevant. Military attitudes based on patriotism, the need to ward off external threat and a perception of one's neighbour as the enemy were all on the wane and with them the need for strong conscript armies and increasingly sophisticated weaponry. Today the enemy was not easily identifiable, the cold war had indeed cooled off and nuclear, chemical and biological warfare was now defensive rather than offensive. Armies were becoming increasingly geared to the need for a professional approach and military action directed towards prevention.

The saying which ran: if you want peace prepare for war, had given way to another principle – if you want peace prepare for it by timely prevention of war. However, peaceful attitudes had not entirely replaced warlike ones. The arms race went on and the trade in weapons it generated led to conflict, internal and external. New forms of nationalism and fundamentalism were emerging.

Europe's dreams of peace were at last coming true. Conflict between two European Union states was now unthinkable. But peace was a fragile commodity, new threats loomed: terrorism, organised crime, unemployment, instability, drug trafficking, poverty, exclusion and various economic and financial irregularities. Such phenomena were potential causes of social conflict, more to be feared than external aggression. To prevent them, policy must be clearer and not based on the conventional wisdom of the times or subject to pressure, whether from organised crime, particular interest groups, the G7 or the IMF.

The United Nations was virtually helpless in the face of such new threats, NATO all but incapable, and it was as though the armed forces did not exist. That was why it was necessary to achieve a new military order, establish new concepts, ensure greater transparency in military matters and anticipate threats to peace more precisely. The concept of interference also needed to be explored further. The aim was no longer to win wars but to avoid them. They were neither inevitable nor a facet of human nature – that was an argument now advanced only by those trafficking in weapons – and the idea that war was a constant ran directly counter to human rights theory.

This was why the evolution of Europe's thinking in the direction of increased intervention designed to ward off threats and maintain peace was to be welcomed. Indeed, what were objections of principle worth when human lives and rights were at stake?

The subject for discussion at the present meeting was how the aim of integrating Western European Union into the European Union could be achieved. Mr Behrendt's splendid report contained a number of pointers. It would be a pity if WEU's accumulated experience were lost. It was true that the notion of integration implied that of absorption but the form of progressive integration advocated in the report seemed a very interesting idea.

The European Parliament was democratically elected by the peoples of the member states and this therefore raised the question of where a parliamentary assembly representing the national parliaments might fit into the scheme of things. As framing defence policy was an intergovernmental activity, the creation of a second chamber was certainly a possibility, given that there was a need at all costs to prevent any lack of accountability and that scrutiny should continue to be based on the modified Brussels Treaty until the latter was superseded by the Treaty on European Union. Moreover, the Parliamentary Assembly of WEU had the supreme advantage of encompassing 28 countries. It was also necessary to work out new forms of cooperation between the Assembly and the European Parliament. Once WEU was fully integrated into the European Union there would be a need to look again at democratic scrutiny over the Union's security and defence activities.

Clearly, it was up to those present at the meeting to square the circle and find a way of integrating without actually doing so. However, having gone for integration, practical solutions now needed to be found, and that was what the report was about. Obviously, everything could not be sorted out at the outset. The European Union itself had been built as it went along. Moving from a common security policy to framing a defence policy was a laudable aim and a means of countering the might of America without harming European Union members' obligations in the framework of the Atlantic Alliance.

Even if European integration, the enlargement of the Alliance and globalisation provided the best prospects for peace, numerous areas of tension and conflict remained: China's attitude towards Taiwan was disturbing, tensions between the two Koreas remained high, the Middle East was unstable, there were sharp differences between India and Pakistan, the tide of Iraqi neo-nationalism was running high

and, lastly, former Yugoslavia and the Caucasus were still major areas of risk. There was a need therefore to identify political solutions upstream.

The speaker wound up by saying that he hoped the meeting would prove successful to the benefit of world peace and security.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr de Almeida Santos who had rightly stressed the sovereignty of the national parliaments in the field of defence and the importance of democratic scrutiny.

7. European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension

(Presentation of the report of the Political Committee, Doc. 1684)

Mr BEHRENDT (*Germany*), in his capacity as Rapporteur for the Political Committee, began by saying that the addresses the Assembly had just heard were a good indication of the vitally important decisions on its future that were necessary to ensure that the work it had done for 45 years had not been in vain and that it continued to play an important role in furthering the integration of central and eastern European countries which were not members of either the European Union or NATO.

The task in hand entailed working out what shape parliamentary scrutiny of the European Security and Defence Policy was to take. Would the relevant decisions look to the future or to the past? Would their tone be one of resignation or would they be forward-looking and ambitious? It was to be hoped that the Lisbon decision would be a landmark in the definition of European policy in this field. The Cologne and Helsinki summits had already given it a new dimension and responsibility for Petersberg missions had been transferred to the European Union. But Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty was still in force and the governments had requested the Assembly to submit proposals on the parliamentary dimension of the future security and defence policy. This had certainly been the message in the addresses Mr Solana and Mr Moscovici had given at the Assembly's plenary session in Paris at the end of November 1999.

It was therefore the Assembly's task to draw up a concept which would then be submitted to the governments. To do so it needed to be bold and give a clear statement of how it saw the way ahead.

Even though some of WEU's activities had been transferred to the European Union's second pillar, the European Parliament was not in a position to exercise responsibility in all the areas they covered. While proposals had been made to extend the Parliament's powers, it was also up to the WEU Assembly to consider how the democratic deficit could be made good. It was necessary to continue the work it had done over 45 years and further the involvement in that work of the associate members and associate partners. There was no question of shutting the door to those countries as they too had taken an active part in the creation of the Common European Security and Defence Policy.

The Political Committee had frequently discussed these matters and yesterday had unanimously, bar one abstention, adopted the recommendation that was now before the Assembly. The underlying idea in it was that in future there should be a European Security and Defence Assembly.

In 1954, the WEU Assembly had been created in pursuance of the provisions of the modified Brussels Treaty but in view of the present-day situation which made treaty changes very difficult to achieve, it was more realistic to legitimise the Assembly in its new configuration by means of a protocol to the EU Treaty. Clearly, it would be necessary to establish close cooperation with the European Parliament and the Rapporteur was pleased that Mrs Lalumière was able to attend the special session.

Having had a series of talks with various members, both in Strasbourg and Brussels, and with Mrs Lalumière herself, Mr Behrendt was aware that a proposal had been made in the European Parliament to create a mixed parliamentary body consisting of representatives of the national parliaments and the European Parliament, with the criteria for its precise composition remaining to be defined. He welcomed the fact that his colleagues in the European Union had accepted the principle of collective representation of the national parliaments in the future assembly.

The objective now was to send the member state governments a clear message spelling out what members of the WEU Assembly were looking for. A decision given strong support would serve as a basis for the future activities of the new assembly and would ensure that it was successful in its work. The Rapporteur therefore asked his fellow parliamentarians for that support, stressing at the same time that their job would not end there as they would have to go about convincing their governments of the case for the approach being taken. Mr Behrendt concluded by thanking the Secretariat and all those who had helped with the drafting of his report.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr Behrendt and invited Mr De Decker, President of the Belgian Senate, to address the Assembly.

8. Address by Mr De Decker, President of the Belgian Senate

Mr De DECKER (*President of the Belgian Senate*) thanked the President of the Assembly for the opportunity to address the Assembly of which he had been a member for 18 years and which he already missed. He applauded Mr de Almeida Santos' opening address, which bore all the hallmarks of his customary wisdom and congratulated Mr Behrendt on his excellent report, which dealt with a particularly complex subject.

A number of developments had brought about a change in the European security and defence architecture: the transfer of responsibility for Petersberg missions to the European Union, the historic meeting in Saint Malo at which two major European countries had expressed the political will to give the European Union a proper defence capability, the decision to create new bodies to manage the Common European Security and Defence Policy and, above all, the decision to form an army corps of 60 000 troops. So considerable progress had been made, as many people had been calling for for a long time. The speaker said that at the start he had been more inclined to favour an arrangement in which policy decisions were taken by the European Union but implemented by WEU. Such an arrangement would have been simpler as it would have avoided a split between political missions and those depending on Article V. Furthermore, there was no getting away from the fact that some European countries had a tradition of neutrality which they did not intend to give up. However, the fact that a reorganisation had taken place was to be welcomed since it was unacceptable for the United States to spend 260 billion dollars in order to go on being the world's leading military power while combined spending on defence by the EU member states amounted to 200 billion dollars and yet, in proportion to what it spent, Europe was the world's weakest military power!

Nevertheless, this transfer of areas of competence must not in any circumstances be accompanied by a reduction in democratic scrutiny, which should continue to be exercised at least to the same degree as it was in the present architecture. Furthermore, for as long as armies were mustered by nations and for as long, unfortunately, as WEU itself did not have the will to pay the salaries of 100 000 or 200 000 troops, security and defence would continue to be a national preserve and democratic control over spending and decision-making would therefore have to continue to be exercised by the national parliaments. Everyone was aware of the limited scope of Article 21 of the EU Treaty which confined the European Parliament's role to the right to be informed by the Council of Ministers. As for a COSAC-type solution, it would be wholly inadequate and a step backwards compared with the present situation. The least that could be said was that it would be paradoxical and even ridiculous for there to be less parliamentary scrutiny in the future than there was when Europe did not possess a common security and defence policy! This meant that it was necessary to form an assembly which had its basis in the Treaty on European Union and was composed of representatives of the 15 national parliaments of the EU member states, the 13 non-EU European NATO members and countries that were candidates for accession.

In so far as was possible, care had to be taken to avoid increasing the number of assemblies since the governments would inevitably complain about the cost. The WEU Assembly was alive and well and would have to go on existing, not only to ensure continued parliamentary scrutiny of all the activities covered by Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty but also to apply the provisions of Article VIII. The WEU Assembly therefore had to be transformed into a European Security and Defence Assembly and be based on the model of a forum which had proved its worth. It would be ridiculous to deprive the European Union of the wealth of experience the WEU Assembly had accumulated in the field of security and defence. The solution adopted by the Political Committee was therefore the right one and the proposal on the table had many good points. Nevertheless, it would not be easy to obtain the approval of all 15 EU member states.

In the first instance it was necessary to convince the European Parliament that it did not have a security and defence "culture" that could be equated with that of the WEU Assembly and it was common knowledge that intergovernmental matters were often a source of irritation to it. However, the Parliament should be persuaded that it was for the nation states, which deployed troops and paid them, to exercise the democratic scrutiny that was required. It had to be borne in mind that, almost by instinct, the European Parliament would probably oppose the creation of any assembly that resembled a second chamber. Was its fear justified? When the European Union eventually achieved integrated political union, it would clearly no longer operate with only one assembly: was it not the case that federal states the world over had a bicameral system? On the other hand, it was understandable that the European Parliament, which would have to have a bigger role in due course, did not wish a "senate" to take its place. In order to avoid deadlock, it was therefore necessary to negotiate a balanced agreement making provision for enhanced scrutiny by the European Parliament over the second pillar and for the exchange of observers on a permanent basis.

The problems did not stop there. The framework of the Common European Security and Defence Policy was being negotiated and some countries took the view that the European Union should be deepened before being enlarged. Moreover, a view that had frequently been voiced in the past was that WEU was unusable because too many countries were involved in it.

The speaker considered that this argument was not wholly convincing because in his opinion the main problems that would occur in building a Common European Security and Defence Policy were more likely to come from EU countries with a tradition of neutrality than from the present associate partners. But the obstacle was nonetheless a real one and he therefore recommended gradual change. Throughout the phase of negotiating and defining the European security and defence framework, the European Security and Defence Assembly should be composed solely of representatives of the 15 EU member states. This situation could quite easily be managed over a certain period provided the associate members and associate partners participated in the work of the WEU Assembly, which would continue to exist. In any event it seemed logical for there to be symmetry between the future assembly and the EU executive bodies and for the situation to evolve as the institutional decisions were made.

Another question that arose was how the new assembly would obtain a role and status at least equivalent to those of the WEU Assembly. There were two conditions that would have to be met: the first was recognition of the European Security and Defence Assembly in the Treaty on European Union or in an additional protocol annexed to it; the second was submission of an annual report on activities to the new assembly by the EU Council and the High Representative for the CFSP.

Finally, the sensitive issue of the type of delegation to be sent to the new assembly would have to be examined. It had been suggested that delegations could be composed of members of the foreign affairs and defence committees of the national parliaments. The speaker agreed that this would guarantee credibility. In any event, reference to the Council of Europe was no longer justified now that the European Union was responsible for security and defence policy.

The WEU Assembly had considerable resources and today it was continuing to prove that it was capable of making innovatory proposals for the democratic scrutiny of EU-led peacekeeping missions. As a strong advocate of parliamentary diplomacy, Mr De Decker therefore called on his colleagues to persuade the governments of the Fifteen and the European Union authorities of the validity of the Assembly's proposals. In his capacity as President of the Belgian Senate, he was at the Assembly's disposal for any initiative it took in order to ensure that the European Security and Defence Policy was a success.

The PRESIDENT said the expertise Mr De Decker had shown in his evaluation of the subject left him with the impression that he was in fact still a member of the Assembly! He thanked Mr De Decker for the support he had just offered.

The President informed the Assembly that Mr Solana, who had been invited to the special session, had been unable to attend owing to other engagements but had promised to come to the June session. He then invited Mr Wegener, Deputy Secretary-General of WEU, to address the Assembly.

9. Address by Mr Wegener, Deputy Secretary-General of WEU

Mr WEGENER (*Deputy Secretary-General of WEU*) expressed thanks for having been invited to address the Assembly. He confirmed that Mr Solana was detained in Brussels by a meeting of the General Affairs Council and preparations for the forthcoming extraordinary session of the European Council and conveyed the Secretary-General's apologies to the members of the Assembly.

He felt that this was a timely debate and that the Behrendt report was an important milestone in the debate on the parliamentary dimension of European security and defence. Governments would undoubtedly give serious thought to the ideas put forward.

The pace of activities in the field of the CESDP had accelerated recently. The Helsinki European Council had started putting the new structures on an operational footing. The first meetings of the Political and Security Committee and Military Committee had been held in Brussels, and thought had been given to the question of assets. At the end of the previous month the defence ministers had agreed to organise a "capabilities pledging conference", a decision subsequently confirmed by the General Affairs Council. The EU had established an ambitious programme of work in the run-up to the European Council in June, with top priority being given to adopting a strategy for EU/NATO relations, which meant among other things working out detailed arrangements for the future participation of non-EU NATO allies and central European partners. In this transitional phase, WEU was engaged in three main areas. First, as long as the EU was still in the preparatory stage for carrying out its new role, WEU would remain operational for its police mission in Albania (MAPE) and demining mission in Croatia. Indeed the latter mission had been extended for another year.

Second, concepts and procedures were being studied in partnership with NATO. A first joint WEU/NATO exercise had been organised and had proved to be a searching test of the arrangements for using NATO assets and capabilities under the political control and strategic direction of a European organisation. The exercise had been a resounding success, completing all the steps necessary to launch a WEU-led humanitarian operation with Deputy SACEUR as the Operation Commander and with other command and material assets provided by NATO. At the same time it had identified a number of specific points that would need further elaboration, clarification or improvement both in the basic NATO/WEU documents relating to ESDI and in WEU's own crisis-management procedures.

Third, WEU was acting as a forum for information and debate among the 21 nations belonging to either the EU or NATO, as well as at 28 including the central European partners. Regular Council meetings had seen some good debates. In particular, seminars involving directors of security and defence policy in the so-called "reflection process" were proving very useful. The Portuguese Presidency had hosted one such event for the 21 EU and NATO countries in Brussels on 27 January, which had given rise to a lively and detailed discussion of the value of WEU's experience in various fields and the ways in which WEU could best help the EU identify and appreciate that heritage. A future event at the beginning of May would offer a timely chance to review the priorities and concerns of WEU nations before the closing events of the Presidency.

According to Mr Solana, this was the ultimate but perhaps the most crucial and most stimulating phase of WEU's long history in the service of European defence. WEU could fairly claim to have laid many of the foundations for the EU's breakthroughs at Cologne and Helsinki. The key challenge for all Europeans now was to ensure that that process led to a strengthened European role in crisis management to underpin Europe's enhanced role as an actor in the world. The debate was far from finished and the present Assembly discussion was an important contribution regarding the parliamentary dimension of that process.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr Wegener for his address and took due note of the importance he attached to regular meetings of the 28 nations. He was pleased that Mr Wegener had also recognised the importance of the contribution the Assembly was making.

10. European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension

(Debate on the report of the Political Committee, Doc. 1684)

Mr EYSKENS (*Belgium*) was convinced that the European Union, having achieved the single market and monetary union, was once again in a crucial phase of its development. On behalf of the Federated Group, he commended Mr Behrendt's report. Indeed, he believed that the EU should endorse the transformation of the WEU Assembly into a European Security and Defence Assembly, but that there should under no circumstances be a duplication of the existing organisation. In his view it was essential to organise parliamentary scrutiny in parallel to the activities of the two new committees.

He felt that the Rapporteur's proposals made sense. First of all they provided a guarantee for the future, in that they paved the way for the gradual creation of continent-wide defence structures. Secondly they preserved WEU's *acquis*, in other words the synergy among the 28 WEU nations, both EU and non-EU members, as well as the defence culture that had developed within the Organisation. Furthermore they transcended the debate between those who considered that security and defence were the prerogative of national governments and parliaments and those for whom a common defence policy meant going further than the intergovernmental cooperation foreseen by the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties. The institutional debate would decide the matter and in the meantime the ESDA should be an interim body, like the two committees.

The proposals were also appropriate in that they opted for an additional protocol rather than an amendment to the Treaty on European Union. It would in this respect be necessary to battle with a number of preconceived ideas. In the speaker's opinion, for example, it seemed absurd to think of the European Security and Defence Assembly as a second chamber. Such a chamber already existed, namely, the Council of Ministers, which was *de facto* the Union's second legislative body. A tricameral system made no sense at all. Moreover, it was important for the new Assembly not to set itself up in rivalry with the European Parliament; rather the two institutions should be complementary. It was therefore a matter of how to guarantee synergy between a 28-member Assembly and a 15-member European Parliament elected directly by universal suffrage. Consideration also needed to be given to relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and with the United States and Canada. The functioning of the future assembly would need to be organised in keeping with the enhanced cooperation arrangements, should it be decided, as the speaker hoped would be the case, that those arrangements would also apply to defence policy. Furthermore, the member countries would have to agree to fund the

institution. Finally and above all, it was important that the democratic deficit should not be accentuated by introducing a new element of complexity.

Mr PASTUSIAK (*Poland, associate member*) congratulated Mr Behrendt on his report which was innovative, and even revolutionary. Admittedly, that revolution was occurring under the threat of WEU's abolition, but major changes always occurred under the pressure of events.

In answer to Hamlet's question "to be or not to be?" Mr Behrendt had answered, quite rightly, "to be". The international community had created numerous institutions to combat political instability in Europe and the rest of the world. To be credible, those institutions themselves needed a stable status. The WEU Parliamentary Assembly needed to have such a status recognised for itself within a wider Europe. Politics being the art of the possible, the establishment of an interim assembly was, under the present circumstances, a rational solution, as well as an opportunity to give the observers and associate members a more normal status. In particular, it was important to preserve the role of the non-EU members of the Alliance which also participated in peacekeeping missions. This was the best way of ensuring that the most appropriate operational options were chosen at all times. In order to ensure that decisions were politically consistent, the Political and Security Committee should meet at 21, in other words, the Fifteen plus the Six. Such a solution would enable all those who so desired to participate in operations and guarantee equal rights for all. Whatever the nature of the future structures, the current rules of WEU should apply. Indeed, why should those WEU associate members, to the extent that they participated in WEU missions, not have full voting rights in the new assembly? Paragraph 2 of the draft decision did not appear to be wholly satisfactory on that point.

There was a certain degree of symmetry between the observers and the associate members. The former had no intention of joining NATO, while most of the latter were negotiating their accession to the EU. If there was to be a new security and defence system in which the associate members would be called upon to play a greater part, it would not be logical to treat them differently from the observers.

Mr HORNHUES (*Germany*) remarked that a milestone had been reached with the decision to transfer certain WEU functions to the EU. Nevertheless, WEU continued to be the body responsible for supervising Articles V and IX of the modified Brussels Treaty.

In his view it was essential, in the present process, to maintain parliamentary scrutiny of decisions and for the parliamentarians from non-EU countries to continue to be closely involved in the Assembly's activities. For the time being, the proposals contained in the Behrendt report, while they might need to be worked out in further detail, provided a good basis for negotiations. It was important for the Standing Committee to adopt them, as the Political Committee had done the day before. They would enable WEU's *acquis* – in particular the essential cooperation with the non-EU member countries – to be preserved, and ensure continued compliance with the treaties.

Finally the speaker asked the President to advise the members of the Assembly on measures that could be taken to ensure that Mr Behrendt's report, and the concepts it put forward, were given wide publicity. Should a specialised working group be set up? In any case, a decision needed to be taken quickly.

The PRESIDENT recalled his proposal of launching a publicity campaign if the Behrendt report was adopted. He urged the members of the Assembly to support the ideas it contained in their respective parliaments and to argue the Assembly's case.

Mr de PUIG (*Spain*) felt that it would be a grave mistake not to take account of the process that was under way. In his opinion, WEU's progressive integration in the EU was not a sign of failure on the part of WEU but, on the contrary, of its success. Thanks to WEU, European defence was on the right track. Neither the media nor the European Union gave it the recognition it deserved for that achievement.

The situation was clear as regards the parliamentary dimension. There was, on the one hand, the European Parliament, directly elected by universal suffrage, but lacking any tradition in the field of security and defence, for which governments were unwilling to grant it any responsibilities. On the other hand there was the WEU Assembly, whose work over the past 45 years was recognised by all and which had the credentials to bring together all European countries.

Whatever happened, democratic scrutiny could not be allowed to disappear. An inherent danger in the idea of creating a new institution was that governments would always favour an assembly at 15, with no observers or associate countries, which would be bad for European defence. The solution proposed by Mr Behrendt of transforming the present Assembly was in keeping with the challenge of the moment and safeguarded both the participation of the associate countries and cooperation with the European Parliament. However, the decision was not in the hands of the Assembly. Each member must

strive to convince the WEU Council, the European Council and the governments of the need to preserve democratic scrutiny.

Mr BÁRSONY (*Hungary, associate member*) remarked that in this debate on Mr Behrendt's remarkable report, the essential question was whether security should be governed by economic and financial imperatives or by the genuine will on the part of states to play an active part in the European Security and Defence Policy. Clearly, there had to be participation by all those states which were involved in developing the European defence architecture. The countries which had recently joined NATO and those which aspired to NATO membership had entered into firm commitments on the basis of political criteria similar to those which had been laid down in Copenhagen for EU membership. Did the EU now have the moral and political right to close the door in their faces? They were perhaps not yet ready to assume all their financial obligations, but they were prepared to meet the political challenges. To deny them the right to participate in the European Security and Defence Policy would create a further dividing line in Europe.

To prevent that from happening, those countries had to be taken into account when talking about the future of WEU and its Parliamentary Assembly. No proposals could be made which would curtail their rights. Ten years ago, when the wave of political change had swept across the whole of Europe, the new democracies had been told that parliamentary scrutiny was essential. How could one now refuse them the right to exercise such scrutiny? Would there be first-class citizens and first-class security on one side of Europe, and second-class citizens and second-class security on the other?

Mr Behrendt's report should certainly be adopted, but it was only a first step, for as the former Polish Prime Minister had frequently said, it was incredible that the accession to the EU of the central and eastern countries should keep being delayed by several years when it was a decisive factor in a global European defence policy, which was something which was not negotiable.

Mr GLOUCHKOV (*Bulgaria, associate member*) emphasised that the transfer of WEU functions to the EU inevitably raised the question of how parliamentary scrutiny would be exercised from now on and what role the Assembly would play. To exclude a certain number of countries from the debate would be a serious mistake. Their participation was a major achievement in the process of building Europe and the dramatic events in Bosnia and Kosovo had confirmed that the European Security and Defence Policy could only be defined in a wider framework. In particular it should involve all the candidates for NATO membership, as well as those countries which had embarked on accession negotiations with the EU.

The political and legal difficulties should not, of course, be underestimated. However, the draft recommendation contained some good proposals in that respect. The Assembly of WEU should be transformed into a European Security and Defence Assembly composed of delegations of the 28 WEU nations, including the associate members and associate partners whose rights in the new assembly should be at least equivalent to those they currently enjoyed.

The Assembly should assert its position clearly and firmly, so that it would be taken into account by the European Union. In this way the new assembly would remain the guarantor of democratic scrutiny.

Mr DAVIS (*United Kingdom*) thanked the President for the tribute he had paid to Mr Colvin and expressed his sympathy to the Irish Delegation for the loss of Mr Ferris who had been a valued member of the Socialist Group.

Speaking on behalf of the Socialist Group and the United Kingdom Delegation, he supported Mr Behrendt's report and recommendation. The Assembly should be transformed and remain as open as possible, so that delegations from all the countries currently represented in the Assembly would continue to be present. Today it was unthinkable to work without the Czech Republic, Hungary or Poland, or to turn one's back on Norway or Turkey. The history of European countries showed there were differences between them, but also many similarities, in particular when it came to the unremitting efforts of the representatives of the people to exercise scrutiny over the activities and decisions of governments. It came as no surprise that governments were not interested in such scrutiny both at national and international level and it was only to be expected therefore that the decisions they had taken so far on a Common European Security and Defence Policy made no provision for democratic scrutiny of the new institutions.

A parliamentary assembly was necessary precisely for that reason, and also because it provided a forum for parliamentarians to share ideas and information, making it impossible afterwards for governments vis-à-vis their national parliaments to shift the responsibility to others.

For all these reasons the United Kingdom Delegation gave its unreserved support to Mr Behrendt's proposal to establish a new assembly.

Mr BAL (*Turkey, associate member*) found Mr Behrendt's report outstanding and his proposals for the future functioning of the Assembly highly interesting. Turkey attached particular importance to democratic scrutiny and to WEU's *acquis*. It intended, in the new situation arising from the development of European security and defence policy, to maintain its involvement which dated back to 1992.

The Turkish Delegation welcomed the consensus that had emerged on Mr Behrendt's report.

Mr SCHLOTEN (*Germany*) recalled that the WEU Assembly had always been an eminently political body. It was the Assembly which had breathed new life into the Organisation, which had run out of steam. The Assembly was also responsible for WEU's enlargement to include 28 nations, for the governments on their own would never have taken such a decision.

However, the European security landscape had changed dramatically in recent years. Mr Baumel had pointed out the day before that the transfer of responsibility for Petersberg missions to the European Union left WEU with responsibility for only 5% of military tasks. If the Assembly wished to continue to exercise scrutiny, it had to take the initiative. One should no longer talk of the old Assembly, for all its merits, but rather try and transform it into a genuine parliamentary assembly with proper powers of scrutiny and capable of exerting a real influence on governments. Mr Behrendt's report proposed a number of interesting avenues for that purpose.

The PRESIDENT invited Mrs Lalumière to take the floor.

11. Address by Mrs Lalumière, Member of the European Parliament

Mrs LALUMIERE (*Member of the European Parliament*) was pleased to participate in such an enriching debate in the splendid city of Lisbon. The Common European Security and Defence Policy had been making headway rapidly since the European Council meeting in Pörschach, its aim being to provide Europe with a crisis-management capability. This was remarkable progress which was due in large part to the unremitting efforts of WEU. This new dimension the European Union was in the process of acquiring was intended to complement its foreign policy with an essential corollary: a Common European Security and Defence Policy. What place and role would parliamentary institutions have in the new architecture? Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union already gave the European Parliament certain prerogatives in the field of the Common Foreign and Security Policy – the right to be consulted by the Presidency on the basic choices of the CFSP and to be regularly informed by the Presidency and Commission of its development, the right to ask questions of the Council and make recommendations to it and, finally, the obligation to hold an annual debate on progress in implementing the CFSP on the basis of a document submitted by the Presidency. In addition, the Treaty conferred more general powers upon the European Parliament. Hence it was no worse off than the national parliaments. Obviously not everything was perfect. Indeed all the parliaments complained about not being sufficiently consulted, or even informed, about decisions to deploy troops. One only had to recall their dissatisfaction on that point during the intervention in Kosovo.

Now the CESDP was in place, there was a legitimate concern to give it a parliamentary dimension. It would indeed be incomprehensible if the extension of the European Union's powers were to mean a step backwards in terms of democracy. The fact remained, however, that neither the Cologne nor Helsinki Declaration made reference to a role for either the European Parliament or the WEU Assembly. Even worse, the Cologne Declaration stated that when the European Union took over those functions of WEU necessary for it to fulfil its new responsibilities in the area of the Petersberg tasks, WEU as an organisation would have completed its purpose. It could be inferred from that statement that WEU was destined to disappear, together with its Assembly even though it fulfilled an essential role. Everyone was well aware of the threats hanging over parliamentary democracy.

Nevertheless it had to be recognised that in the framework of the Treaties and the decisions taken in Cologne and Helsinki, the national parliaments still had a role to play in the framing of the CESDP. The new policy could not be implemented without reorganising the armed forces, and that restructuring process would in some cases require greater financial efforts. And who was responsible for approving budgets, if not the national parliaments? As for the European Parliament, it was a recognised link with the EU decision-making bodies and it would clearly seek to expand its role, even if that led to tensions with governments.

In short, if the WEU Assembly were to disappear, a paradoxical situation would arise in which the European Parliament would be properly informed about the security and defence policy being followed, without having the power to vote for the corresponding budget, while the national parliaments would be required to vote the budget without having an overview of the CESDP. This was a remarkable contradiction which illustrated the purpose to be served by the national parliaments maintaining a presence at the level at which decisions were taken in order to guarantee the link that was essential

between decisions of a political nature and those that concerned the budgetary aspect. None of this could be done without the European Parliament, which shared the WEU Assembly's concern to consolidate the parliamentary dimension of the new Common European Security and Defence Policy so that it could be developed with the support of public opinion.

Mr Behrendt's very comprehensive report proposed transforming the WEU Assembly into a European Security and Defence Assembly composed of parliamentarians from the 15 EU member states and the 13 European members of NATO which were not members of the EU, together with the candidates for accession to the EU. This Assembly would exist alongside the European Parliament. This proposal was to be seen in conjunction with the aim of defining a European Security and Defence Framework which would be wider than the more limited CESDP.

The European Parliament would determine its position as of April and convey it to the Intergovernmental Conference. To date, the European Parliament Committee which Mrs Lalumière was representing had submitted a proposal in an opinion addressed to the EP Committee on Constitutional Affairs, in which it had stated that when the functions of WEU necessary for the execution of Petersberg tasks were transferred to the EU, a new arrangement would need to be made for parliamentary involvement in second pillar affairs, for example in the form of a mixed assembly of national parliaments and the European Parliament.

That proposal, which might sound similar to the one put forward by Mr Behrendt, was in fact quite different. It was to be seen in the context of the EU and CESDP, whereas the proposal submitted by the Assembly's Political Committee placed European security in a framework that was wider but further removed from the EU decision-making bodies. Was there not a danger that Mr Behrendt's proposal would weaken the position of those national parliaments which wished to see the role they played vis-à-vis the EU decision-making bodies strengthened, in particular in the field of the CESDP? Furthermore, WEU was bound in the long term to take second place to the European Union. In that case, how could one prevent the European Parliament from assuming the same role for security and defence as it currently had for foreign policy?

It was difficult at this stage to decide which was the best solution, for the answer was not obvious. The WEU Assembly's thinking was more advanced on the subject than that of the European Parliament. Hence the dialogue should continue, in order to persuade governments of the need for effective parliamentary scrutiny over security and defence issues, extended, if possible, to the vast geographic area that Mr Behrendt had defined as the "European framework". That was a shared priority. That democratic scrutiny must involve the national parliaments, as Mr De Decker had quite rightly insisted. However, ever since the European Parliament had been created, there had been and would continue to be an instinctive and ineluctable movement among its members, which could not be brushed aside, towards having a political say in the activities of the Council, the Commission and more recently the High Representative where security and defence policy was concerned. Clearly, it was eminently desirable that the European Parliament should start by improving its knowledge in that area.

The speaker was convinced that the Parliament was fully aware of all those points and that it was resolved to enhance its role and at the same time deepen its knowledge of security and defence issues. The Assembly had its experience to offer it, as well as the benefit of a wider geographic framework.

It would not be easy to meet all the requirements and Mrs Lalumière had no intention of proposing miracle solutions. However, she could not conceal her preference for an "intermediate" solution very close to that advocated by Mr De Decker. This would involve creating alongside the European Parliament an assembly, or rather, a forum of parliaments of the European Union, which would be very similar to the WEU Assembly but would also borrow from the COSAC idea, inasmuch as it would bring together both national and European parliamentarians. That forum could be open to parliamentarians from third countries and benefit from the experience of the WEU Secretariat. That solution, then, would be somewhat different from that proposed by Mr Behrendt. It would require amendments to the Treaty on European Union but, on the assumption that the WEU Treaty was to be abolished, it would have the advantage of preserving the WEU Assembly's *acquis* in political and human terms while giving the renovated assembly broader powers and setting it in an EU framework. This arrangement would leave the door open for the future and, even if the idea of a second chamber was not very popular with the European Parliament, would involve parliamentarians more closely in the process of building Europe.

The ideas put forward during the special session would therefore be of great interest to the European Parliament. The discussions within the two institutions would certainly continue, because the construction of Europe was an ongoing process, in which one reform led to another, but it was essential to keep the dialogue going in order to work out with clear-sightedness and efficiency a parliamentary dimension to the European Security and Defence Policy. That was indeed the reason why the European

Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee had invited Mr Behrendt to address it the following day in Brussels, thus providing a further opportunity to pursue and deepen the dialogue.

The PRESIDENT wholly welcomed the spirit of dialogue shown by Mrs Lalumière and assured her that the Assembly would indeed seize every opportunity to pursue its discussions with the European Parliament with a view to ensuring that security and defence matters were subject to parliamentary and democratic scrutiny.

Mr Bühler, who had an appointment with the Portuguese Prime Minister, handed over the Chair to Mr Medeiros Ferreira after giving the floor to Mr Castro Caldas, Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council.

(Mr Medeiros Ferreira, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the Chair)

12. Address by Mr Castro Caldas, Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council

Mr CASTRO CALDAS (*Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council*), speaking on behalf of his government, wished all the parliamentarians a pleasant stay in Lisbon and every success in their work. He congratulated the Assembly on an initiative which could not fail to make a contribution to new developments in European security and defence policy. The decisions taken in Cologne and Helsinki represented a turning point for the European Union which would have been unimaginable only a short time before but which had proved the Assembly right in its views.

If the European Union wanted to maintain its credibility it had to move forward quickly in the direction opened up in Helsinki. This was, moreover, the only means of dispelling the uncertainties that formed part of any state of transition. The Portuguese Presidency had therefore taken advantage of its dual EU/WEU Presidency to launch the new interim institutions, begin to identify joint defence capabilities and assets and establish ties of trust and transparency between the European Union and NATO, and between the Union and countries applying for accession or non-member associate countries. It had also sought to identify ways of making optimum use of the human, conceptual and organisational capital represented by WEU.

With regard to the assets and capabilities the EU should have, the Portuguese Presidency had convened an informal meeting of defence ministers in Sintra. The meeting had elicited sufficient consensus for major progress to be made on laying down a timetable and scheduling a force generation conference. The speaker was hopeful that the Lisbon European Council would lead to the definition of CESDP institutional and operational structures and EU crisis-management machinery.

Regarding ties with NATO and third countries, the Presidency had submitted two documents to its partners for examination by the Political Committee. Appropriate measures for setting up close, transparent cooperation could be expected as an outcome. Lack of coordination between the two organisations would be unthinkable and there was a need to learn the maximum from the Crisex 2000 exercise. There was also a need to preserve the European Union's autonomous decision-making capability and avoid any discrimination operating against its members.

In terms of relations between the European Union and WEU, the initial assumption of the Portuguese Presidency was that the second of those organisations would gradually be stripped of its responsibilities which would be taken over by the first. A wholesale transfer could not be envisaged in view of the differing natures of the two institutions. Consequently it was necessary for WEU to maintain its operational capability in certain fields. For its part the Portuguese Presidency was continuing its efforts to update operational concepts and procedures, for example by drawing up a list of forces answerable to WEU. The wider forum for discussion the Organisation represented must also not merely be preserved but strengthened. A seminar of security chiefs of the 28 countries had therefore taken place and its conclusions would be brought together in a report to be conveyed to the European Union.

As far as third countries were concerned, a seminar had been held in Lisbon on conflict prevention in the Mediterranean. The Presidency had submitted a communication to the Permanent Council on this subject, thus strengthening the Barcelona process. A further report would examine the question of a transfer to the European Union of the missions undertaken by WEU in Croatia and Albania. Lastly, there was the matter of whether the Torrejón Satellite Centre and the Institute for Security Studies should be brought under the EU's auspices. The Cologne European Council had already shown an interest in those institutions and the Satellite Centre would now give equal priority to European Union and WEU requests.

The problem of WEU's future was therefore now on the table, but the speaker did not intend to make any premature statements on the matter.

WEU's *raison d'être* in operational terms depended on its ability to conduct Petersberg operations under European command using Alliance assets. The modified Brussels Treaty and Article V had to be preserved. There was also a need to retain the Permanent Council. The Assembly's opinions and recommendations were welcome during the transitional phase.

The speaker felt that it was not up to him to intervene in the debate on democratic scrutiny over security and defence matters, but he did feel the parliamentary dimension was vital. It was important to identify suitable democratic structures and define their areas of competence.

Decisions concerning security were obviously a matter for all citizens and had budgetary implications. It was more difficult today than in the past to define threats and the structures needing to be erected to respond to them. In any event democratically controlled military programming was necessary.

The Portuguese Presidency would take account of the discussions in the Assembly, which history had over and over again proved right.

The PRESIDENT thanked Minister Castro Caldas for his clear and constructive contribution and noted that several members had questions they wished to put to him.

Mrs LALUMIÈRE (*Member of the European Parliament*) wanted to know what were the aims of the Portuguese Presidency in terms of common security and defence in the wake of the rapid advances made by the German and Finnish Presidencies.

Mr CASTRO CALDAS (*Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council*) stressed that the French Presidency would inherit a sound legacy from its Portuguese predecessor. The interim committees had made a good start with their work and some important instruments had been defined. It should be possible between now and the year-end to evaluate the capability of the European rapid intervention force which was likely to be around 50 000 to 60 000 strong. Moreover, a consensus had been reached the previous day on setting up an EU committee for civilian crisis management. This crucial decision concerned all European countries, whether or not they were members of the Union. The way things had been handled recently in Mozambique had served as an example, particularly the way the armed forces collaborated with civil defence bodies, and demonstrated the need to set up this type of committee rapidly. The Portuguese Presidency would send its French counterpart a paper on the subject.

Mr SCHLOTEN (*Germany*) wanted to know whether the Portuguese Presidency intended including the proposal the Assembly would almost certainly adopt that afternoon on the agenda for the June Ministerial Council meeting, in other words before the WEU Assembly plenary session.

Mr CASTRO CALDAS (*Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council*) pointed out that the European Union needed to have a clear idea of what parliamentary scrutiny there should be over Petersberg missions. The Portuguese Presidency could not state with certainty that it would put the Assembly's recommendation on the agenda for the June Ministerial Council. If it proved impossible, it would hand the matter over to the French Presidency.

Mr MOTA AMARAL (*Portugal*), like a number of his colleagues, welcomed Mr Castro Caldas's statement about the European rapid intervention force. He wondered, however, what financial provision had been made for it.

Mr CASTRO CALDAS (*Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council*) reminded members that a consensus had been achieved about the European rapid intervention force at the informal conference held in Sintra. The creation of a flexible standing force with suitable logistics required a clear policy decision from parliaments and governments. The speaker hoped that European governments would reach agreement on appropriate financial commitments. This was a sensitive issue but the way it had been handled in the interim committees left room for optimism.

Mr CHERRIBI (*Netherlands*) noted the Minister's reference to security in the Mediterranean. He wanted to know whether it was the Portuguese Presidency's intention in this context for the Torrejón Centre to have a digital capability similar to that of the United States.

Mr CASTRO CALDAS (*Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council*) conceded that guaranteed funding of technological assets for the Common European Security and Defence Policy was necessary, but also pointed out that European capabilities were scarcely on the same scale as those of NATO or the United States, as intervention in Kosovo had served to demonstrate.

The PRESIDENT thanked Minister Castro Caldas and the Portuguese Government.

Business was adjourned at 12h 40.

SECOND SITTING

Tuesday, 21 March 2000

(Business was resumed at 15.00 with Mr Bühler, President of the Assembly, in the Chair)

13. European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension

*(Resumed debate on the report of the Political Committee
and votes on the draft texts, Doc. 1684)*

The **PRESIDENT** informed the members of the Assembly that the Prime Minister of Portugal, with whom he had held talks that morning, had undertaken to convey the decisions taken at the special session to the next European Union Summit, for which the Assembly was most grateful.

Mr BLAAUW (*Netherlands*) remarked that much had been said that morning about the future of the Assembly, European defence and parliamentary scrutiny. It should be stressed that WEU was composed not just of its 10 full members, but of 18 other countries, to which not a single reference had been made in Mrs Lalumière's speech. The Assembly should not fall into that trap, but rather continue along the path mapped out by Mr Behrendt, with the support of the Political Committee. From that perspective the presence of a delegation from the Duma was to be welcomed, for the continent of Europe was wider even than the 28.

In conclusion, and speaking on behalf of both the Netherlands Delegation and the Liberal Group, the speaker called on the members of the Assembly to adopt Mr Behrendt's report.

Mr GÜRKAN (*Turkey, associate member*) underlined the importance of the transformation under way in the security and defence field, which had repercussions for all the countries represented at the meeting. It was necessary to adapt to the new environment and respond to the new challenges, and Mr Behrendt's report was a step in that direction. There was a widely held view that Europe should be doing more and shouldering greater responsibilities, which was why the Turkish Delegation was fully in favour of ESDI.

The immense task of protecting the Balkans was Europe's responsibility and for that purpose it needed to strengthen its military capabilities. This did not necessarily entail an increase in spending, but there was a need for qualitative improvements, as the Kosovo crisis had made clear. Furthermore it was necessary to clarify the relations between NATO and Europe.

While Turkey, a WEU associate member, welcomed its new status as an EU accession candidate, it was aware that this did not give it any rights in the field of security and defence, despite the role which it clearly had to play in that area.

Mrs FURUBJELKE (*Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Swedish Parliament*) was of the opinion that the transfer of responsibility for Petersberg missions to the European Union was a major step which illustrated that Europe had learned from its experience in former Yugoslavia. The EU was now in a position to set up a model for crisis management.

While, as the representative of an observer country, she could not vote on the proposal to establish a new interim assembly, she felt that it would perhaps make more sense to wait and see what decisions were taken by the European Council at the end of the week.

The speaker was not at all sure that the wording of recital (*viii*) in the preamble to the draft recommendation – “convinced that such scrutiny must be exercised by a European parliamentary body in which the collective voice of parliaments of all the countries included in the European Security and Defence Framework can be heard” – was appropriate. Indeed, such an assembly could only reflect what was happening in the various national parliaments, thereby highlighting the divisions among member states. Furthermore, a number of other fora already existed, such as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the numerous meetings, both official and informal, of the Speakers and Committee Chairmen of the national parliaments.

Regarding paragraph 2 of the draft decision which stated that the delegations of non-EU European NATO members and candidates for accession to the EU should have at least the same participation rights as those they had acquired in the WEU Assembly as associate members and associate partners, would it not be simpler to give them those rights at a later stage, once the legal basis had been established? After all, observer status did not have only disadvantages.

Mr WILKINSON (*United Kingdom*) felt that this was a historic debate. He paid tribute to Mr Behrendt's report which had succeeded in reconciling a number of divergent views. Indeed, some people were in favour of moving towards a genuine collective defence, while others, including himself, attached great importance to the intergovernmental character of defence cooperation and to the need to respect the sovereign rights of individual states.

The full members, associate members and associate partners all had rights of participation in the current Assembly's activities, and that participation should at all costs be preserved. The European Union, concerned above all with monetary union and the idea of becoming a single state, was constantly strewing obstacles in the path of those countries wishing to join. While it was clear that European security could not be seen in isolation from this core formed by the EU member states, it was important to view it from a much broader perspective.

From the practical point of view, executing Petersberg missions meant improving interoperability and transport capabilities, as well as more frequent joint training.

Furthermore, it was clear that force projection called for additional investments. Hence one had to be sure that there was real political will and that words would be followed by deeds. The conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo had brought home the shortcomings of European security policy. This was why it was absolutely vital for the Assembly to keep its feet on the ground.

The speaker welcomed the fact that Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty and the obligation of the Council of Ministers to report on its security and defence policy would be maintained. More generally speaking, all efforts should be geared to guaranteeing the security of member states. The lives of the soldiers of each member state were liable to be put at risk for that purpose and they, and they alone, were the true guarantors of peace.

Mr Wilkinson added that he supported the Behrendt report, not because he agreed with everything it said, but because he considered it a cornerstone for European defence.

Mr LISINENKO (*observer from the Russian Federation*) considered that the presence of the Russian representatives was symbolic, for this was the first meeting organised by a European politico-military organisation attended by a delegation from the newly elected Duma and it was taking place at a time when much was happening on the Federation's borders.

After a period of lethargy, relations between Russia and the West were moving towards realistic cooperation. The new generation of political leaders in Russia wished to strengthen that partnership and achieve, by means of a process of dialogue, solutions for European security which were acceptable to all. Many Russians had placed their hopes in Mr Putin, whose promises, if kept, would strengthen confidence and enable a more stringent application of the democratic principles on which Russia's legislation was based. The speaker counted himself among the representatives of that new generation, which had redoubled its efforts to balance public finances and thereby establish the climate of confidence that was essential for investments, and hence for economic development. There were still many hurdles to overcome, but Russia was already reaping the first fruits of its new policy and knew what path to follow in order to further improve upon its results.

He welcomed the constructive dialogue which had been initiated, for he was convinced that effective communication called for direct exchanges when dealing with issues as important as a common security and defence policy. He wished WEU every success in its efforts to become an integral part of the future European security and defence architecture.

Mr KONECNY (*Austria, observer*) emphasised how much the members of the Austrian Delegation to the WEU Assembly had always appreciated the quality of the Assembly's work. It remained to be seen what would happen to the parliamentary scrutiny of security and defence policy in the new European architecture. The Behrendt report had stated the problem very clearly. The Austrian Government for its part quite naturally recognised the prerogatives of Parliament and was not prepared to give up certain sovereign rights. It was important that this cordial exchange of views be pursued in order to guarantee the continued existence of parliamentary scrutiny, which was essential.

Mr PÁLSSON (*Iceland, associate member*) congratulated Mr Behrendt on his excellent and well-reasoned report, and thanked the President of the Assembly for his equal treatment of delegations regardless of status, which meant that the non-EU countries could also have their say on the crucial issues of security and defence. Over the years this had contributed to maintaining good cooperation between EU countries and the United States within NATO.

Mr GUARDANS I CAMBÓ (*Spain*) explained that he had been the only one to abstain during the voting on the report in committee. Mr Behrendt's report was outstanding in terms of its content, analyses and conclusions; indeed no-one questioned the need for strengthening parliamentary scrutiny of

security and defence issues. It was inappropriate to reason in black-and-white terms, taking the view that some people, including the speaker, were opposed to enhancing democratic scrutiny while others were in favour of such scrutiny. The issue was a different one: namely what should be done to guarantee effective democratic scrutiny when sovereignty was transferred to the European Union? The question, therefore, was whether the solution advocated in the report was indeed the best one. In the speaker's opinion, it was not. He might have been able to agree had it been presented as an interim solution, but this was not the option that had finally been chosen by the Committee, contrary to what might be thought by some delegates who were about to vote in favour of the draft recommendation, decision and order. In fact the proposed solution involved setting up the European Security and Defence Assembly in permanent competition with the European Parliament, which was unacceptable for reasons of efficiency as well as from the political standpoint.

Indeed, within a truly political Union there was no room for a second assembly, whose existence would only complicate the decision-making process. What was undoubtedly needed was a body along the lines suggested by Mrs Lalumière; but to create a kind of European Senate would be tantamount to reviving the idea of nation states which was unacceptable to some people and would weaken the European Parliament. Moreover, such a construct would be totally at odds with the real direction in which events were moving.

In short, the speaker might have been able to accept the report had it underlined that the proposed solution was only a provisional one. However, the proposal it put forward was not a satisfactory long-term solution.

Mrs DURRIEU (*France*) welcomed the progress being made towards security and defence Europe, and hence towards a peaceful Europe. Defence Europe would be a vital component of political Europe. The question was not only whether this political Europe was wanted and whether it was wanted soon, but also whether everyone understood it to mean the same thing. Clearly this was not the case. Mr De Decker, for example, had spoken of a federal Europe, while Mr Guardans' vision was totally different. Clearly then, it was too soon to make a final decision and the debate should continue in order to find a solution politically acceptable to all.

There had, however, been real progress in terms of organising forces. A work programme had been defined and would be adhered to. Nevertheless, as had been pointed out by the French European Affairs Minister Mr Moscovici when addressing the Assembly, there was an institutional "grey area" which would remain for some time to come. The only principle on which there was unanimity was that of democratic scrutiny. That principle should be defended by parliamentarians in their national parliaments and in the European Parliament and provision made for it. However, as underlined by Mr De Decker – who should return to the Assembly more often! – as long as the armed forces remained under national authority and depended on national funding, scrutiny over the relevant policy would remain a matter for the national parliaments. Nevertheless it was logical that the European Parliament should seek to expand its role in spite of its lack of experience in the field of security and defence, and of the fact that it had no role in approving the funds required for the deployment of troops.

The WEU Assembly intended to continue playing its role. There were many questions awaiting a political solution, and that solution might only be found during the final phase in the development of the political Europe which certain people, including the speaker, wished to see become a reality.

In the meantime the WEU Assembly existed and one could not simply ignore its founding Treaty and call for the creation of a new assembly. With its 10 full members and 28 members in all it already provided the forum that Mrs Lalumière had called for. France did not intend to put an end to that Assembly and would certainly in no way strive to do so during its Presidency.

The Assembly was being perfectly consistent in putting forward proposals to fill the vacuum that would exist as long as the institutional "grey area" persisted. It should not leave it to others to fill the gap, but should rather work on a different solution, the precise contours of which remained to be defined. In the meantime all the members of the French Delegation, whatever their political colour, would unanimously support Mr Behrendt's report and defend it vis-à-vis the national authorities once France took on the Presidency.

The PRESIDENT closed the list of speakers and thanked all those who had participated in the debate for the clarity and conciseness of their contributions.

Noting that some of those who had put their names on the list of speakers had not been able to take the floor, he requested them to send their comments in writing to the Office of the Clerk so that they could be published in the appendix to the record of proceedings.

He then gave the floor to the Rapporteur and to the Chairman of the Political Committee.

Mr BEHRENDT (*Germany*) also thanked all the speakers. In answer to Mrs Furubjelke's remarks he wished to clear up a misunderstanding, since what was proposed in the report was to explicitly guarantee the associate members and associate partners at least the same rights as those they currently enjoyed in WEU. Regarding recital (*viii*) in the preamble to the draft recommendation, the aim was to ensure that there was parliamentary scrutiny in all areas for which the High Representative currently had competence, but for which the European Parliament had no remit. Hence the Austrian and British delegates should rest assured that the prerogatives of the national parliaments would not be impinged upon.

Mrs Lalumière's scepticism had come as no surprise to the Rapporteur, since there was clearly a conflict of interest between the European Parliament and the WEU Assembly. But this was all the more reason to strengthen the dialogue in order to find common ground and clearly establish the prerogatives of each of the two assemblies, the WEU Assembly being the body which collectively represented the national parliaments.

As Mr Davis had stressed, governments were not interested in parliamentary scrutiny and Mrs Durrieu was therefore quite right to call on parliamentarians to defend their role. What was important was not to mourn the past and the old Assembly, but rather to forge ahead by adopting the proposals he as Rapporteur had put forward. This was only one step in the process and it would have to be followed up by action. All members present should therefore be ready for such action vis-à-vis their parliaments and governments.

Mr MARSHALL (*United Kingdom*) said that the Political Committee had unanimously, bar one abstention, adopted the report the previous day.

The PRESIDENT noted that no amendments to the draft recommendation contained in Document 1684 had been tabled, and that there had been no request for a roll-call vote. He therefore invited the members of the Standing Committee to proceed to a vote by a show of hands.

The draft recommendation was adopted unanimously.

The PRESIDENT invited the members of the Standing Committee to vote, also by a show of hands, on the draft decision contained in Document 1684.

The draft decision was adopted.

Finally, the President put the draft order contained in Document 1684 to the vote.

The draft order was adopted unanimously.

The PRESIDENT congratulated Mr Behrendt as well as all those who had contributed to the drafting of this important report. He was convinced that the Assembly had just taken a major step forward and that, as he had indicated to the Portuguese Prime Minister that morning, the Lisbon Initiative would go down in history. Now the work must be taken ahead during the June session.

In conclusion, Mr Bühler expressed his gratitude to the Portuguese Parliament for its excellent organisation of the special session.

The sitting was closed at 15.55.

APPENDIX

Other contributions from session participants

Mrs BELOHORSKÁ (*Slovakia, associate partner*) said that all political parties were obliged to reach consensus on security and defence matters in order to ensure lasting peace and stability. In this respect Slovakia had proved that it was a member of the family of European democracies by taking practical measures and accepting responsibility in helping to promote a common security and defence policy.

Slovakia fully supported the development of the ESDP and the creation of European crisis-management capabilities, separable but not separate from NATO, as they would make for enhanced stability and security in Europe.

It supported and was closely monitoring implementation of the decisions taken at the Cologne and Helsinki summits regarding the gradual integration of certain WEU functions into the EU by the end of the year 2000, and the strengthening of European defence capabilities. This effort would be greatly enhanced by the establishment of formal relations between the EU and NATO at the European Council meeting in Feira. European involvement in security and defence matters should under no circumstances undermine the role of NATO or the link between the United States and its European allies. The involvement of WEU associate partners in ESDP and CFSP activities should continue after the transfer of functions from WEU to the EU as it was an important part of their preparations for accession to the EU and NATO. The appropriate cooperation structures enabling the applicant countries to engage in dialogue with the EU on security issues should be set up as soon as possible and in due course they would help to strengthen European military capabilities.

Slovakia welcomed the initiative the Portuguese Presidency had taken to review the format of meetings between the Political Committee and the associates. However, the status, role and participation of applicant countries in the decision-making process needed clarifying.

Slovakia believed that the proposal to create a European Security and Defence Assembly was a practical step forward that deserved support and approval. The participation of all the countries concerned was essential.

Mr KANERVA (*Finland, observer*) congratulated the Rapporteur, observing that the report represented a comprehensive analysis of the different aspects of parliamentary scrutiny and the possible options for the WEU Assembly in the future. In Cologne and Helsinki the European Union had taken the decision to develop a Common European Security and Defence Policy. The first steps towards its implementation were now under way and the wider aspects of those decisions were currently being discussed in the IGC. In addition to the issues referred to in the report, the speaker particularly wished to draw attention to the role of national parliaments in democratic scrutiny of policy as this was the most direct channel for parliamentarians to influence the decision-making process.

Finland was very happy with the way its own system worked and the opportunity it gave the Finnish Parliament to take part in EU decision-making. To involve national parliaments in scrutinising the EU process extended the reach of democracy. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament was fully entitled to be kept informed and to express the latter's view. It was important to bear in mind this national aspect of parliamentary scrutiny when decisions were being made on future frameworks.

The speaker found the new role proposed for the WEU Assembly, which had been actively involved throughout in discussions on the future parliamentary dimension, interesting as a complementary form of parliamentary involvement in the European Security and Defence Policy.

II

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

The sitting was opened at 09.10, with Mr Bühler, President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

1. Attendance list

The names of the participants who attended the special session are given in the attendance list¹.

2. Examination of credentials and changes in membership of committees

In accordance with Rule 5.1 of the Rules of Procedure, the Assembly took note of the letter from the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe informing the Assembly that the credentials of the representatives and substitutes had been ratified by that Assembly [Document A/WEU/SC (2000) 1].

The President informed the Assembly of changes in membership of committees proposed by the German Delegation as they appeared in the Assembly List.

These changes were ratified.

3. Tribute to two former members of the Assembly

The President informed members of the death of two members of the Assembly, that of Mr Colvin several weeks past and Mr Ferris on the eve of the present session.

Members observed one minute's silence.

4. Address by Mr Medeiros Ferreira, Leader of the Portuguese Delegation to the WEU Assembly

Mr Medeiros Ferreira, Leader of the Portuguese Delegation to the WEU Assembly, addressed the Assembly.

5. Address by the President of the Assembly

The President addressed the Assembly.

6. Address by Mr de Almeida Santos, Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament

Mr de Almeida Santos, Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament, addressed the Assembly.

7. European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension

(Presentation of the report of the Political Committee, Doc. 1684)

The report of the Political Committee was presented by Mr Behrendt, Rapporteur.

8. Address by Mr De Decker, President of the Belgian Senate

Mr De Decker, President of the Belgian Senate, addressed the Assembly.

9. Address by Mr Wegener, Deputy Secretary-General of WEU, representing Mr Solana, Secretary-General of WEU and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Council of the European Union

Mr Wegener, Deputy Secretary-General of WEU, addressed the Assembly.

¹ See page 5.

10. European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension

(Debate on the report of the Political Committee, Doc. 1684)

The debate was opened.

Speakers: MM Eyskens, Pastusiak (*Poland, associate member*), Hornhues, de Puig, Bársony (*Hungary, associate member*), Glouchkov (*Bulgaria, associate partner*), Davis, Bal (*Turkey, associate member*), Schloten.

11. Address by Mrs Lalumière, Member of and Rapporteur for the European Parliament

Mrs Lalumière, Member of the European Parliament, addressed the Assembly.

(Mr Medeiros Ferreira, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the Chair).

12. Address by Mr Castro Caldas, Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council, representing Mr Oliveira Guterres, Prime Minister of Portugal and President of the European Council

Mr Castro Caldas, Minister for Defence of Portugal and co-Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council, addressed the Assembly.

Mr Castro Caldas replied to questions from Mrs Lalumière (*Member of the European Parliament*), MM Schloten, Mota Amaral and Cherribi.

(Business was adjourned at 12.40 and resumed at 15.00, with Mr Bühler, President of the Assembly, in the Chair).

13. European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension

(Resumed debate on the report of the Political Committee, and votes on the draft texts, Doc. 1684)

The debate was resumed.

Speakers: MM Blaauw, Gürkan (*Turkey, associate member*), Mrs Furubjelke (*Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Swedish Parliament*), MM Wilkinson, Lisinenko (*observer from the Russian Federation*) Konecny (*Austria, observer*), Pálsson (*Iceland, associate member*), Guardans i Cambó and Mrs Durrieu.

Mr Behrendt, Rapporteur, and Mr Marshall, Chairman of the Political Committee, replied to the speakers.

The Standing Committee proceeded to vote on the draft recommendation.

The draft recommendation was adopted unanimously (This recommendation is published as No. 664).

The Committee proceeded to vote on the draft decision.

The draft decision was adopted. (This decision is published as No. 23).

The Committee proceeded to vote on the draft order.

The draft order was adopted unanimously. (This order is published as No. 112).

The sitting was closed at 15.55.

RECOMMENDATION 664

on European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension

The Assembly,

- (i) Welcoming the progress being made to develop a Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) in the European Union and to deploy by the year 2003 a European force up to corps level capable of carrying out the full range of Petersberg tasks;
- (ii) Taking note of the establishment in the European Union as of 1 March 2000 of a number of interim bodies with responsibility for preparing decisions on how the CESDP is to function;
- (iii) Emphasising how important it is for the 15 EU governments to conclude with non-EU European NATO member countries and candidates for accession to the European Union an appropriate multilateral agreement granting those countries the necessary collective participation rights in a wider “European Security and Defence Framework”;
- (iv) Pointing out that, notwithstanding the forthcoming transfer of WEU’s Petersberg functions to the European Union, the WEU Council retains full responsibility for meeting its obligations arising out of the modified Brussels Treaty and making an annual report to the Assembly on its corresponding activities;
- (v) Stressing therefore that the Assembly must continue to exercise its treaty-based rights and responsibilities for as long as the modified Brussels Treaty remains in force;
- (vi) Welcoming the Council’s reply to Recommendation 653 in which it confirms the importance of the parliamentary dimension of the debate on European security and defence and its determination to continue to fully abide by its treaty-based obligations in its relations with the Assembly;
- (vii) Underlining, on the other hand, the need to make provision for appropriate democratic scrutiny of all activities and decisions emanating from the EU bodies in the areas hitherto covered by WEU;
- (viii) Convinced that such scrutiny must be exercised by a European parliamentary body in which the collective voice of parliaments of all the countries included in the European Security and Defence Framework can be heard;
- (ix) Convinced also that the Assembly’s present configuration including delegations from parliaments of all the countries which are to be involved in the European Security and Defence Framework, and its long experience of debating security and defence issues make it the appropriate body to be taken as a model for exercising democratic scrutiny over the activities that are to be transferred from WEU to the European Union;
- (x) Emphasising that such scrutiny does not prejudice the rights and responsibilities of the European Parliament as laid down in the Treaty on European Union or the exercise of its rights of information and consultation in the field of the CFSP;
- (xi) Resolved to endeavour to arrive at a joint approach with the European Parliament in order to seek an improvement in democratic scrutiny in the EU on the basis of the complementary areas of competence of both parliamentary bodies, one of which represents the collective will of nations whereas the other represents Community interests,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Propose that the European Union endorse the transformation of the WEU Assembly into a European Security and Defence Assembly which shall be composed of delegations of the 15 EU member states, delegations of the 13 non-EU European NATO member countries and candidates for accession to the European Union with the following remit:
 - it shall receive an annual report on the European Union's activities in the field of the European Security and Defence Policy, particularly in the context of the European Security and Defence Framework;
 - the delegations of the 15 EU member states shall have equal rights and responsibilities;
 - the delegations of non-EU European NATO member countries and candidates for accession to the European Union shall have at least the same participation rights as those they have acquired in the WEU Assembly as associate members and associate partners;
 - the activities of the European Security and Defence Assembly shall not prejudice the rights and responsibilities of the European Parliament as laid down in the Treaty on European Union;
2. Urge WEU member and observer countries in their capacity as EU member states to ensure that the European Security and Defence Assembly's remit as described above is given a formal legal basis in a protocol to be annexed to the revised Treaty on European Union and that until the protocol enters into force, it is recognised as the interim European Security and Defence Assembly;
3. Support the proposal that appropriate cooperation between the European Security and Defence Assembly and the European Parliament should be established on the basis of the complementary areas of competence of both parliamentary bodies, one of which represents the collective will of nations whereas the other represents Community interests;
4. Continue to make an annual report to the Assembly and, for as long as the recommendations made in paragraphs 1 and 2 above have not been given effect, include in it all the activities the EU and its interim bodies conduct as part of the functions WEU is to transfer to the European Union.

DECISION 23

on European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension

The Assembly,

- (i) Welcoming the progress being made to develop a Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) in the European Union and to deploy by the year 2003 a European force up to corps level capable of carrying out the full range of Petersberg tasks;
- (ii) Taking note of the establishment in the European Union as of 1 March 2000 of a number of interim bodies with responsibility for preparing decisions on how the CESDP is to function;
- (iii) Emphasising how important it is for the 15 EU governments to conclude with non-EU European NATO member countries and candidates for accession to the European Union an appropriate multilateral agreement granting those countries the necessary collective participation rights in a wider “European Security and Defence Framework”;
- (iv) Pointing out that, notwithstanding the forthcoming transfer of WEU’s Petersberg functions to the European Union, the WEU Council retains full responsibility for meeting its obligations arising out of the modified Brussels Treaty and making an annual report to the Assembly on its corresponding activities;
- (v) Stressing therefore that the Assembly must continue to exercise its treaty-based rights and responsibilities for as long as the modified Brussels Treaty remains in force;
- (vi) Underlining, on the other hand, the need to ensure appropriate democratic scrutiny of all activities and decisions emanating from the EU interim bodies in the areas hitherto covered by WEU,

DECIDES

1. To take without delay such steps as are necessary to transform the WEU Assembly into an interim European Security and Defence Assembly with responsibility for monitoring the development of the Common European Security and Defence Policy in a wider European Security and Defence Framework;
2. To take measures to ensure that in the interim European Security and Defence Assembly:
 - the delegations of the 15 EU member states have equal rights and responsibilities;
 - the delegations of non-EU European NATO members and candidates for accession to the EU have at least the same participation rights as those they have acquired in the WEU Assembly as associate members and associate partners;
3. To inform the EU and WEU Councils and especially the countries holding the present and forthcoming EU/WEU Presidency of the Assembly’s initiative as set out in the paragraphs above, with a view to formal endorsement of the interim assembly by the EU;
4. To ensure that all 28 national parliaments involved in the European Security and Defence Framework are fully conversant with these proposals and give them their support;
5. To send the relevant proposals to the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly as well as to other interested international parliamentary bodies.

ORDER 112*on European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension*

The Assembly,

- (i) Welcoming the progress being made to develop a Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) in the European Union and to deploy by the year 2003 a European force up to corps level capable of carrying out the full range of Petersberg tasks;
- (ii) Taking note of the establishment in the European Union as of 1 March 2000 of a number of interim bodies with responsibility for preparing decisions on how the CESDP is to function;
- (iii) Emphasising how important it is for the 15 EU governments to conclude with non-EU European NATO member countries and candidates for accession to the European Union an appropriate multilateral agreement granting those countries the necessary collective participation rights in a wider “European Security and Defence Framework”;
- (iv) Pointing out that, notwithstanding the forthcoming transfer of WEU’s Petersberg functions to the European Union, the WEU Council retains full responsibility for meeting its obligations arising out of the modified Brussels Treaty and making an annual report to the Assembly on its corresponding activities;
- (v) Stressing therefore that the Assembly must continue to exercise its treaty-based rights and responsibilities for as long as the modified Brussels Treaty remains in force;
- (vi) Underlining, on the other hand, the need to ensure appropriate democratic scrutiny of all activities and decisions emanating from the EU interim bodies in the areas hitherto covered by WEU,

INSTRUCTS ITS PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE

To invite the parliaments of the five WEU observer countries to participate with immediate effect in all the WEU Assembly’s activities with delegations composed in the same way as the delegations of full members.

*The Lisbon Initiative on
European security and defence: the parliamentary dimension*

With the decisions on the European Union's Security and Defence Policy taken in Cologne and Helsinki, the member states have embarked on one of the most ambitious intergovernmental projects in the history of Europe.

This European Security and Defence Policy requires democratic legitimacy and accountability - the Parliamentary Dimension.

Therefore, the members of the Assembly, representing our national parliaments:

1. are determined both to maintain and carry forward the parliamentary experience of the sole European treaty-based Assembly for security and defence questions;
2. have decided to transform the WEU Assembly into an **interim European Security and Defence Assembly** without delay;
3. will centre this interim Assembly on the EU's 15 core nations, while aiming to include all other countries which will participate in the wider European Security and Defence Framework in due course;
4. strongly urge the governments of the 15 EU member states to confirm the legal and material basis for this new Assembly as the parliamentary dimension for the European Security and Defence Policy;
5. are willing to enlist the European Parliament's cooperation in this initiative.



Klaus BÜHLER, MdB
President of the WEU Assembly

21 March 2000
Lisbon

