

MEETING OF THE WEU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
ON 23 APRIL 1990

COMMUNIQUE

1. The Foreign and Defence Ministers of Western European Union, meeting in Brussels on 23 April 1990, were particularly pleased that the ratification of the Protocol of Accession of Portugal and Spain to the modified Brussels Treaty had been completed.

2. Ministers welcomed the sweeping changes which had taken place in Europe since their meeting in November 1989. The division of Europe is now being overcome. The emergence of new democracies following free elections is opening up new prospects for broader cooperation among Europeans.

They welcomed the return to democratic standards which the elections in the GDR and Hungary represent, and looked forward to those to be held shortly in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The prospect of the forthcoming attainment of German unity, founded on the unequivocal expression of the wishes of the population concerned, is an opportunity for Europe as a whole and an important step forward towards constructing a just and lasting peaceful order.

The united Germany will thus take its place alongside its fellow members of the North Atlantic Alliance and alongside its partners who have chosen to build a European Union.

3. Ministers welcomed the new impetus being given to the CSCE process and the prospect of a conference of Heads of State and/or of Government taking place by the end of 1990.

The CSCE is the framework within which all Europeans, together with the United States and Canada, can establish new relations and develop cooperative structures capable of assuring each one of them that peace and stability will be maintained and their legitimate interests safeguarded.

4. It was with this new prospect in view that Ministers recalled the importance they attach to building a European Union consistent with the Single European Act which they have signed as members of the European Community. They also reaffirmed the importance of the Atlantic Alliance and Western European Union as essential instruments for the security of the member countries and as factors for stability throughout Europe.

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The continued presence of the forces of the United States and of Canada stationed in Europe provides a necessary contribution to our common security and overall stability, together with the contribution of WEU countries and their other European partners. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of The Hague Platform and the Comprehensive Concept of arms control and disarmament of the Atlantic Alliance.

5. Ministers stressed the importance they attach to the concluding of a CFE agreement and to the holding of the CSCE summit before the end of the year. They regard such an agreement as an important achievement in the process of improving security and adapting military postures to the far-reaching changes - both military and political - which Europe is witnessing. They considered that the momentum of the negotiation process should be maintained so as to enhance stability, promote cooperative structures and expedite the attainment of a new peace order in Europe. Agreement on new confidence and security-building measures in parallel with a CFE agreement would contribute greatly to that end.

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6. European stability continues to be based on the collective and individual commitment of all partners in the Alliance. It is also an essential matter for the Europeans themselves. For the Europeans to enhance their contribution to stability on the European continent and to the protection of their legitimate security interests, a greater degree of cooperation will be fundamental.

Ministers therefore recognized the need to continue working to strengthen the European identity and to promote the process of European integration including the security dimension. This growing identity is destined to be given concrete expression in the form of close, and even new cooperation between the member countries.

In the field of verification of the CFE Treaty and "Open Skies", Ministers welcomed the specific measures which had been adopted by WEU member countries particularly as regards the opening of national inspection teams to include inspectors from other WEU member countries.

On the subject of the computerized processing of verification data, Ministers welcomed the fact that a WEU group of experts had jointly defined realistic parameters for a system of interconnected data bases, and that this common WEU viewpoint had been taken into account by the Atlantic Alliance.

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Ministers also noted the progress which had been made in studying the possibilities for European cooperation in the field of space-based observation systems for the purposes of arms control verification, and also for crisis and environmental monitoring. They called for concrete proposals to be submitted to them at their next meeting, inter alia with a view to examining the possibility of establishing a satellite verification agency.

7. Ministers recognized that European security has an extra-European dimension. As a consequence the European countries follow closely developments in other regions of the world, in particular the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

8. Peace, security and cooperation in Europe depend on an intensification of the dialogue at all levels. With regard to the new tasks for the Organization proposed by the incoming Presidency, Ministers agreed on the opportuneness of establishing contacts for two-way information with the democratically elected governments in Central and Eastern Europe. They instructed the Presidency and the Secretary-General to organize these contacts. Ministers recognized that, by virtue of its activities, the Parliamentary Assembly of WEU has an important role to play in opening up contacts with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This has been illustrated by the recent Extraordinary Session of the Assembly held in Luxembourg on 22 and 23 March. Likewise, the WEU Institute for Security Studies, whose establishment was decided upon at the last Council, and which is to begin operation from July this year, also has an active role to play in pooling ideas and in drawing together the new strands of thinking being developed in both the East and the West.

9. Ministers congratulated the Belgian Presidency on the particularly active way in which they had conducted the work of WEU. They hoped that, under its impetus and that of the incoming French Presidency, there would be a continued and intensive process of reflexion and concertation among the member countries, particularly with a view to the two major meetings scheduled to take place before the end of the year, namely the CSCE summit and an Atlantic summit both aimed at giving appropriate responses to the changes taking place in Europe.

WEU provides an entirely suitable forum for its members to prepare a common approach to these forthcoming meetings.