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**The associate partners and the new European security architecture  
with special reference to regional security problems**

**REPORT**

**submitted on behalf of the Political Committee  
by Mr Martínez Casañ, Mr Hancock and Mr Blaauw, Rapporteurs**

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

<sup>2</sup> *Members of the Committee: Mr Baumel (Chairman); MM Blaauw, N ... (Vice-Chairmen); MM Behrendt, Bianchi, Brancati, Sir Sydney Chapman, MM Clerfayt, Cusimano, Dias, Mrs Dumont, Mrs Durrieu, MM Ehrmann, Evangelisti, Eyskens, Fayot, Guardans I Cambó, Haack, Hornhues, Lord Kirkhill (Alternate: O'Hara), MM Lemoine, Liapis, van der Linden, Marshall (Alternate: Mrs Fyfe), Martínez Casañ, Micheloyiannis, Mrs Nagy, Lord Ponsonby, MM Puche Rodríguez, Roseta, Schmitz, Skoularikis, Sterzing, Timmermans (Alternate: Valk), Volcic (Alternate: Mrs Squarcialupi), Wray, Yañez-Barnuevo, N...*

*Associate members: MM Adamczyk, Gundersen, Kosmo, Pastusiak*

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***Draft Recommendation******on the associate partners and the new European security architecture  
with special reference to regional security problems***

The Assembly,

- (i) Convinced of the indivisible nature of European security and defence;
- (ii) Recalling that WEU and its Assembly provide the only possibility for the associate partner countries to participate collectively, in a European multilateral framework, in the discussions on the definition of a security and defence Europe and in carrying out the Petersberg tasks;
- (iii) Stressing that the work done by WEU in its configuration at 28 makes an essential contribution to strengthening the security and stability of Europe as a whole and that this is an important component of its *acquis* which must be safeguarded and developed;
- (iv) Regretting that neither the Bremen or Luxembourg WEU Ministerial Councils nor the Cologne European Council entered into any precise commitments with regard to preserving the role of the associate partners and their participation in the future European Security and Defence Identity;
- (v) Welcoming the negotiations that the EU plans to start with certain associate partner countries with a view to their future accession, giving all associate partners clear prospects of EU membership;
- (vi) Welcoming the fact that negotiations for accession to the EU will be opened for the rest of the candidates in Helsinki, putting them on an equal footing with the first group and associating them more closely in the process of European construction;
- (vii) Considering nonetheless the complexity of the EU enlargement process and the uncertainty with regard to the prospects of NATO opening its doors to new members;
- (viii) Welcoming the attitude adopted by the associate partner countries during the Kosovo crisis;
- (ix) Welcoming especially the participation of certain associate partner countries in ongoing WEU missions, in particular, that of MAPE in Albania;
- (x) Welcoming the remarkable progress made by all the associate partner countries towards the peaceful settlement of differences among themselves or with third countries, and the establishment of good political and economic relations with all neighbouring countries;
- (xi) Stressing that it is of the utmost importance for security and stability in Europe to support the efforts to enhance regional cooperation;
- (xii) Stressing also that a possible transfer of WEU functions to the EU must not lead to the creation of new dividing lines or to reducing security and stability in Europe, but on the contrary, to improving the situation in this respect;
- (xiii) Convinced of the key role of Ukraine as a European partner for maintaining a balance and security in the eastern part of Europe, and of its importance for the security of Europe as a whole;
- (xiv) Welcoming the adoption of an “action plan for political dialogue and practical cooperation between WEU and Ukraine”;
- (xv) Taking note of the information provided in the first part of the 45th annual report of the Council on the development of the associate partner countries’ contribution to WEU’s activities;
- (xvi) Emphasising the importance of the contributions that the representatives of the parliaments of the associate partner countries make to the Assembly’s work both in committees and during plenary sessions;
- (xvii) Drawing attention to Resolution 288 adopted by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly concerning the role of WEU in the European security and defence architecture,

**RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL**

1. Inform the Assembly about NATO's response to the WEU proposal that the possibility of contributions from the associate partners be included in the framework for WEU's involvement in the NATO defence planning process;
2. Encourage all associate partner countries which have not yet done so to provide the latest information regarding their contribution to the list of FAWEU for the purpose of its annual update;
3. Inform the Assembly about developments that have taken place in the cooperation between the Military Staff and the military representatives of the associate partners since June 1999;
4. Invite the associate partner countries to participate in WEU's further work on strengthening its collective capabilities in the light of the audit of assets and capabilities available for European-led operations;
5. Urge its member countries, as members also of the EU, to ensure that the EU draws up arrangements allowing the associate partner countries to:
  - (a) participate, as they currently do in the WEU bodies, in the activities of the structures to be set up within the EU, in order to enable the Union to establish a European security and defence policy;
  - (b) be associated, as they currently are in the framework of WEU, in EU decisions concerning Petersberg missions and their implementation;
  - (c) participate in exercises and in the planning process and make their forces available to the EU for specific operations;
  - (d) participate in the command structures and decision-making process for all operations for which they make forces available;
6. Insist vis-à-vis the EU that the parliamentary representatives of the associate partner countries be able to continue participating in the parliamentary scrutiny of the European security and defence policy, as proposed by the Council to the Assembly in its Kirchberg Declaration;
7. Study the development of relations with Ukraine, making full use of the possibilities offered by the action plan adopted by WEU and Ukraine at the end of June 1999.

*Draft Order*

*on the associate partners and the new European security architecture  
with special reference to regional security problems*

The Assembly,

- (i) Considering the importance of the contributions made by the representatives of the parliaments of the associate partner countries to its work both in committees and during plenary sessions;
- (ii) Recalling the provisions of Rule 17.2 and 17.3 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure,

**INSTRUCTS ITS PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE**

To define arrangements for the participation of the representatives of the parliaments of WEU's associate partners in accordance with Rule 17.3 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure.

## *Explanatory Memorandum*

*(submitted by Mr Martínez Casañ, Mr Hancock and Mr Blauuw, Rapporteurs)*

### *I. Introduction*

1. In view of the decisions taken at the NATO Summit in Washington and the WEU Ministerial Council in Bremen, as well as the impending Cologne European Council which would certainly have implications for the future of WEU and hence for the role of its associate partners in European defence, the WEU Assembly during its June 1999 session adopted an order instructing its Political Committee to “examine closely the decisions taken by the EU Council in Cologne on 3-4 June 1999 and their consequences for WEU’s associate partners” and to “prepare a progress report on the subject for the next session of the Assembly, including proposals to ensure that the associate partners can participate appropriately in the further development of a European Security and Defence Identity in the framework of the EU, with at least the same rights as they currently enjoy within WEU”<sup>1</sup>.

2. Almost six months after the Cologne Summit, we see the wisdom of that decision. Not only was the future role of the associate partners with regard to the European Security and Defence Identity to be developed within WEU scarcely touched upon in Cologne, but today we are none the wiser as to how the WEU – or EU – Council intends to organise its future relations with those countries and safeguard their participation rights. For, in your Rapporteurs’ opinion, their involvement is indeed a valuable asset, not only for WEU but for the European security balance in general. This is why they deemed it appropriate in the present report to describe the associate partners’ perspectives in the new European architecture, with special reference to European regional security problems, in order to illustrate the vital importance of their security policy – in both the WEU and regional framework – for the cause of European security and defence.

3. The conclusion to be drawn from an analysis of this issue seems to be straightforward: the group of associate partners is composed of countries that adhere to the same democratic principles, both at national and international level, as

EU member states. Moreover, these are countries which have been actively involved for many years in European defence bodies. It therefore seems inconceivable that they should now find themselves – even if only partially or temporarily – sidelined in the new European architecture. Such disregard for their importance would be neither politically nor morally justifiable and would be tantamount to suggesting that the spirit of Cologne was to reduce, rather than enhance, European security as a whole.

4. Thus, on 5 November 1999, at the initiative of the Lithuanian Parliament and Government, the Assembly’s Political Committee organised a colloquy in Vilnius to discuss the security of the associate partners of Western European Union. This colloquy, attended by representatives of the seven WEU associate partners, namely, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, provided the opportunity for an in-depth debate on the impact on the security of those countries of the Washington and Cologne Summit decisions. It also illustrated that WEU and its Assembly today provide the only forum in which the associate partners can collectively participate in the discussions on defining a security and defence Europe.

### *II. The associate partners’ relations with NATO*

#### *(a) Historical background*

5. At its London Summit in 1990, the Atlantic Alliance, in a remarkable effort to adapt to the new political and strategic realities on the European continent, proposed for the first time to establish relations of friendship and cooperation with the countries of central and eastern Europe (CEECs) and offered, in particular, to organise regular diplomatic consultations, to strengthen military contacts and finally, to build a partnership<sup>2</sup>.

6. One year later, in 1991, at a time when NATO’s legitimacy as a military alliance could have been called into question following the dis-

<sup>1</sup> Assembly Document 1649, 19 May 1999.

<sup>2</sup> See the London Summit Final Communiqué, 5-6 July 1990.



solution of the Warsaw Pact, the Alliance adopted a new Strategic Concept at its Rome Summit. Most importantly, it was proposed to set up the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), a forum allowing certain former members of the Warsaw Pact to participate in some of the discussions among Alliance members on issues of security and defence, in order to establish peaceful relations of cooperation between countries which for many years had belonged to opposing blocs in Europe. The NACC, although essentially a consultative body to begin with, was nonetheless the first step on the path towards the gradual involvement of the central and eastern European countries in some of the Alliance's activities, thereby making a practical long-term contribution towards achieving the ideal of political and economic unity in Europe. The great majority of former Soviet bloc countries, including WEU's current associate partners, participated in the NACC, although they joined at different times according to the development of their political situation and especially to changes of mentality in each of those states.

*(b) Development of the associate partners' participation in NATO activities*

7. The Partnership for Peace (PfP), launched by NATO at its Brussels Summit in 1994, considerably enhanced participation by the central and eastern European countries in the bodies and activities of the Atlantic Alliance. This practical programme, set up within the NACC framework, went a step further than the dialogue which had been under way since 1991, creating real ties between Alliance partners and the central and eastern European countries.

8. The fundamental objectives of the Partnership for Peace were to:

- facilitate transparency in national defence planning and budgeting processes;
- ensure democratic scrutiny of defence forces;
- maintain the capability and readiness to contribute to operations under the auspices of the UN and/or the responsibility of the OSCE;
- strengthen cooperative military relations with NATO, with a view to developing joint planning, training and

exercises, so as to enhance the ability of PfP participants to undertake missions in the field of peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian operations, etc.;

- develop, over the longer term, forces better able to operate with those of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance.

9. All WEU's current associate partners, as well as the three new NATO members who were WEU associate partners for many years, joined the PfP within months of its creation in 1994, thereby demonstrating their resolve to participate actively in the new Euro-Atlantic security architecture, although this programme was not designed as a pre-accession programme. In keeping with the spirit and declared aims of the Partnership for Peace, they participated in its discussions and activities, with a view to enhancing stability and developing good-neighbourly relations in Europe. A practical contribution to the programme was the role they played in the creation and operations of IFOR, the multinational force for the implementation of the military provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Similarly, the associate partners made a direct contribution to setting up the stabilisation force, SFOR. The only state not to participate in the two abovementioned forces was Croatia.

10. Cooperation within the PfP being so clearly a success, the Alliance defence and foreign affairs ministers decided to bolster the Partnership. In 1997, in Madrid, they agreed to create the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) to replace the NACC, thereby setting up a new cooperation structure which built extensively on the experience of politico-military cooperation gleaned from the NACC and the PfP. The EAPC now provides the general framework for consultations not only with the associate partners, but also other countries of the region, with a view to enhancing cooperation within the strengthened Partnership. It also has the stated aim of allowing the PfP to acquire an enhanced operational capability and enabling the partners to participate more actively in the decision-making and planning processes.

11. Since 1997, therefore, the associate partners have been more actively involved in preparing and taking decisions relating to the organisa-

tion of the PfP operations in which they wish to take part. Their participation takes place essentially through the Political-Military Steering Committee and ranges from a simple exchange of views to full involvement in the decision-making process.

12. From an operational point of view, the enhanced Partnership enables the countries concerned to be involved in planning and conducting activities such as joint exercises. They do so by sending officers to the various NATO headquarters. Moreover, ongoing contacts are maintained through their permanent national missions within the NATO bodies.

*(c) Present situation and future prospects for NATO membership following the Washington Summit*

13. The most recent Alliance summit in Washington in April 1999 was above all the occasion on which the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to NATO was endorsed. These countries, which were invited to join NATO during the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Madrid in July 1997, have now become WEU associate members by virtue of their NATO membership. The Alliance has, however, refused to issue any further accession invitations to the remaining seven associate partners of WEU. Paragraph 7 of the Washington Communiqué makes this clear, while affirming that the doors of the Alliance remain open:

“We reaffirm today our commitment to the openness of the Alliance under Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty and in accordance with paragraph 8 of the Madrid Summit Declaration. We pledge that NATO will continue to welcome new members in a position to further the principles of the Treaty and contribute to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. This is part of an evolutionary process that takes into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe. Our commitment to enlargement is part of a broader strategy of projecting stability and working together with our Partners to build a Europe whole and free. The ongoing enlargement process strengthens the Alliance and enhances the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region. The three new members will not be the last.”

14. As noted in the Baumel report adopted by the Assembly in June 1999<sup>3</sup>, some countries are explicitly mentioned in the Communiqué and the first seven of these are all associate partners of WEU. But there are slight differences in the way in which the candidate countries are referred to. The Alliance, for example, “recognises” the “efforts and progress” in Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, while it “notes” the “recent positive developments” in Bulgaria and Slovakia. One wonders whether these subtle differences, rather than implying any ranking of the accession prospects of the various associate partners, are not simply a reflection of the close attention being paid to developments in these countries. The Alliance has in effect postponed any decision on the follow-up to be given to the enlargement process until its next summit meeting, to be held in 2002 at the latest. The accession prospects of our associate partners therefore remain unclear. However, a Membership Action Plan (MAP) has been drawn up with the official aim of giving the candidate countries “advice, assistance and practical support”. It includes the following elements:

- “the submission by aspiring members of individual annual national programmes on their preparations for possible future membership, covering political, economic, defence, resource, security and legal aspects;
- a focused and candid feedback mechanism on aspirant countries’ progress on their programmes that includes both political and technical advice, as well as annual 19+1 meetings at Council level to assess progress;
- a clearinghouse to help coordinate assistance by NATO and by member states to aspirant countries in the defence/military field;
- a defence planning approach for aspirants which includes the elaboration and review of agreed planning targets.”

<sup>3</sup> “WEU after the Washington and Cologne Summits – reply to the annual report of the Council”, Assembly Document 1652, Rapporteur: Mr Baumel.

15. The Membership Action Plan (MAP) does not, then, put forward any dates or guarantees for the future membership of our associate partners. However, it does impose upon them a series of obligations, such as that to provide proof of their progress in such diverse areas as the economy, defence and democracy. While some may perceive the MAP as marking the start of a pre-accession phase, others consider that it may on the contrary draw out the whole process. The associate partners' poor prospects of accession to NATO are an argument in favour of enhancing their status within WEU, although unfortunately the Bremen Declaration makes no mention of that issue.

### *III. The associate partners' relations with the European Union*

#### *(a) From association agreements to Agenda 2000*

16. The association agreements signed between the European Union and the central and eastern European countries in 1992 (1995 in the case of Slovenia), which created a framework for bilateral cooperation, were the first step on the road towards EU membership for those countries. The agreements covered many areas (trade, competition, harmonisation of legislation, compliance with standards, etc.). The joint structures created under the agreements (councils, association committees, parliamentary committees) provided a forum for consultations with the candidate countries.

17. The work done within the framework provided by the agreements should make it possible to evaluate those countries' progress towards adopting the Community *acquis*.

18. Given that the agreements cover most areas concerned by the *acquis*, they are used as a basis on which to help the countries concerned draw up their national programmes with a view to adopting those *acquis*.

19. WEU's associate partners have all concluded association agreements with the EU, although the dates of signature and entry into force of the agreements vary from one country to another, depending on developments at national level.

20. In 1993, the Copenhagen European Council decided that all associated countries from central and eastern Europe which so requested

would be entitled to accede to the European Union, provided that they complied with a number of criteria and met with the obligations of membership. Aspiring members must, *inter alia*, have achieved:

- stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- a functioning market economy;
- the capacity to cope with the competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;
- the ability to take on the obligations deriving from membership and the Community *acquis*, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

21. With its creation of the PHARE programme, the Copenhagen Council set up a more effective structure for assisting the countries of central and eastern Europe.

22. The European Council, meeting in Essen in December 1994, decided to improve upon the process of convergence between the EU and the central and eastern European countries by drawing up a pre-accession strategy based on three elements: the association agreements, a structured dialogue and the PHARE programme.

#### *(b) Agenda 2000*

23. At its meeting in Madrid in December 1995, the European Council instructed the Commission to draft a report on the impact of enlargement on Community policy. In 1997 the Commission submitted its views in the three-volume document known as Agenda 2000.

24. The first of these (for a stronger, broader Union) reviews EU policy. The second deals with the challenges of enlargement, focusing more specifically on strengthening the pre-accession strategy. It sets out the aims of that strategy, describes the methods, financial resources and legal instruments to be used, and presents a new financial framework (2000-2006). The third contains the summaries of and conclusions resulting from the ten opinions drawn up by the Commission in response to the membership applications submitted by the candidate countries.

25. The report establishes for the first time and in detail a coherent financial link between developments in internal EU policy and enlargement. It clearly affirms the EU's financial commitment to future enlargement and provides answers to a number of practical issues related to the enlargement process, in particular by proposing new negotiating structures. In the Commission's view and according to Agenda 2000, the success of the accession strategy should combine:

- negotiations based on the principle of applying the Community *acquis* from the moment of accession, and
- a reinforced pre-accession strategy for all the applicant countries, designed to guarantee that they adopt as much of the Community *acquis* as possible before accession. It entails regular progress reports with a view to evaluating the applicant countries' progress towards meeting the accession criteria.

26. In Agenda 2000 the Commission also published its opinion on the various candidates. This included a comparative analysis in the light of the criteria set out in Copenhagen. According to the Commission view, none of the central and eastern European countries met all the necessary criteria for membership. However, it felt that the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia would be able to comply in the medium term with all the conditions if they maintained their efforts. It therefore recommended to the Council that it should begin negotiations with those five countries, which at the time were all associate partners of WEU, as well as with Cyprus. Three of them subsequently became WEU associate members following their accession to NATO.

*(c) Status of negotiations: the German and Finnish Presidencies and membership prospects*

27. As has already been mentioned, two WEU associate partners, Slovenia and Estonia, were in the first wave of candidates to be invited in 1998 to start negotiations. Also among the first wave, in addition to Poland, were Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Republic of Cyprus. The European Union is currently conducting separate negotiations with each of those countries. Since they started in autumn 1998, the negotiations have focused essentially on the easiest aspects of

harmonising the candidate countries' laws and practices with EU legislation.

28. However, the negotiations have now reached a difficult stage during which thorny subjects such as foreign trade relations must be tackled. Estonia, for example, has a free trade agreement with Ukraine which must cease to exist once it becomes a member of the EU. Indeed, as we know, while every member state has access to the EU's large single market, the terms of trading relations with third countries are decided in Brussels. However, Estonia is keen to maintain its free trade agreement with Ukraine, which gives it a sound trade surplus with that country despite an overall balance of trade deficit. Slovenia, for its part, would like to preserve for ten years the free trade agreements it has with Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia. The economic consequences for those countries of the war in Kosovo may induce the EU to be more flexible on that issue. The Czech Republic can also be mentioned, since it wishes to maintain its customs union with Slovakia, given the obvious economic consequences its abolition would have for both countries.

29. The other five associate partners of WEU (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia) are in the "second group". On 3 April 1998, the Commission started a review with those countries of the Community *acquis*. During the initial, multilateral phase of the review, 29 chapters of the *acquis* were covered. From March to July 1999, a more in-depth bilateral review was performed for each country and for all the chapters, with the exception of agriculture, to be examined separately in autumn 1999.

30. With reference to the final stages of the negotiations, we can describe the results of the German Presidency as globally positive for the enlargement process. The process is on a fairly fast track, and for each of the countries currently involved in negotiations, 15 out of a total of 31 chapters are being dealt with. But as mentioned above for Estonia and Slovenia, it is only now that the delicate phase of the negotiations is beginning and that the major difficulties are likely to arise.

31. Furthermore, when it assumed the EU Presidency, Finland set itself the objective of continuing to make progress in the areas already

being dealt with and to tackle, and as far as possible, settle, a number of new chapters. On the basis of the Commission report of 13 October 1999 on the progress of each of the applicant countries, which was adopted in principle by the 15 EU member states during their informal summit in Tampere, the Helsinki European Council in December is to examine the possibility of inviting other candidates to start negotiations.

32. The Commission report stresses in its conclusions the progress achieved by candidates with regard to the short-term priorities of the accession partnership, and proposes that negotiations should start soon with Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia, as well as Malta. However, the report also highlights the efforts that remain to be made by certain countries in a number of key areas such as agriculture, legislation and administration, and it criticises the Czech Republic and Poland for their slowness in carrying out certain reforms.

33. The six countries of the "second group" could be invited to the next EU Summit to be held in December, in Helsinki, as proposed by the Commission in its report of 13 October. According to the Commission and in the light of the review of the situation on a country-by-country basis, the five associate partners in the "second group" (as well as Malta) should be invited to start accession negotiations as of the December 1999 Helsinki Summit.

34. Although no date has officially been set for the next waves of enlargement, the Commission recommends in its report that the Council take all the necessary measures in order to be ready to decide on possible enlargement in 2002, which is the target date set by countries like Hungary and Poland.

35. Thus EU enlargement could start in 2003, provided that the Union creates the requisite financial and institutional conditions and that the negotiations have been completed by then. According to some analyses, the process of enlarging the Union to embrace the countries of central and eastern Europe could take from 2003 to 2009<sup>4</sup>. Hungary and Poland could join in 2003, followed in 2004 by the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Malta. They would be followed

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the analysis in *The Economist*, 2 October 1999, pages 32-33.

by Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia in 2005, then finally, Bulgaria and Romania in 2008. But the accession of all those countries is contingent on a sustained effort being made and on the success of the reforms that have already been or are about to be introduced.

36. The Finnish Presidency attaches particular importance to ensuring that the pre-accession partnership (which is due to be renewed) should be used in such a way as to encourage the efforts of the candidates to comply with the accession criteria. New forms of pre-accession aid will be introduced as of the beginning of the year 2000, thus generating new financial potential in this area. The Finnish Presidency has also pledged to prepare an Intergovernmental Conference on institutional reform, in preparation for enlargement. Indeed the general view is that if the 15 EU member states decide in Helsinki to comply with the Commission's recommendations, they will have to tackle the essential issue of the institutional reform which will be necessary for any EU enlargement in the medium term.

#### *IV. Relations with WEU*

##### *A. The participation of the associate partners in WEU: a major acquis*

37. The associate partner status currently enjoyed by seven countries enables them to participate in a considerable number of WEU activities and in most of the WEU bodies. Their involvement is both of an institutional and operational nature and covers several areas. The status has evolved since its inception and, in the view not only of your Rapporteurs but above all that of the states concerned, has definite advantages both for the associate partners themselves and for the Organisation.

##### *(a) Historical background*

38. The first contacts between the various WEU bodies (Council Secretariat, Institute for Security Studies) and the countries of central and eastern Europe, established in 1991 and 1992, were given an institutional framework by the WEU Council Decision (Bonn, June 1992) instituting the Forum of Consultation. The Decision provided for political consultations at various levels as well as an exchange of documents and information between the two parties. The success of this first formal cooperation arrangement led

to the creation of associate partner status in Kirchberg, in May 1994, for the nine central and eastern European countries which had already signed a Europe Agreement with the EU, namely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Slovenia joined their ranks in 1996. Among other things, the Kirchberg Declaration made provision for the associate partners' participation in Petersberg missions and the parallel development of their ties with WEU and those with the EU, and foresaw the relations between WEU and the associate partners as an evolving process.

39. Indeed, the Kirchberg decisions enabled the associate partners to:

- participate in meetings of the WEU Council;
- be briefed on the activities of the Council working groups and participate in them on an *ad hoc* basis;
- have a liaison arrangement with the Planning Cell;
- be involved in decisions by the Council regarding Petersberg missions and the relevant planning exercises, as well as in the operations themselves.

Furthermore the Kirchberg Declaration laid the foundations for participation by the parliamentary representatives of the associate partner countries in the activities of the Assembly. Although their participation is the result of an autonomous decision by the Assembly, it is important to recall that the Council of Ministers, at its meeting in Kirchberg, expressly invited the Assembly to involve them in this way.

40. Indeed, associate partner status has evolved within the WEU bodies since it was first introduced, as a result of pressure from two directions: from certain member countries such as Germany, which attach the utmost importance to integrating the new democracies in western institutions, and from the CEECs themselves, for whom WEU constituted a useful, flexible and efficient partner which could help considerably to assert their important role in the new order in Europe.

41. Among the various stages in the process of integrating the ten countries in the WEU family, we should make particular mention of:

- the Lisbon Declaration (May 1995), which made provision for extending the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Council at 27;
- the adoption in Madrid (November 1995) of a "common concept" on the challenges and risks to European security. It should be noted that this decision was taken at 27;
- the decision by the Erfurt Council (November 1997) to considerably extend the associate partners' participation in WEU activities, in particular those of WEAG, to include meetings of the NADs (National Armaments Directors) and the Staff Group, as well as specific armaments projects.

*(b) Present participation – political significance*

42. Since then, the ten associate partner countries (seven since the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland acquired associate member status in 1999) have become increasingly involved in WEU's activities, so much so that the large majority of decisions are now taken at 28. The present situation has been described in detail in the Political Committee's previous report<sup>5</sup> and rather than repeating ourselves here, we will simply stress the following points.

43. Associate partners now play an important role in the *operational sphere*. It should be noted that:

- liaison arrangements make information exchanges between the Planning Cell and associate partners possible;
- all associate partners have now signed security agreements providing a legal basis for the exchange of classified documents, intelligence and situation reports, which can be circulated to them with the originators' consent;
- several associate partners were actively involved in operations in Albania: Operation Alba (Romania, Slovenia) and MAPE (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia,

<sup>5</sup> See Assembly Document 1649, 19 May 1999; Rapporteur: Mr Martínez Casañ.

Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovenia);

- six out of seven associate partner countries have designated forces answerable to WEU (FAWEU);
- most of the associate partners (with the exception of Estonia and Lithuania) were involved in the Crisex 98 exercise and all participated in the preparations for Crisex/CMX 2000, to be conducted at 28;
- for WEU-led missions using NATO assets, participation by the associate partners is to be decided on a case-by-case basis<sup>6</sup>.

44. Thus there are numerous areas in which the associate partners cooperate actively with WEU and its full members. These forms of cooperation are beneficial not only to the associate partners themselves, but also to WEU as an organisation.

45. Associate partner status, thanks to the many forms of cooperation it offers, enables the central and eastern European countries to take an active part in the Western security system. While this status does not, of course, offer any guarantees regarding future full membership of the countries concerned in Western structures, it does provide a fairly satisfactory answer to their security requirements. Doubtless its most important advantage is to have averted once and for all the potentially dangerous marginalisation of the central and eastern European countries, by involving them in practical decisions and operations in the security and defence field.

46. The involvement of those countries in key WEU activities (armaments, training, MAPE etc.) is bound to be conducive to an adaptation of their doctrines and security structures and to their convergence with Western systems, which will be of considerable advantage for their future membership of the Western structures.

47. The presence of the associate partners within WEU and the status they enjoy there is

<sup>6</sup> See, in particular, the 45th annual report of the Council (1st part), Assembly Document 1661, 20 September 1999.

also beneficial to WEU as an organisation and to its members. Authorisations to overfly their territory during the recent crisis in Kosovo, their participation in missions such as MAPE and in exercises such as Crisex 98, their active involvement in the evaluation of that exercise and in the preparations for Crisex 2000 conducted by the Politico-Military Group at 28 and the support they offer for the Organisation's activities can only strengthen WEU's capacity to play its proper role in the security and defence field. Finally and above all, the practical involvement of non-full member countries in our Organisation's activities is a way of extending the zone of stability, peace and democracy beyond the borders of western Europe and of helping to anchor those countries in the Western world and in the system of democracy.

*B. The participation of the associate partners: an asset to be safeguarded and developed*

48. A number of relatively precise and, in the opinion of some people, strict rules have been laid down for the enlargement processes of NATO, the European Union and WEU. In compliance with what is commonly known as the Cahen doctrine, it seems to be generally accepted that only states which are members both of the EU and NATO are entitled to full membership of WEU. Furthermore, the associate member, associate partner and observer categories of status within WEU were defined according to the ties of the countries concerned with NATO and the EU. Hence particular attention must be given to the developments within those two organisations, in terms of their successive waves of enlargement, in order to determine what is likely to be the future status of a number of countries with regard to WEU.

49. As far as NATO is concerned, we note first of all that the enlargement process embarked on in Madrid, in 1997, has led this year to the accession to NATO of three new members, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, but that the short-term accession prospects for the other candidate countries do not look very bright, notwithstanding NATO's repeated assurances that its doors remain open to future new members. Indeed, a large number of aspiring members are without any precise timetable for their accession to NATO, despite the fact that this is the core of their foreign policy.

50. Furthermore, the EU's eastward enlargement has always been perceived as a long drawn-out process which must take place in stages, for obvious reasons related to the candidate countries' differing levels of economic development, the need to adapt their legislation to the Community *acquis*, the need for internal institutional reform within the EU before it can absorb 10 or 12 new members and, last but not least, the costs involved in this historic enlargement process, which although they have not yet been calculated, will certainly be enormous. Let us repeat that in your Rapporteurs' opinion, this gradual, step-by-step EU enlargement process – doubtless a necessity in the light of the indisputable political and economic realities – must under no circumstances lead, even temporarily, to a security vacuum for those countries which have not yet been able to join. However, this is precisely the danger that seems to be threatening those of our associate partners which are not included in the first waves of enlargement, should the WEU institutions cease to function as such without being replaced in the EU by similar bodies, in which at least the same level of participation as that enjoyed in WEU is guaranteed to the associate partners (in other words, those countries not yet accepted for EU membership).

51. It is precisely with regard to the future role of those countries, so important for the security balance in Europe, that the absence of any mention in the Bremen Declaration and only a passing reference in the Cologne Declaration give rise to concern, in our view justified. Indeed, the Cologne Declaration refers only to "the consideration of ways to ensure the possibility for WEU associate partners to be involved" (see Annex III of the Presidency's conclusions).

52. Since Cologne, the members of the Assembly have been assured during all their contacts with the Chairmanship-in-Office, Permanent Council and Council Secretariat that thought is being given to this matter. Nonetheless, and in spite of our insistence, we have been unable to obtain any details, and no Council document on the subject has been produced to date, at least as far as we are aware. Yet clearly, there is little time left. It is necessary to find a solution which, while being adapted to EU institutions and structures (old and new), makes it possible to safeguard and further develop the major *acquis* that is represented by the associate partners' remark-

able contribution – in the operational sphere, at decision-making level, at planning level and in terms of democratic scrutiny – to the cause of European security and defence. This is an asset that we have no right to squander.

53. While the EU's position has always been that the situation of the associate partners is to be studied on a case-by-case basis, for obvious reasons, particularly that of their different levels of economic development, WEU has always managed to perceive them as a more or less homogeneous group, an approach which is in fact in line with Agenda 2000, which underlined that all the CEECs fulfilled the political criteria for participation in the CFSP. However, clearly there are differences, relating not only to their geographic location – an element analysed further on in the report – but also their history, social development, ethnic composition and so on. We believe that although, as we have said, each country has many specific features, WEU's stance has always been a major factor contributing to greater harmonisation within this group of countries and to the more ambitious cause of their integration within the European institutions.

54. In order to properly assess the challenge facing the associate partner countries after Cologne, it is necessary to recall the specific features that association status in WEU and its Assembly offers the seven countries concerned, and that are not available in their current relations with the EU and NATO. The latter do indeed offer those countries prospects of joining in the future, but these are contingent upon an evaluation on a case-by-case basis and on compliance with a number of criteria, without this constituting a guarantee for future accession. For the transitional period, the European Union and NATO have set up bilateral relations with the countries concerned, providing them with a minimum of information, but not involving them in the decision-making process.

55. The associate partner status that those countries enjoy in WEU, however, enables them to participate collectively – although they do not have voting rights – in the discussions taking place in the Council and in the Assembly and its committees, with a view to defining security and defence Europe. What was unique about WEU's decision to grant that status was that it preempted the decisions of the EU and NATO, a



fact underscored several times in Vilnius. WEU was the first and – to date – the only organisation to grant such a possibility to those countries, accepting the somewhat more complicated organisational structure that this entailed. This original approach by WEU was designed to strengthen mutual relations and to make a substantial contribution to security and stability in Europe. That contribution, quite unquestionably, is a major component of the *acquis* of WEU.

56. Our Assembly for its part has stressed on several occasions the absolute necessity of safeguarding and developing this crucial dimension of European security and defence resulting from the active presence of the associate partners within WEU. Among several initiatives which have been taken in that respect, let us mention more specifically:

- the Assembly Plan for Action adopted in March 1999 on the eve of the Washington and Cologne Summits, which urged that the associate member and partner countries “be given a guarantee that they will continue to enjoy all the rights of participation they currently have in WEU”. Similar language was used in Recommendations 642 and 643, adopted the same day<sup>7</sup>;
- the text adopted at the Special Session of the Assembly in Luxembourg on 18 and 19 October 1999, in which it is stated that “the European Union should organise the way in which the CFSP and its relevant structures will work so as to provide the WEU associate members and associate partners with a guarantee that they will preserve all the rights of participation they have acquired in WEU”;
- the letter sent on 30 September 1999 by the President of the Assembly to the heads of state and government, foreign affairs and defence ministers and Speakers of the national parliaments of the associate partner countries, strongly regretting the fact that the Council has

<sup>7</sup> See the Assembly Document *Time for Defence* containing the official record of the extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee held on 16 March 1999.

not so far taken the necessary steps to guarantee the rights acquired by the associate partners in WEU. The letter draws their attention to the fact that in the field of parliamentary cooperation, the European Parliament does not have, and is not prepared to introduce, a system for associating representatives of non-EU member countries and stresses that it is important, in the Assembly’s opinion, to maintain and indeed further develop the involvement of the associate countries (associate members and associate partners) until such time as they become members of the European Union;

- our discussions in Vilnius on 5 November 1999 were guided by the same concern to preserve and consolidate the contribution of the associate partners. During this very fruitful day of meetings attended by representatives of the governments of the associate partner countries and members of our Assembly, there was a remarkable degree of agreement on that issue. Moreover, the present report and the other reports tabled or already adopted by our Assembly were drafted in the same spirit<sup>8</sup>.

## V. Regional problems

### A. Cooperation in the Baltic region

#### (a) *The legacy of the past*

57. The security and stability of the Baltic region are crucial for guaranteeing peace in Europe in the future. Thus, in spite of the uncertainty and the potential dangers arising from the collapse of the USSR, the relative stability of this region, which shows such a stark contrast with the situation that has prevailed in south-eastern Europe since 1991, is encouraging. However, this apparent stability should not lead us to forget the vital security issues at stake which call for a response from the international community.

58. The current security issues and arrangements in the Baltic region are to a very large ex-

<sup>8</sup> *Inter alia*, the report on “The future of European defence and its democratic scrutiny”, Assembly Document 1667, 9 November 1999; Rapporteur: Mr Marshall.

tent a legacy of its history. This region has always been a major crossroads for communications and trade. Already in ancient times and particularly during the era of the Hanseatic League, it was an important trading centre and meeting point. From the 18th to the 20th centuries, Denmark, Germany, Russia and Sweden fought for control of the Baltic Sea. The Baltic region remained divided during the 50 years of the cold war. Thus this region was split by a fault line between east and west, similar to the line dividing the rest of Europe, into two groups of states. The first group was composed of western democracies with a market economy – Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Norway and Sweden – and the second of the USSR and the five states in its sphere of influence – the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the three Baltic countries. The Baltic republics, which were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 in accordance with the secret appendix to the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, were the last states to be absorbed into the USSR. The western democracies had never, in any case, recognised the status of “Soviet socialist republic”. Moreover, western influence – in other words that of the Scandinavian countries, Germany and Poland – had always been greater than that of Tsarist, and later of Soviet, Russia. Indeed, it is significant that the three Baltic republics were the first to break away from the USSR in 1991, thereby playing a key part in the collapse of the Soviet Union. This separation was not possible without tensions or indeed casualties. Nevertheless, by dint of the political resolve of the different players in the region, it was possible to avert a serious and lasting crisis and to maintain some degree of stability in this potentially explosive region. In the 1990s there was even a resurgence of regional trade and cooperation of various kinds, an indication of the region’s vitality.

*(b) The present situation*

*(i) Environmental problems*

59. A key challenge facing this region is to come to grips with the environmental problems afflicting all the Baltic Sea states. Firstly, the alarmingly high rate of pollution in this *quasi* landlocked sea calls for a common response and a concerted policy among all the states of the catchment area. Given its shallowness and very narrow link with the North Sea, the pollution is

highly concentrated and its waters are difficult to replenish. This means that any pollutants entering the Baltic Sea stagnate there for some considerable time and may have drastic effects before the water has time to be renewed. This problem is compounded by the threat of nuclear pollution from the large numbers of Soviet-type nuclear reactors in the region. At the initiative of the Scandinavian countries, Denmark and Germany, various policies to combat pollution and enhance regional cooperation on environmental issues were recently developed.

*(ii) The economic situation*

60. The current economic situation is indicative of a rebirth of this region, notwithstanding the major differences which still exist among the different states. A high level of education, the existence of dynamic metropolitan areas and a growing desire for cooperation are conducive to developing its underlying economic vitality. The Baltic part of the former Soviet Union already provided a location for a number of high-tech industries and was a relatively prosperous zone. There is unquestionably still a gap between those countries which have always been part of the West and those which were under Soviet sway. Thus the Scandinavian states, Denmark and Germany are real economic locomotives in this region, whereas the situation in Poland and the Baltic states – although their progress is constant – remains less favourable. The development of regional trade and cooperation has doubtless contributed to the recovery in these four states. Ambitious policies for economic reform and a restructuring of the financial and industrial sectors have also helped these countries develop viable market economies, with varying degrees of success from one state to another. Certain shortfalls remain in all three Baltic states in terms of their economic, social and political structures. For example, problems of widespread endemic corruption, some degree of poverty and deficiencies in a number of administrative areas hamper the proper internal functioning of these states, in spite of the efforts they have made.

*(iii) The security climate*

61. While there can be no doubt that there was considerable tension in this region following the break-up of the Soviet Union – as a result, among other things, of the presence of large Russian minorities in Estonia and Latvia, the fact

that Russia did not recognise borders between itself and those two states, the presence of a disproportionately large amount of weaponry in the Kaliningrad enclave and, last but not least, of the legacy from the recent past<sup>9</sup> – it must be said that most of those problems are in the process of being settled and that the security climate has considerably improved. The active cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and their major economic achievements, the agreement between Latvia and Russia on the delimitation of borders, the first efforts to promote the integration of Russians in those countries where they constitute a large minority, the remarkable economic progress in this region, the programmes for military cooperation between the Scandinavian countries and the Baltic states, Poland's very constructive role, the political guarantee provided by the US and the prospect of EU membership first for Estonia, and at a later stage for Latvia and Lithuania, are all important milestones which have quite unquestionably improved the situation in the Baltic and give hope of a better future.

*(c) Regional cooperation*

*(i) Cooperation between the three Baltic states*

62. The relative similarity between the political situation of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia in terms of security has prompted them to develop several types of practical cooperation in the field of defence. A number of common structures have thus been set up:

- the Baltic Sea battalion (Baltbat) stationed near Riga in Latvia. It provides peacekeeping forces such as the ones deployed in Bosnia;
- the Baltic naval squadron (Baltron);
- the Baltic air surveillance network (Baltnet);
- the Baltic defence college (Baltdecol);
- the Baltic air force, whose creation was announced in February 1999.

<sup>9</sup> See the report on "Defence and security in an enlarged Europe – reply to the annual report of the Council", Assembly Document 1545, 12 November 1996; Rapporteur: Mr Marten.

*(ii) Security cooperation between the Baltic states and the other states of the region*

63. Right from the start of their independence, the three Baltic republics enjoyed the considerable support of the other states of the region, particularly in the security field. The Nordic countries, for strategic, economic and political reasons, were the first to respond to the problems of the Baltic states, as well as being the most generous. By virtue of their geographic proximity, their good relations with Russia and their stable political and security situations, these countries were bound to become key partners for the Baltic states. Thus Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden endeavoured to coordinate their aid in the security field as well as working within groups of other western countries to provide assistance and advice. The three Nordic EU members, for example, brought pressure to bear in favour of an "integrated EU policy" vis-à-vis the Baltic Sea region. Denmark even concluded individual defence agreements with the three Baltic states as of 1993. But it is above all through the development of regional institutions that the Baltic countries can organise practical cooperation with their neighbours.

64. The Council of the Baltic Sea States brings together the four Nordic states bordering on the Baltic Sea, as well as Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Russia. It was created in 1996 at the initiative of the Swedish Prime Minister in response to a need for coordination and cooperation in the region. Although it is not exclusively concerned with security matters, this regional institution nonetheless provides a discussion and cooperation framework that helps to promote the stability and security of the region. In particular, it establishes a permanent link in the present security architecture between states whose situations are different, which, among other things, has paved the way for cooperation between the Baltic states and other players on the international stage.

*(d) Cooperation with players outside the region*

*(i) The European Union*

65. The accession of Sweden and Finland to the EU in 1995 gave it a Nordic dimension which enabled it gradually to develop a truly integrated policy with regard to the Baltic region. In 1995, association agreements were signed with Lithua-

nia, Estonia and Latvia. These three countries, together with Poland, are beneficiaries of the PHARE programme, which is designed to help them achieve the progress that is a condition for their future EU membership. Neighbouring Russia receives assistance through the TACIS programme. Furthermore, the INTERREG programme provides the basis for a genuine EU regional policy in this region. These programmes are indicative of the EU's real political and economic commitment to this region, as well as having an unquestionable stabilising effect on it. Indeed, by anchoring the region in the system of trade with western Europe, they contribute to its economic stability.

66. The prospect of European integration, founded on the desire of the Baltic states for EU membership as well as on the resolve expressed by the EU in Agenda 2000 *inter alia*, strengthens the region's western identity and enhances its stability. It should, however, be noted, that while Estonia and Poland are among the first wave of candidates, Latvia and Lithuania, to their great regret and indeed disappointment, have not for the moment been invited to start accession negotiations.

*(ii) The United States*

67. Although accession to NATO remains a distant and uncertain prospect for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the United States has nonetheless shown a genuine commitment with regard to the Baltic region. American policy in recent years has been to closely monitor the developments in this region in order to guarantee the security of the Baltic states, while meeting their aspirations to rejoin the West, including the Euro-Atlantic structures. While it does not meet with the legitimate aspirations of the Baltic states, the Charter signed between them and the United States in Washington in 1998 nonetheless is a demonstration of the United States' commitment to guaranteeing the integrity and sovereignty of those countries. Unquestionably, however, this political guarantee, for all its importance, is far from satisfying the security needs and aspirations of the three countries concerned.

*(iii) NATO*

68. While Poland is now a full member of NATO, the Baltic states, for reasons both of a technical and geopolitical nature, cannot join the

organisation for the moment. Major obstacles to their accession in the near future are the lack of interoperability between their armed forces and NATO and their proximity to unstable countries. In the case of the Baltic states, it is certainly as important for their security to maintain good-neighbourly relations as it is to draw closer to the Atlantic structures. Thus their *rapprochement* with NATO will be a gradual process, even if it is not contingent on the approval of Russia, which is not keen to see those three states joining the Alliance.

69. As mentioned above, the Baltic states are members of the Partnership for Peace which they joined in 1994. The cooperation that has developed between them has enabled them to participate in a number of peacekeeping operations such as the one in Bosnia.

*(iv) WEU*

70. With regard to WEU, the position of the three Baltic states also varies. While Poland is now an associate member, three Nordic states (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) are observers and Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia have been associate partners since 1994. WEU has an important role to play in this region in the field of security policy, due, in particular, to the fact that Russia is more amenable to its activities than to those of NATO. Associate partner status and the cooperation it entails are therefore particularly important in the case of the Baltic region. Hence WEU offers major possibilities for security cooperation in this region.

*(v) Future prospects*

71. The future of security in the Baltic region seems less uncertain now than was the case just a few years ago. However, developments in this region must be closely monitored by all outside players, who have a crucial role to play. The presence in the EU of Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden could be used to optimise the cooperation and stabilisation strategy already launched in this region by the EU. The European Union, in spite of the obstacles to its rapid enlargement, has an indirect but important role to play for the region's security by contributing to the development of economic, political and social stability in the Baltic states. It is to be hoped in this respect that Estonia's accession to the EU can take place as soon as possible, and that Lat-

via and Lithuania will be invited to start pre-accession negotiations at the Helsinki Summit in December.

72. It is also of the utmost importance for the region's security to clarify the relationship between the EU and WEU and to guarantee that the advantages enjoyed by virtue of associate partner status will be maintained. This is all the more important in the light of the very poor short-term chances of NATO membership for the Baltic republics. In that respect another key factor for the region's future security is to optimise the PfP. The Euro-Atlantic structures must respond to the three Baltic states' desire for integration by organising intensive practical cooperation.

73. But also and above all, the future security of the Baltic region is contingent on strengthened cooperation with Russia, which must become involved as soon as possible in the political and security debates concerning this region. The development of good-neighbourly relations and strong cooperation among all the players involved will to a very large extent be the determining factor in guaranteeing the stability and security of the Baltic region.

#### *B. The situation and role of Ukraine*

74. Ukraine, finding itself in 1991 independent for the first time in centuries, apart from a short period following the first world war, seemed to hesitate for some time with regard to the part it should play in the European security architecture. The existence of a pro-Russian influence, essentially in the east of the country, and the clear pro-Western tendencies which dominated in the western part of the country, as well as among government circles, made it somewhat difficult at the time to determine its political leanings. Its disputes with Russia, in particular on the status of the Crimea, but also with regard to the Black Sea fleet and the status of Sevastopol, were an additional complicating factor which made it difficult for it to assert its role on the international political stage. Ukraine is nonetheless highly important for the security balance in Europe in general, but particularly in eastern Europe. Its geographic location, its indisputable political weight, the importance of its relations with Russia and the very size of the country, make Ukraine an important partner not to be underestimated. Indeed since 1995 the country has been moving

slowly but surely towards the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, and in spite of the difficulties that have arisen it has made considerable progress in its relations with the organisations of what, for a very long time was known as "the West".

75. A partnership and cooperation agreement between the European Community and its member states and Ukraine was signed on 1 March 1998. This agreement, which in your Rapporteurs' opinion was an important political step, in that it paved the way for cooperation and a formal dialogue between Ukraine and the EU, did not offer the same degree of assistance and convergence as the association agreements that the EU had already concluded with most of the countries of central and eastern Europe. However, it did set up a Cooperation Committee in order to provide an institutional framework for the various levels of dialogue and the practical cooperation foreseen in the agreement. As of the Committee's first meeting in November 1998, it adopted a document concerning measures to remove trade barriers, harmonise Ukrainian legislation with that of the EU and strengthen customs and cross-border cooperation. Since then it has met regularly, but Ukraine is unlikely in the short term to achieve the same degree of convergence with the EU as that attained by the associate partners.

76. Objectively speaking, the Atlantic Alliance's relations with Ukraine cannot be entirely separated from Ukraine's relations with Russia. Russia's interest in the matter – whether it is legitimate or not – is easily understood, although some people think that these things are better left unsaid. However, it must be admitted that although Ukraine's convergence with NATO was facilitated by the normalisation of relations between Ukraine and Russia, it could have happened almost regardless of Russia's views on the matter, given Ukraine's key role for the balance in Europe and its legitimate interest in breaking out of its isolation from the West which was imposed on it by the Soviet regime. Ukraine has therefore been part of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) since February 1994. Moreover, on 9 July 1997 it signed a cooperation charter with NATO, which foresees, among other things, consultation between the two parties in the event of a threat to the country's territorial integrity. It should perhaps be pointed out that this charter was signed

following the signature of a cooperation and partnership agreement between Ukraine and Russia in May 1997. The NATO-Ukraine Charter of July 1997 provided a more formal basis for relations between the two parties by developing practical cooperation in the PfP framework and making provision for more detailed consultations. Ukraine has since made a major effort to establish regular relations with NATO, as illustrated, among other things, by its drawing up of a "State programme for cooperation with NATO until the year 2000", the creation of a NATO information centre in Kiev and the secondment to that city of two NATO liaison officers.

77. The dialogue between Ukraine and WEU which started in 1995 is particularly important in view of the desire clearly and repeatedly expressed by Ukraine, almost from the outset, to obtain associate partner or a similar status within WEU<sup>10</sup>. Given the obvious limits to the cooperation between NATO and Ukraine, WEU seemed to be the ideal body to fill the gap, particularly in view of Russia's supposedly rather more benevolent stance with regard to European institutions. Although this aim may not be totally realistic, the WEU-Ukraine dialogue has provided the opportunity to define several areas in which cooperation appears to be realistic and mutually beneficial. Regular meetings between the WEU Secretary-General, the Permanent Representative of the Presidency and the Ukrainian Ambassador in Brussels have provided the framework for a regular dialogue on issues of common interest. Furthermore, a cooperation agreement on long-haul air transport was signed in June 1997<sup>11</sup>.

78. Two years later in June 1999, WEU and Ukraine, anxious to consolidate this important achievement, adopted an "action plan for political dialogue and practical cooperation" with a view both to enhancing the dialogue and developing practical cooperation between the Organisation and Ukraine. This agreement provides, in particular, for:

<sup>10</sup> See, *inter alia*, the report on "The eastern dimension of European security", Assembly Document 1542, 4 November 1996; Rapporteur: Mr Antretter.

<sup>11</sup> See the report on "European capabilities in the field of strategic mobility", Assembly Document 1644, 18 May 1999; Rapporteur: Mr López Henares.

(i) *an enhanced dialogue*: it is planned to include such subjects as "demining and international police operations" among the issues to be discussed at meetings between the Ukrainian Ambassador and the members of the Permanent Council. Experts' meetings on such questions as peacekeeping operations and, as soon as it is ratified by Ukraine, application of the Open Skies Treaty, are also foreseen. The action plan also envisages "participation by WEU in contacts of the EU with Ukraine, as well as in informal 'triangular' EU/WEU/Ukraine meetings or related events covering issues of shared interest". The wisdom of including such a clause is obvious, given the development of relations between the EU and WEU;

(ii) *practical cooperation*: the plan represents a favourable response from WEU to Ukraine's request to be involved in peacekeeping operations, in that it makes such involvement possible subject to a decision by the Permanent Council on a case-by-case basis. Indeed the action plan, welcoming the presence of Ukrainian observers at the Crisex 98 exercise, proposes to repeat this approach in the future: "WEU will agree with NATO appropriate modalities for the observation by Ukraine of CMX/Crisex 2000". The plan also places Ukraine's provision of training areas and facilities for WEU exercises on an official footing. Cooperation is also foreseen in the field of satellite imagery.

79. Thus a framework for enhanced cooperation between WEU and Ukraine is gradually being developed. It can only be beneficial to the interests of both sides and for stability in Europe in general. However, the situation is far from satisfactory. Although, judging by a visit made by one of your Rapporteurs to Kiev and the symposium organised there by the WEU Institute for Security Studies in October 1998, our Ukrainian partners have high expectations, it would appear that certain WEU member countries are showing little enthusiasm for applying the 1997 agreement on strategic airlift and that, more generally speaking, they are reluctant to make the most of the opportunities that cooperation with this major country would offer. If the Ukrainians' complaints are indeed well-founded, then it seems

obvious that a greater effort will be necessary from us, and more particularly from the Council of WEU. Even if, for obvious reasons, WEU cannot grant associate partner status to this country, which is so important for Europe as a whole, there is no doubt in our minds that a genuine enhancement of our cooperation with Ukraine is a political necessity. We should also remember that the whole logic of our relations with Ukraine requires that they mirror at least to some extent – albeit not totally – those with Russia<sup>12</sup>.

80. Finally, let us bear in mind the outcome of the recent presidential elections on 14 November, in which President Kuchma gained a large majority over the communist contender, in spite of widespread public discontent with the country's endemic economic crisis and the manifest corruption of the state system. This political event, of major importance for the balance in eastern Europe, only confirms the firm pro-Western stance which President Kuchma has always openly advocated for Ukraine.

### *C. South-eastern Europe*

81. The aim of this report is certainly not to analyse the repercussions of the latest tragic developments in the Yugoslav crisis, which unfortunately could become chronic. However, it must be said that the recent crisis in Kosovo, together with the general instability in the region, has had major repercussions for two of our associate partners, Bulgaria and Romania. The third country to be concerned is neighbouring Slovenia. However, as a member of the first group of candidates for accession to the EU, its position is stronger. Moreover, having the good fortune of being somewhat removed geographically from the crisis zones, it also had the wisdom – although it is far from being indifferent to developments in the region – to distance itself from the crises relating to the break-up of former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, Slovenia's resolutely pro-Western trade and economy, which remain sound, have considerably contributed to maintaining this country as a zone of stability and progress despite its proximity to what risks becoming, once again, the powder-keg of Europe.

<sup>12</sup> See also the report on "WEU's relations with Russia", Assembly Document 1603, 28 April 1998; Rapporteur: Mr Martínez.

82. However, the other two associate partners which are neighbours of Yugoslavia – Romania and Bulgaria – have, through no fault of their own, been hard hit by the crisis. In the case of Bulgaria in particular, the Kosovo conflict dealt a hard blow to the economic recovery which had started towards the end of 1998, with a 4-5% annual growth rate and decreasing inflation of about 11% at the time<sup>13</sup>. A few months later, growth appeared to be stagnating, although fortunately the inflation rate continued to decline, reaching its present level of about 1% in October 1999. The slower growth is hardly surprising, given that before the crisis and the resulting economic sanctions, 20% of Bulgaria's trade had been with Yugoslavia. It was only logical, therefore, that the country would need time to find other outlets. Moreover, its problems were compounded by the closing of the Danube as a trade route, following the destruction of Serb bridges by NATO bombardments. And finally, the trade route which passes through Romania depends on a single bridge over the Danube linking the two countries. The effects for Romania are similar. This country embarked at a very late stage on economic reform, although its government has shown political courage with regard to the public discontent and social unrest that have been generated by the lack of progress in the life of the country and its citizens. Indeed, according to an opinion poll conducted a few months ago by the Soros Institute, 51% of Romanians consider that their general situation is worse now than it was in 1989.

83. The cases of Romania and Bulgaria are similar in many respects. It should be noted that those two countries, which have been valuable partners in a whole series of WEU missions, showed no hesitation in opening up their airspace to NATO planes, despite objections from their citizens, which were hostile to the NATO operation. Both are opposed to a change of borders in the Balkans and to a large extent are pinning their hopes for economic recovery on the Stability Pact for the region. The two countries are staunch supporters of the Franco-German project for the reconstruction of the Danube bridge. And

<sup>13</sup> See the report on "Monitoring the situation in the Balkans", Assembly Document 1653, 10 June 1999; Rapporteur: Mrs Squarzialupi.

both, of course, hope in the long term for integration in the EU.

84. We for our part cannot ignore the fact that the latest developments in the region, the delays in making the Stability Pact a reality and the well-known difficulties linked with the long drawn-out process of accession to the EU have led to some bitterness among the people of those countries. As the Bulgarian Prime Minister recently remarked, "All we want for the moment is to be treated as Europeans. Yet we do not have the feeling that this is the case"<sup>14</sup>.

#### *D. Slovakia – central Europe*

85. This region at the heart of Europe, endemically unstable in the period leading up to the second world war and a potential theatre of armed conflict during the cold war years has fortunately, over the past decade, become the part of Europe where there has been the most tangible progress in terms both of economic development and of the creation of strong democratic institutions, making it a zone of security and stability. Several factors have contributed to this achievement: the establishment of efficient market economies, a process of democratisation following the demise of communism, a consistent pro-Western strategy on the part of almost all the governments of the region, improvements in the situation of minorities and their integration in the political lives of their respective countries. To this must be added the recent accession by three countries of this region to the Atlantic Alliance and their prospects for accession to the EU during the first round of enlargement, and finally, sustained economic growth. All these factors, then, have contributed to the success of those countries, which inspires among their citizens, if not enthusiasm, at least a sense of stability and confidence in the future.

86. The same three countries became associate members some months ago. Slovakia, whose economy has shown major signs of recovery in recent years, has made remarkable progress. Since the change of government last spring, it has been consolidating the process of democratisation and fully integrating minorities – the Magyars in particular – in political life. The recent European

Commission report on the accession prospects for the central and eastern European countries, adopted on 13 October, notes Slovakia's progress and implies that fairly rapid accession – around 2005 – might even be possible. This would certainly crown Slovakia's efforts and would serve to enhance regional stability and more firmly anchor the country in the family of Western nations<sup>15</sup>.

#### *VI. Conclusions – future prospects for the associate partner countries*

87. All the WEU associate partners, regardless of their geographic location and level of economic development at the time of the collapse of the Soviet bloc, have from the very beginning founded their foreign policy on integration in the Western politico-military institutions – NATO, the EU and WEU. Their aim was twofold: to strengthen their international position, in particular in terms of their security, and to further consolidate their democratic institutions. Ten years after the demise of communist regimes in Europe, three countries from that group of ten have succeeded in joining NATO and have prospects of EU membership within a time-frame of some four to five years. Those countries are, of course, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, which have become associate members of WEU pending the full member status to which they will be entitled once they join the European Union. For the seven other countries there is no precise timetable – or indeed any precise commitment – for their future accession to NATO, while accession to the EU could well take the best part of a decade.

88. However, it is clear that during that period and as long as the EU has still made no provision for granting them a special status, WEU will remain the principal – if not the only – political and security organisation in which those seven countries enjoy considerable participation rights. Let us recall that they are involved at political level (Parliamentary Assembly, the Council at 28, the Permanent Council), in practically all Council working groups (Politico-Military Group, the Eurogroups etc.), in the various WEU bodies (Satellite Centre, Planning Cell), in WEU exer-

<sup>14</sup> *Le Figaro*, 1 November 1999.

<sup>15</sup> See *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 October 1999 and *The Economist*, 2 October 1999.



cises and peacekeeping missions, and of course, in armaments cooperation. This list is not exhaustive, but gives a clear idea of the valuable contribution they make to European security and defence. It is unthinkable that those *acquis* should be lost as a result of the transfer – albeit partial and gradual – of the functions of WEU to the EU, leading to a security vacuum east of the EU. Such a policy would border on the absurd, even if that security vacuum was only temporary. Hence, the involvement – at least at the same level as today – of our associate partners in all EU functions pertaining to security and defence, to the extent that they replace the functions currently exercised by WEU, must in our view become one of the priorities of the Council, just as it is a major priority for our Assembly. It would perhaps make sense for that participation by the associate partners to be preserved first and foremost in the Political and Security Committee which France has proposed should be set up as soon as possible as the principal body assisting the High Representative for the CFSP.

89. Your Rapporteurs take the view that even if the Council was not prepared at this stage to include our associate partners in the Political and Security Committee as we have suggested, it would nonetheless be difficult to deny the basic

logic of ensuring that the new arrangements in no way diminish the participation of those seven countries in the European security and defence bodies, which would be detrimental to their own security. As long as no in-depth study has been performed by the Council on this issue, it would of course be difficult, possibly unfair, to risk more detailed comment. Generally speaking, however, it would seem logical that as long as the bodies of the EU are unable to organise cooperation with the associate partners at a level which is at least equivalent to that which they currently enjoy in WEU, cooperation with WEU will remain the essential channel for their contribution to European security and defence. This argument is all the more valid for the parliamentary dimension of our Organisation, which already offers the representatives of the seven associate partners a wide range of possibilities for participating in the process of defining its political positions. Indeed the intention is to further strengthen what are already mutually beneficial relations. Under no circumstances should that range of possibilities be curtailed, which would be the case if, for example, the Assembly's functions were to be transferred to the European Parliament, since for the moment the EP does not envisage granting a status to associate countries of the EU.

