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WEU's relations with Russia

**REPORT**

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

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*submitted on behalf of the Political Committee<sup>2</sup>  
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<sup>1</sup> Adopted unanimously by the Committee

<sup>2</sup> *Members of the Committee:* Mr Baumel (Chairman); MM Urbain, *Blaauw* (Vice-Chairmen); MM Antretter, de Assis, Bianchi, Brancati (Alternate: Mrs *Pozza Tasca*), Mr Buhler, Sir Sydney Chapman (Alternate *Hancock*), Mr Cusimano (Alternate: *Gnaga*), Mr Dias, Mrs Dumont, MM Ehrmann, *Evangelisti*, Eyskens, Mrs Fischer, Mr Forni, Lord Grenfell (Alternate: Lord *Ponsonby*), Mr Irmer, Lord *Kirkhill*, MM *Liapis*, van der Linden, Van der Maelen, MM *Marshall*, *Martínez*, Martínez Casañ (Alternate: *Arnau Navarro*), MM *Puche Rodríguez*, Recoder, Rippinger, *Roseta*, Skoularikis, Vrettos, *Wolter*, Wray (Alternate: *Vis*), MM Yamgnane, Zierer, N. (Alternate: Mrs *Squarcialupi*).

*Associate members:* MM *Akçali*, *Ataç*, *Kosmo*, *Mutman*

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

*Draft Recommendation*

*on WEU's relations with Russia*

The Assembly,

- (i) Recalling that the Amsterdam Treaty reinforced the importance of WEU's role as the European defence organisation intended to become, in the longer term and in stages, the defence component of the European Union,
- (ii) Recalling also that NATO member countries agreed to develop a European security and defence identity (ESDI) within the Atlantic Alliance and that WEU must be an essential element of that development;
- (iii) Stressing that the modified Brussels Treaty continues to be an important part of European security, as the WEU Ministerial Council expressly recalled in its Erfurt Declaration;
- (iv) Recognising that it would make no sense to discuss, much less to seek to promote security and stability in Europe without taking the Russian Federation into account as a factor of prime importance in that area, in view of its potential and the weight of influence the country wields in Europe and, more widely, on the international stage,
- (v) Noting that the Russian Federation is still in the throes of transformation and redefinition of its role on the world stage and, more particularly, in European affairs including matters relating to security,
- (vi) Welcoming progress achieved in recent years as evidenced by
  - (a) Russia, as the principal successor state to the former Soviet Union, continuing to hold full membership of the OSCE and even extending its position and influence in the organisation by making a positive and constructive contribution, in conjunction with the other member states, both to the management of specific crises and the prevention of certain conflicts and to the OSCE's own development,
  - (b) ever stronger institutional ties of partnership and cooperation which the Russian Federation has developed with the European Union and NATO,
  - (c) Russia's accession to full membership of the Council of Europe, in other words to the organisation also with responsibility for the democratic dimension of security in Europe,
- (vii) Welcoming Russia's constructive involvement – alongside its other European partners – in the efforts expended by the international community in managing a number of crises, in peacekeeping, especially in the Balkans, and in the Contact Group, while aware that Russia's points of view or more specific interests in certain conflicts may not always coincide fully with those of its other European or American partners,
- (viii) Convinced that WEU should, just as the European Union and NATO have done, establish official relations with Russia, bearing in mind that the latter has on several occasions made known its interest in consolidating and strengthening its existing links with WEU,
- (ix) Regretting therefore that the Council has taken no action on Assembly Recommendation 574 proposing that relations between WEU and Russia be put on an institutional footing, and that existing relations are as yet still no more than sporadic interchanges which do not match the Assembly's expectations,
- (x) Convinced that establishing a permanent, institutionalised system of contacts between WEU and Russia is in the interests of Russia, of security in Europe as a whole, of Europe's transatlantic partners and of WEU:
  - (a) inasmuch as such contacts are commensurate with the role of WEU as an essential factor in European security construction, in the broad sense of the term, and should therefore lead WEU

to deepen dialogue and cooperation with the Russian Federation, on the same basis at least and with the same intensity as other organisations close to WEU, while at the same time being aware that its relations with its Russian partner are unlikely to be entirely tension-free,

(b) inasmuch as they offer a further way of reducing the feelings of isolation that the Russians experience in consolidating the process of democratic reform and strengthening the political stabilisation going on in the Federation, with a view to inducing the latter increasingly to become a constructive factor for security, stability and peace in Europe,

(c) inasmuch as such relations should be considered as a useful and necessary contribution to building confidence and understanding between Russia and NATO's European and North American partners;

(xi) Considering that giving relations between WEU and the Russian Federation an institutional basis might create a precedent and a model that could be applied to WEU's relations with other states with which the Organisation may wish to establish similar ties,

#### RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

- 1 Take a rapid decision on a suitable formula that will allow a programme of regular information exchange, dialogue and cooperation to be set up with Russia;
2. Identify with the Russian authorities the areas of common interest over which mutual consultation would be appropriate and spheres in which practical cooperation might apply;
- 3 Put relations between WEU and the Russian Federation on a permanent institutional basis by such means as seem most appropriate

*Draft Order*  
*on WEU's relations with Russia*

The Assembly,

- (i) Considering the report of its Political Committee on WEU's relations with Russia;
- (ii) Recalling in that context Order 95 adopted on 1 December 1994,
- (iii) Resolved to make a contribution at parliamentary level towards putting relations between Russia and WEU as a whole on a formal basis;
- (iv) Considering that a similar approach could subsequently be taken by the Assembly following a procedure which the Presidential Committee might then extend to the Assembly's relations with the parliaments of other states with which it wished to establish similar permanent collaborative ties,

1 DECIDES to take a first step in that direction and to institutionalise relations with both chambers of the Russian Parliament,

2 INVITES ITS PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE to take, in cooperation with the Rapporteur, such measures as are necessary to create a permanent status for the Russian Parliament so as to allow a set number of representatives thereof to participate regularly in plenary sessions of the Assembly and possibly in committee meetings

*Explanatory Memorandum**(submitted by Mr Martínez, Rapporteur)**I. Introduction*

1 The role and place of the Russian Federation in Europe and a Euro-Atlantic security system is a relatively open question not only in Russia itself but also in Europe and the United States. The vast expanse of territory that it covers, stretching from the Baltic to the Pacific and the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of its people mean that Russia can be classed both as a European and an Asian country. Nevertheless, in view of its history and above all the political will expressed by its principal leaders and its most representative institutions, nobody can seriously contend that this great country does not have a European calling, moreover, because of the geographic location of its capital and the fact that the vast majority of its population live west of the Urals, Russia's centre of gravity still lies within its "European" sector. What is more, the country's economic potential, based on its vast natural resources, military might and strategic importance confer on it a very special weight of influence.

2 Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, of which it considers itself to be the main successor state, Russia has embarked upon large-scale political, economic and social transformation. It is firmly committed to reform as the road to democratic statehood based on freedom, human rights compliance and the rule of law, and is endeavouring to get policies off the ground to establish a free-market system within the country. Such reforms, never easy, have also had to be carried through over a period in which Russia requested and was granted full membership of the Council of Europe. Its accession has without any doubt helped accelerate the process of change to a system comparable with that of its partners in that organisation which is responsible, within the project of European construction, for defining democratic practice and the rule of law and monitoring compliance with them. However it is quite clear that the reforms under way are still far from completion and there is still some uncertainty about the degree of change that is possible in a country that is both a potential

superpower and a patchwork of territories where stability is undoubtedly a fragile commodity.

3. In any event Russia has completed withdrawal of its armed forces and nuclear weapons from German soil and from other countries in central Europe. It has, in compliance with international disarmament agreements, substantially reduced both troop levels and the overall volume of its military arsenal, the present state of which would not allow it to launch a major offensive. All this, but above all the political will Russia has expressed on countless occasions to make progress on the road to cooperation, combined with the ongoing development of all sorts of economic and industrial links, has persuaded the West that it need no longer regard Russia as a threat.

4 After the collapse of the Communist regime in the former Warsaw Pact countries, followed by the dissolution of the Pact and the break-up of the Soviet Union, the central European countries as a body, once released from a totalitarian and ineffective political system dominated by the Soviet Union, refocused their foreign policies on the attempt to secure their rapid assimilation into European and Euro-Atlantic structures such as the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Atlantic Alliance and WEU.

5 The countries in the European part of the former Soviet Union that acquired or regained independence, primarily the Baltic states, but perhaps also, and to varying degrees, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova, showed a common resolve to embark on a search for their own identity and on a course in which they intended to act in total freedom while maintaining proper and good-neighbourly relations with the Russian Federation. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, for their part, are resolutely seeking to guarantee their security and independence by joining the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance. Furthermore, these three countries very quickly established special relations in many areas with their Scandinavian neighbours, particularly Sweden and Finland. Moldova, more remote and less advanced in its development, is also turning its gaze towards European organisations and placing

particular emphasis on fostering relations with countries that are geographically close and share its Latin cultural heritage. That leaves Belarus and Ukraine. Serious tensions in Minsk have meant that even the process of democratic constitutional change appears to have reached stalemate. While events in Belarus have come in for severe criticism, particularly in the Council of Europe, the country's authorities are seeking to establish closer contacts with the Russian Federation and have even drawn up plans for constitutional cooperation in the economic and political spheres. Ukraine, on the other hand, appears to be trying to assert its identity and independence by quite reasonably establishing a balance between maintaining cordial relations with its large Russian neighbour – many problems remain unresolved, particularly in relation to Crimea, but the two sides are endeavouring to settle them through dialogue and negotiation – and developing closer relations at all levels, including security, both with the member states of the European Union and NATO and with those two organisations themselves.

6. Under these circumstances, the Russian Federation, where feelings of isolation – not to mention humiliation over the break-up of the Soviet Union – still lie close to the surface and whose western border is now less than 500 kilometres from Moscow, needs to carve out a new place for itself within the system of international relations, particularly as far as its security policy is concerned. Conversely, the Western countries, and Europe in particular, are faced with the need to agree on the nature of the relations they are prepared to develop – and indeed have an interest in developing – with the successor state to a former world power which for many continues to hold that status and which in any event will doubtless be restored to its former rank in the future. It is a hugely complex country that is now in the throes of political and economic upheaval but in geographic terms it is still the world's largest country.

7. The solutions arrived at to date have tended to vary according to the particular characteristics of the organisations involved. Russia is fully integrated into pan-European structures such as the OSCE – and also the Council of Europe, of which it has been a full member since early 1996. The Russian Federation has ties with the European Union through an Agreement on

Partnership and Cooperation, signed on 24 June 1994, which came into force on 1 December 1997. In June 1994 the European Union also signed a partnership and cooperation agreement with Ukraine which took effect on 1 March 1998.

8. After some considerable difficulty, a "Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation" was signed in Paris on 27 May 1997 and the Madrid NATO summit concluded in its turn, on 9 July 1997, with the signing of a "Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine".

9. As far as relations between Russia and WEU are concerned, some headway has been made both at the level of the Assembly and of the ministerial organs. However the WEU authorities have up to now sought to avoid their acquiring any formal or institutionalised character, despite repeated requests to that effect from Russia since 1994. It is to be noted in passing that on 30 June 1997 WEU signed an agreement with Ukraine on long-haul air transport. In their Erfurt Declaration of 18 November 1997, the WEU ministers "stressed WEU's readiness to develop further WEU's relationship with Russia based on an enhanced political dialogue and practical cooperation. Ministers requested the Permanent Council to continue to explore further possibilities for practical cooperation".

10. Furthermore, the Greek Presidency of the Council confirmed in its programme of work that it would pursue cooperation with Russia in specific areas such as long-haul air transport, while it also intended to further enhance WEU's relations with Russia by identifying areas that might be of interest to both sides.

11. WEU nevertheless remains, at the present time, the only European organisation whose relations with Russia are not based on official agreements or arrangements. One may well ask why this should be. There would seem to be little justification for this omission and its absence is not helpful and does not serve the interests of either WEU or Russia. Sharing this view, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Primakov, proposed taking a step forward by suggesting that WEU and Russia study together ways of putting their relations on a formal footing. The WEU Secretary-General responded to this proposal in a letter in which he set out argu-



ments – which in our view are outdated and insubstantial – attempting to justify maintaining the *status quo*. He expressed the view that WEU-Russia relations could be further developed by taking account of WEU's role as defined in the 22 July 1997 Declaration on the role of WEU and its relations with the European Union and with the Atlantic Alliance “and WEU's and Russia's mutual interest in contributing to the establishment of a cooperative European security architecture.” “For these reasons” he goes on to say “we are not of the view that WEU-Russia relations need be seen in strict comparison with Russia's relations with the EU or NATO”

12. Nevertheless, although this is the crux of the argument for maintaining the *status quo*, consisting of holding political consultations from time to time and developing cooperation in a number of specific areas, the least that can be said is that there are grounds for questioning whether such a policy continues to be justified. In point of fact, given that the Treaty of Amsterdam and the Madrid NATO summit have redefined the role and position of WEU, now might be an appropriate time to look again at whether and to what extent it might be in WEU's interest and that of its members – which is how we see it – to make a qualitative improvement in their relations with Russia

## *II. Russia's place in Europe and the development of its relations with the European Union and NATO*

13. Consideration of this issue implies that not only should Russia's role in Europe be examined, but also and more pertinently that of WEU post-Amsterdam and Madrid. Should Russia be regarded as a partner for Europe or an integral part of it? This is undoubtedly a key issue on which one might expound at length without any certainty of reaching a conclusion to which there would be no dissent.

14. If one considers pan-European cooperation, Russia's full membership of the OSCE and the Council of Europe is the expression of a general consensus that Russia is an integral part of that cooperation and fully involved in the decision-making process for any plan of action developed within the framework of those institutions. This is tantamount to saying that we have all accepted that the Russian Federation should

play a full part in all aspects of democratic security in the context of the European construction project. As to the prospects for integration in the framework of the European Union and, in respect of military security and defence, that of the Atlantic Alliance, the question of what place the Russian Federation should have arises in different ways given the nature of the two projects, but although the solutions put into effect to date are satisfactory for the time being, they cannot be regarded as final and will have to adapt as continental integration moves forward and cooperation and good-neighbourly relations take a firm hold, gradually expunging the inevitable consequences of almost half a century of confrontation and cold war.

15. The Rapporteur is convinced that Russia will, in the longer term, be more than just a partner of the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance but is aware that this remains a controversial issue and one to a large extent linked to Russia's own development and that of the organisations referred to. The German Chancellor's address on 7 February 1998 to the conference on security policy in Munich provides food for thought, in particular his statement that

“Russia belongs to Europe – historically and culturally – stability and security in Europe cannot be achieved without Russia.

The Founding Act on which NATO-Russia relations are based and the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation concluded between Russia and the European Union are most important instruments in terms of Russia's integration into future European security structures (...)

Today we are embarking on a long-term process. I would imagine, if things go well in the next century, that NATO's and the EU's relationship with Russia could eventually turn into a real partnership.”

16. In WEU's case, the issue does not require an immediate solution and could therefore be left open. But we should ask ourselves whether – in its own long-term interests – WEU can afford not to set up a more structured relationship with Russia, given that the latter already has formal relations with the European Union on the basis of a partnership and cooperation agreement and has

developed an elaborate system of cooperation and consultation with NATO. This question takes on an added dimension when one considers just how flexible WEU showed itself to be when it created various categories of status for observers and associate members and partners precisely to meet the need to cooperate with countries that were at different stages in the process of European construction. In his report *Security in a wider Europe – reply to the annual report of the Council*, Mr Antretter explains why he proposes – very justifiably – that in the future there should be only two categories of membership of WEU: one for countries that have acceded to the modified Brussels Treaty and the other for countries which will be accorded the status of associate member on the basis of very solid legal grounds that remain to be specified. The purpose of this proposal is to enable those of the 28 countries in the “WEU family” that so wish to belong to the Organisation and take part in its activities. As far as the Russian Federation is concerned, it should be included in an extensive structure of dialogue and cooperation enabling it to stay in permanent contact with WEU and commensurate with the Organisation’s importance, as WEU cannot be relegated to the sidelines compared with the European Union and NATO when it comes to “really important” matters.

17 Because we do not accept that WEU should take a back seat and play a secondary role, we intend to address the question just raised and come up with an answer that is not only more realistic but also more constructive. To that end we must consider WEU’s role in the context of its close ties with a NATO in the process of change and a European Union also in the throes of transformation, bearing in mind always the responsibilities assigned to WEU under the modified Brussels Treaty.

18 The Amsterdam Treaty continues the institutional convergence between WEU and the European Union already set in motion under the Maastricht Treaty, linking establishment of a common defence in the European Union and WEU’s possible integration therein to a decision in the European Council. While remaining an independent organisation with its own treaty base, WEU therefore forms an integral part of the Union’s development, providing the latter with access to operational capability. Moreover it has the task of helping to frame the defence as-

pects of the CFSP and elaborating and implementing decisions and actions of the European Union in the field of crisis management, for which the European Union will avail itself of WEU.

19 It might be appropriate to consider what areas of the common foreign and security policy are covered by the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation concluded between the European Union and Russia. In the preamble to this Agreement the parties affirm *inter alia* their determination to promote international peace and security and the peaceful settlement of disputes. According to Article 6 of the Agreement.

“A regular political dialogue shall be established between the Parties which they intend to develop and intensify. It shall accompany and consolidate the rapprochement between the European Union and Russia, support the political and economic changes underway in Russia and contribute to the establishment of new forms of cooperation. The political dialogue:

- shall strengthen the links between Russia and the European Union. The economic convergence achieved through this Agreement shall lead to more intense political relations,
- shall bring about an increasing convergence of positions on international issues of mutual concern thus increasing security and stability,
- shall foresee that the Parties endeavour to cooperate on matters pertaining to the observance of the principles of democracy and human rights and hold consultations if necessary, on matters related to their due implementation”.

20 This very general wording makes it possible for an exchange of views to be established for all international problems likely to be of interest to the two parties without obliging them to enter into specific, practical commitments. In fact during the first meeting – held on 27 January 1998 in Brussels – of the EU/Russia Cooperation Council, the ministerial body created under the Agreement, the foreign ministers of the Fifteen and Russia discussed international policy and security issues such as the European security architecture, developments in central and eastern

Europe, the support agreed and coordinated by the European Union and the Russian Federation for the Middle East peace process, the possibility of halting arms deliveries to Iran, the situation in Iraq, and initiatives designed to consolidate stability in the Balkans and bring to an end the conflicts in Albania and the various territories of former Yugoslavia

21 Such dialogue is certainly useful, primarily because it improves information exchange and could even lead to convergent positions on certain questions of international policy. However, while the intention of the Agreement is to increase security and stability through political dialogue, it does not cover the specific areas identified in the section of the Maastricht Treaty that deals with the CFSP<sup>1</sup>, or the areas for which WEU has responsibility. In May 1996, the European Union set up a plan of action for Russia which, among other things, makes provision for dialogue with Russia on matters of European security and foreign policy, with emphasis on the general aspects of development of the OSCE, disarmament and crisis prevention in the framework of the OSCE and the United Nations. This arrangement does not cover the specific responsibilities of WEU and is therefore no substitute for direct dialogue between WEU and Russia.

22 As far as relations between NATO and Russia are concerned, the latter joined the Partnership for Peace on 22 June 1994 but did not agree on an individual NATO/Russia partnership programme within the framework of the PfP until 31 May 1995. The specific areas for dialogue and cooperation were to include

- exchange of information on the role of NATO, military doctrines, crisis management, defence industry conversion and defence budgets,
- consultations over proliferation issues relating to weapons of mass destruction, implementation of the chemical and biological weapons conventions, nuclear safety issues and specific crises in Europe,

- cooperation on peacekeeping and humanitarian issues.

23 Such cooperation has found its most concrete expression in Russia's participation in the NATO peacemaking mission in former Yugoslavia. With the signature of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations in Paris on 27 May 1997, cooperation between NATO and Russia acquired a new dimension. Apart from those aspects of the specific dialogue and cooperation programme mentioned above, the Founding Act lists the following areas for consultation and cooperation between NATO and Russia:

- joint operations, including peacekeeping operations, on a case-by-case basis, under the authority of the UN Security Council or the responsibility of the OSCE and if Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) are used, participation in them at an early stage;
- arms control issues, particularly the adaptation of the CFE Treaty;
- possible cooperation in theatre missile defence;
- enhanced regional air traffic safety, and promoting confidence in relation to air defence by exploring possible cooperation in those areas;
- increasing transparency, predictability and mutual confidence regarding the size and roles of respective conventional forces;
- reciprocal exchanges, as appropriate, on nuclear weapons issues;
- pursuing possible armaments-related cooperation;
- joint exercises in civil emergency preparedness and disaster relief;
- combating terrorism and drug-trafficking;
- improving public understanding of evolving relations between NATO and Russia, including the establishment of a NATO Documentation Centre or Information Office in Moscow

24. Both parties have agreed that other areas could be added by common accord. The future

<sup>1</sup>or for that matter CFSP areas as defined in the Treaty of Amsterdam signed three years after the EU/Russia Agreement

development of this partnership is of fundamental importance to the nature of the relationship that WEU and its member countries wish to develop with Russia and the interest the latter may have in establishing such relations. At present a degree of ambiguity surrounds NATO/Russia relations. The Founding Act states:

“NATO and Russia do not consider each other as adversaries. They share the goal of overcoming the vestiges of earlier confrontation and competition and of strengthening mutual trust and cooperation ”

The two parties reaffirm their shared commitment to build a stable, peaceful and undivided Europe, whole and free. The aim of the new relationship is to develop a partnership

25. NATO and Russia declare jointly that they are both engaged in a process of transformation that will continue

“While preserving the capability to meet the commitments undertaken in the Washington Treaty, NATO has expanded and will continue to expand its political functions, and has taken on new missions of peacekeeping and crisis management ”

While NATO member states are in the process of re-examining the Atlantic Alliance’s strategic concept in order to ensure that it is fully consistent with the new situation, Russia is working on development of a new concept of national security and revising its military doctrine “to ensure that [they are] fully consistent with new security realities”

26. What direction will this rapprochement between NATO and Russia take and how far will it go? What are the areas of disagreement? The Founding Act does not expressly identify them but rather employs the term “Euro-Atlantic community” and takes as its point of departure the principle that the security of all states belonging to that community is indivisible. Consequently, it devotes several paragraphs to both NATO’s and Russia’s endeavours to strengthen the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) – defined as the only pan-Euro-

pean security organisation and assigned a key role in European peace and stability

27. In certain areas however, sources of friction persist, as the principles agreed by NATO and Russia for the settlement of differences by peaceful means that both parties undertake to comply with serve to attest. These include:

- refraining from the threat or use of force against one another or as well as against any other State, its sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence,
- respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all States and their inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security (which includes the freedom to join such military alliances as they choose),
- respect for the inviolability of borders and the right of peoples to self-determination,
- mutual transparency in creating and implementing defence policy and military doctrines,
- prevention of conflicts and settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with UN and OSCE principles

28. The NATO member countries’ determination to preserve the defence capability of the Alliance based on Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, while opening up the Alliance to central European countries which were either former Warsaw Pact members or formed part of the territory of the former Soviet Union, is evidently one of the principal bones of contention between NATO and Russia with Russia still mystified – after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of Russian troops from central Europe – as to precisely who the enemy is against which NATO feels impelled to defend itself, if Russia is no longer viewed as an adversary or a threat

29. In his address at Noordwijk on 31 May 1995, when the individual NATO/Russia partnership programme within the framework of the PfP was approved, Mr Kozyrev, the then Rus-

sian Foreign Minister, put the issue in the following terms

“If however one has in mind a third-party threat, Russia and NATO could tackle the issue jointly, together with other European institutions, by determining ways to counter new challenges”.

30. Although NATO has repeatedly sought to reassure Russia that its enlargement was not directed against the latter and that it had no intention, plan or reason for setting up nuclear arsenals or deploying foreign forces on the new member states' territories, it has not yet managed to allay Moscow's concerns and overcome its resistance. Russia has, however, accepted that its relationship with NATO on the basis of the Founding Act does not give it a right of veto over NATO action, similarly the arrangements envisaged do not in any way restrict NATO's right (or that of Russia) to take decisions and act independently. It was also agreed that consultations would not extend to the internal affairs of NATO or its members, or of Russia

31. In short, it can be said that the new partnership between NATO and Russia will essentially, in the early stages, serve to strengthen mutual confidence, still undermined by both sides' negative perceptions of one another dating back to times of confrontation. Nevertheless it should not be forgotten that the Founding Act opens up enormous vistas for consultation and practical cooperation and provides for highly sophisticated machinery (two meetings a year at foreign and defence minister and chief-of-staff level, monthly meetings of ambassadors and military delegates and the establishment of committees and working groups)

32. In view of those arrangements, one might therefore ask whether it is necessary to supplement them further by a formalised system of WEU/Russia relations, and, more particularly, the establishment of a Russia/WEU Consultative Council, as proposed initially by Mr Kozyrev in 1995 and again in May 1997 when Mr Primakov took up his predecessor's suggestion. The Rapporteur believes that the answer to this question is directly linked to the importance we ourselves assign to WEU and the confidence we have in it. In his opinion a further consultation mechanism would not contravene or necessarily duplicate the one that already exists between Russia and

NATO. On the contrary, strengthening cooperation with WEU might help break down suspicion, oil procedures and all in all help both sides get to know each other better. It would also lend support in Russia itself to those forces and sectors of society that are resolutely looking towards Europe and therefore towards peace in Europe.

### *III. The unsatisfactory development of relations between WEU and Russia since 1994*

33. Russia has made a request to develop its relations with WEU. This is a political fact and the reasons that prompted it to do so must be analysed when searching for an appropriate response to that request. There may indeed be an advantage for Russia to have institutionalised relations with WEU inasmuch as it may regard them as an additional means of keeping abreast of European security and defence policy and exerting influence on the European decision-making process. Russia's concern to hold regular political dialogue with WEU is therefore likely to be directly linked to the use of the WEU Council makes of its political decision-making powers. Moreover, we shall see later on that its request is not the only issue that needs to be addressed because – and this is perhaps the most important aspect – there is also the matter of the advantage for WEU of institutionalising its relations with Russia.

34. It must also be remembered that Russia hopes not only for enhanced political dialogue but also involvement in one form or another in the work of the WEU subsidiary bodies, such as the Satellite Centre and WEAG. As stated in Mr Baumel's report on *WEU's relations with Russia*<sup>2</sup>, adopted by the Political Committee on 10 November 1994, it was from that year onwards that the Russian authorities gave more specific indications of the areas in which they would like to cooperate with WEU.

35. It also emerges from his report that in the course of the same year the Russian Embassy in Paris provided the Assembly with information concerning a document approved by the Russian Head of State, which defined Russia's policy towards WEU. It would appear from that docu-

<sup>2</sup> Assembly Document 1440

ment that Russia's objective was to develop special partnership arrangements with WEU with a view to synchronising the development of cooperation with our Organisation and that of relations between Russia and the European Union in the political and economic spheres. Russia was not seeking to emulate the status of WEU's associate partner countries but to establish a stable partnership fitting into the pattern of its political and military cooperation with western Europe.

36 At the time the Russians made no reference to their relations with NATO which were still of an informal nature, but in his letter to the WEU Council dated 12 May 1997, Mr Primakov made clear that relations between Russia and WEU in general, and in particular the machinery for dialogue and consultation, should be comparable with "how our links with the European Union and NATO are taking shape".

37 In terms of subjects for dialogue and consultation, the 1994 document referred *inter alia* to peacekeeping and defence cooperation, including cooperation on tactical missile defence. Besides developing ties with the Satellite Centre and WEAG, the document also advocated intensifying exchanges with the WEU Institute for Security Studies and establishing regular contacts between the Duma and the WEU Assembly.

38 In the meantime, cooperation took shape between WEU and Russia in the framework of the Open Skies Treaty although that Treaty has still not been ratified by the Russian Parliament. The Russian reaction to WEU's proposal for cooperation on long-haul air transport was also positive. The Assembly can but regret that it was not informed of the content of the WEU Council's reply to Russian proposals regarding armaments cooperation.

39 With reference to peacekeeping, Mr Primakov's letter states "we think that our cooperation in peacekeeping is promising. Our military have positively received the WEU readiness to cooperate with Russia in peacekeeping operations which will be pursued by the Union". The Minister goes on to make reference to WEU's intention, as stated in a previous letter from the Secretary General (of which the Assembly is unfortunately once again unaware of the content) to invite Russian observers to exercises conducted by WEU. He also suggests here that WEU and Russia launch a dialogue with a

view to establishing contacts in the military sphere.

40 While the WEU Council is prepared to consider the possibility of opening WEU exercises to Russian observers on a case-by-case basis, its reaction to establishing regular dialogue in the military sphere is less clear-cut and Russia's proposal for the creation of a WEU-Russia Consultative Council for coordinating cooperation in all spheres – political, parliamentary, military and scientific – met with a rather cool reception, with the WEU Secretary-General reiterating that the dialogue could be enhanced through the usual channels, in other words via the Russian ambassador in Brussels.

41 The WEU Secretary-General nevertheless stressed that the Council valued highly "the development of parliamentary contacts between the Duma and the WEU Assembly, and [we] will, from our side, take every opportunity to encourage the WEU Assembly to intensify such contacts and hope the Russian Government would do likewise with the Duma".

42. According to a WEU Council press release, the 28 members of the Permanent Council of Western European Union met Mr Vitaly Churkin, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, in Brussels on 20 January 1998. No information was released about what was discussed at this meeting, which according to the press release "focused on issues relating to European security, and the current state of dialogue and cooperation between WEU and the Russian Federation". However reports from unofficial sources suggest that the Russian representative confirmed on this occasion that Russia was prepared to organise an anti-missile defence system in conjunction with WEU, that would cover the whole of Europe, and that the Duma had set up a permanent delegation to the WEU Assembly.

43 The Assembly has argued on principle that WEU and its range of ministerial and parliamentary bodies constitute a whole and that it would be difficult for the Assembly to confer on a parliament a status not commensurate with that granted by the Council to the government of the country concerned. However the Assembly can make recommendations to the Council in that connection. In terms of the Assembly's relationship with Russia, in December 1994, Assembly Recommendation 574, based on the in-depth as-

essment contained in the report submitted by Mr Baumel on behalf of the Political Committee, was conveyed to the Council. The first two paragraphs of its operative text recommended the Council to

- "Offer the Russian Federation permanent cooperation, including a regular system for information, dialogue and political consultation at ministerial level and at that of the Chairmanship-in-Office, the Secretary-General and senior officials of the ministerial organs of WEU,
- Determine, in coordination with the Russian authorities, the specific areas in which WEU might offer the Russian Federation practical cooperation that might include questions within the purview of WEAG and possibly space questions . "

44. Paragraph 6 of the operative text proposed that the Council establish with Ukraine (and Belarus which at the time was still carrying out democratic reforms prior to the serious disputes that arose later) relations similar to those proposed in the paragraphs cited above. Although the Council stated in its reply to that recommendation that "the relations mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this recommendation already apply to Russia and Ukraine ...", it did not set up systematic dialogue at ministerial level but merely maintained sporadic contact at ambassador level

45. As far as parliamentary relations were concerned, in December 1994 the Assembly adopted Order 95 inviting its Presidential Committee

"1. To take a decision allowing the exchange of views started with the two chambers of the Russian Parliament to be pursued on the basis of regular meetings, specifying the regularity and ways and means of the participation of the committees of the Assembly in such meetings,

2. To ask the President of the Assembly to transmit appropriate proposals to the Presidents of the two chambers of the Russian Parliament ...".

46. Although no formal follow-up action to that Order was taken, the Assembly invited observers from the Duma to its 1995 and February 1996 sessions and the Presidential Committee decided to issue invitations regularly, from June of that year and for subsequent sessions, to the same parliamentary observers as had attended the earlier sessions. A Russian delegation attended the extraordinary session held in London on 22-23 February 1996, and the ordinary sessions that same year. Representatives of the Assembly took part in a seminar organised by the Duma in Moscow in late November 1996 and a delegation of the Russian Parliament attended the colloquy organised by the Political Committee in Athens on 11-12 March 1997. Finally, on 5 November 1997 a delegation of Russian parliamentarians had a meeting with the Defence, Political and Technological and Aerospace Committees at the seat of the Assembly in Paris. However, no Russian parliamentary delegation was invited to attend the June 1997 session. The relationship the Assembly has built up with the Russian Parliament to date therefore consists entirely of *ad hoc* invitations and the Duma, like the Ukraine Parliament, does not benefit from a status of any kind in the WEU Assembly notwithstanding its endeavours to secure one. In April 1996, the Russian Embassy in Paris informed the Assembly that the International Affairs Committee of the Duma had in fact set up a permanent delegation to the Assembly of WEU.

#### *IV. The need to deepen and institutionalise Russia's relations with both the Council and the Assembly*

47. The Rapporteur is convinced that this situation cannot continue to obtain either at Assembly or Council level. A number of arguments can be advanced in favour of a greater degree of formality in WEU's relations with Russia. Following the signature of the Amsterdam Treaty, it became plain that a common defence would not be achieved in the foreseeable future in the framework of the European Union. Rather, WEU will gradually become the defence component of the European Union, in line with the aim the WEU member states set themselves in their 10 December 1991 Declaration and which they expressly reaffirmed in the WEU Ministerial Council's Declaration of 22 July 1997, appended

to the Final Act of the intergovernmental conference which culminated in the signature of the Amsterdam Treaty on 2 October 1997<sup>3</sup>

48 WEU, although an integral part of European Union development, will remain an independent organisation, with its own Council and Assembly.

49. WEU, in its configuration of 28 countries that are involved in its work commensurate with their status, is the forerunner of tomorrow's security and defence Europe WEU is therefore an essential factor in building a European security architecture in the wider sense, of which Russia is an important element In a situation where the range of interlocking European organisations with complementary responsibilities have formalised their relations with Russia, it can surely be in no-one's interest to exclude WEU from that process or for its contacts with Russia to be restricted to *ad hoc* encounters.

50 As far as its role in relation to NATO is concerned, WEU's 22 July 1997 Declaration reaffirms that the Organisation is an essential element of the development of the European security and defence identity within the Atlantic Alliance in accordance with the Paris Declaration and with the decisions taken by the NATO ministers in Berlin WEU also wants to play an active part in conflict prevention and crisis management as provided in the Petersberg Declaration It has committed itself to developing its role as the European politico-military body for crisis management using the assets and capabilities made available by WEU nations on a national or multinational basis and having recourse, when appropriate, to NATO's assets and capabilities under arrangements being worked out In this context, the WEU Ministers reaffirmed that WEU would also support the United Nations and the OSCE in their crisis-management tasks.

51. The Founding Act between Russia and NATO provides both for consultations on joint peacekeeping operations under the authority of the UN or the responsibility of the OSCE and, if combined joint task forces (CJTF) are used in such cases, participation in them at an early stage The cases referred to are specifically those where an operation is to be conducted under the

political control and strategic direction of the WEU Council If Russia wishes to participate in such operations, there is all the more reason to make provision for timely consultation with WEU

52 Of course there will be those among us who will continue to ask whether, practical cooperation in areas that are specifically WEU's responsibility aside, the establishment of a regular, formal political dialogue between WEU and Russia might not run the risk of duplicating the work of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council which already covers all areas of interest to WEU and Russia If we look further into the matter it becomes clear that such is far from being the case, any more than NATO and WEU duplicate one another. In the first place, NATO is a Euro-Atlantic organisation whose purpose continues to be to provide a collective defence under the terms of the Washington Treaty, based in particular on support from the powerful United States military machine. NATO-Russia relations are still very much coloured by Russia's abiding distrust of that machine which, in Russia's eyes, continues to make steady inroads towards Russia's borders, in the wake of NATO enlargement. The Russians do not have the same suspicions of WEU, in its present or its enlarged form There is a fear in some quarters that Russia might try to use such formal relations as may exist with WEU to try and create a breach between Europe and the United States and weaken the Atlantic Alliance And in an interview with the *Corriere della Sera* on 8 February last, the Russian President did go so far as to reveal his country's intention of becoming a full member of all the institutions working for European integration in an effort to counter United States domination and its monopoly But we must not be afraid of this debate; on the contrary we ourselves should be helping the Russians gain a better understanding of the way we work and of our prospects so that they can eventually be integrated in a framework we should share with them Furthermore, Russian interests are not the only ones at stake WEU's interests and those of its member countries also come into it Defining those interests in relation to Russia is not always easy because opinion is not necessarily unanimous on the role and place of Russia in Europe, or, even after Amsterdam and Madrid, on what WEU's role and tasks should be.

<sup>3</sup> Assembly Document 1582, 28 November 1997



53. Therefore it is essential to make the effort to define WEU's interests vis-à-vis Russia if we want to prevent Europe's sole defence organisation lagging behind the changes in the decision-making process that are being formulated and approved in other fora, with Russia's involvement, but in the absence of that of WEU.

54. In its Ostend<sup>4</sup>, Paris<sup>5</sup>, and Erfurt<sup>6</sup> Declarations the WEU Council recalled "the importance of the development of relations with Russia corresponding to its size, capabilities and strategic importance". The last of them goes on to say, most appositely, that Russia (and Ukraine) play an essential role in Europe's security and stability. Equally WEU itself must make its position vis-à-vis Russia clear in view of its aspiration to be the precursor of a European defence. For although without Russia there can be no guarantee of security and stability for Europe, the European defence that WEU stands for is no less vital an element of that guarantee.

55. In order to bring about a meeting of minds between Europe and Russia in this sphere, it will not suffice for the WEU Permanent Council or Secretary-General to indulge in the occasional exchange of views. Regular political dialogue is what is needed – and an agreement putting that dialogue on an official basis. This could, it is true, be of a less formal nature than those Russia has negotiated with the European Union and NATO. To organise a regular dialogue there is no obligation to set up a WEU-Russia Consultative Council as our Russian contacts appear to see it. The NATO-Russia Founding Act gives the latter a privileged status in NATO, while the central European countries which have not been invited to join NATO are having to make do with involvement alongside Russia in the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. The NATO Joint Council consists only of the 16 member countries plus Russia. In the European Union the foreign ministers of the Fifteen and Russia make up the Cooperation Council.

56. The position is different in WEU, where several categories of status exist alongside one

another. WEU has granted ten central European countries associate partner status in order to consolidate their integration in the Organisation and involvement in its work. The WEU Council therefore sits at regular intervals at 28 and consultations between the Permanent Council and the Russian representative take place within that framework. When giving such contacts a more formal basis, it is perhaps not essential to set conditions for Russia that are strictly identical to those applying to the associate partners. One solution, which does not automatically exclude others, would be – as has been suggested in some quarters – for the erstwhile Forum of Consultation, which brought together WEU and the central European countries prior to the latter acquiring associate partner status, to be revived for the purpose of managing relations with Russia.

57. Under the present circumstances, the primary aim must be to set up a system for information exchange and permanent mutual dialogue with Russia. That system could be established by means of a document instituting an information, dialogue and cooperation programme between WEU and Russia (a similar document defining areas for dialogue and cooperation was signed between NATO and Russia in 1994). The first part of the programme could deal with arrangements for regular information exchange and topics to be addressed, a second might set out provisions governing political dialogue on matters of common interest while a third might be devoted to areas where there could be practical cooperation and how it would be achieved.

58. Such an approach would bring WEU into a much closer relationship with Russia without the need for awkward discussions over the exact status the latter should have. The Assembly could likewise develop its working relations with the Duma in parallel without being obliged to follow to the letter the model adopted by the Council. On this point the Rapporteur puts some hope in a thorough study of positions set out recently by certain members of the Permanent Council of WEU.

59. There is widespread belief in the Council that in its relations with Russia the Assembly has comparatively greater freedom of manoeuvre. There are even those who point to the Assembly's independent power of decision in this re-

<sup>4</sup> Assembly Document 1550, 19 March 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Assembly Document 1573, 13 May 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Assembly Document 1597, 20 November 1997.

spect and there is in fact a historical precedent which has proved its worth and taken on overriding importance in the process of extending the Council of Europe towards the central and eastern parts of the continent. It concerns the status of special guest created by its Parliamentary Assembly and granted to parliaments of countries wishing to draw closer to the organisation but whose governments would have found it very difficult to obtain an invitation to take part on a regular basis in the work of the intergovernmental structure of the Council of Europe. There is no doubt that the Assembly holds dear the independence granted it under the modified Brussels Treaty. But if it did decide to take independent action to institutionalise a permanent procedure of cooperation with both chambers of the parliament of the Russian Federation, it would have to ensure in so doing that it retained maximum credibility and effectiveness and this it could only do by not acting counter to the will of the Council but rather in agreement with it and by being flexible in the interests of the Organisation as a whole. This course of action, the details of which will be proposed elsewhere, should not be a substitute for a permanent status placing relations between the Russian Federation and WEU on an institutional footing but should rather be seen as a stepping stone on the way to obtaining that status which should not be long in coming.

60 If the ideas and proposals set out in the foregoing paragraphs are favourably received by the Council, there will be no risk of a rift between the policy and any course of action followed by the Assembly or the Council. On the contrary, there needs to be some sort of effective complicity between the two in the interests of WEU as a whole. This would require closer links between the Assembly and the Council, with the Secretary-General for his part taking action to ensure that relations with the Assembly are just as harmonious as those with the Council. Come what may, the objective of this report is to ensure that relations between WEU and the Russian Federation are given a normal, effective and comprehensive institutional framework as soon as possible. In the meantime there is an urgent need to set up a formal arrangement enabling

Russian parliamentarians to participate regularly and on a permanent basis in the work of our Assembly whose competent bodies should get down to the work of drawing up that arrangement imaginatively and in a spirit of flexibility. Let us be in no doubt that the presence of representatives of the Russian people among us can but help consolidate democratic values and practices in their great country and thereby the very credibility of WEU itself. As of now the Assembly should continue to issue regular invitations for a delegation from Russia to attend its sessions and perhaps meetings of its main committees as well. Moreover, reciprocal visits between delegations of the Assembly and the Duma between sessions, and the holding of colloquies and seminars, should continue and take place more often.

61 While recognising that there are many fundamental differences between the situation in the Russian Federation and that in Ukraine (in terms of size, potential, prospects, etc.), it is nevertheless the case that until now WEU has put these two countries into the same category, namely that of "countries that are very interested in working with us and with which it is essential that we develop relations as long as those relations are confined to sporadic, one-off, relatively informal contacts." Like Russia, Ukraine has established institutional relations with the Council of Europe, the European Union and NATO. Like Russia, it is absolutely essential – albeit in a different way – to the security of Europe with which WEU is supposed to concern itself. Ukraine has asked to become an associate partner of WEU and the Council of WEU has for its part recognised it as an important partner for our Organisation. This is why it would appear essential for a separate report to propose special arrangements to try, by making it official, to improve the status Ukraine has vis-à-vis our Organisation and in particular that of the Rada (the Parliament in Kiev) vis-à-vis the Assembly. It would perhaps be appropriate to offer Ukraine the status our Assembly might establish for the Russian Parliament, if only so as not to make relations with the latter a wholly exceptional case.



