Annual report on progress in the field of common foreign and security policy (Article J.7, Treaty on European Union)

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Mr MATUTES, quoting Article D of the Treaty on European Union, complained that the Council had not presented a specific report on the CFSP. The first assessment of the CFSP was not satisfactory: the most obvious failures were the war in the former Yugoslavia and the genocide in Rwanda. He thus called for more effective implementation of the CFSP. It was essential above all to find the political will to achieve positive results, such as the Pact for Stability in Europe. As regards food and economic aid, the Union's significant commitments meant that it had already surpassed the other major powers. Other progress included the reduction in the number of cases where unanimity was required in Council votes, given that positive abstention was already a qualifier. Ensuring democracy, respect for human rights and the protection of minorities were also key objectives of the CFSP, while preventive diplomacy was the most effective weapon in peaceful conflict resolution. Among the objectives of the 1996 IGC he emphasised the importance of: - the insertion of a mutual assistance clause, based on Article 5 of the WEO Treaty, for the defence of the Union's external borders; - the revision of paragraph 3 of Article J.4 of the Treaty on European Union (on defence policy) to clarify the relations between the Union and the WEO; - an interinstitutional agreement on the application of Article J.7 and the financing of the CFSP to take account of the EP's demands; - the creation of a risk assessment centre. Mr LAMASSOURE stipulated that the Council's annual report on all areas of the Union would soon be forwarded to Parliament and that, beyond the current experimental period, he agreed with the rapporteur that the number of votes for which unanimity was required should be reduced. He also proposed the establishment of a joint diplomatic executive under the auspices of the Council. Mr VAN DEN BROEK was in favour of doing away with unanimity in the Council and establishing structured dialogue with Parliament on the CFSP. The vote was postponed to 18 May.