European defence policy: the second part of the Tindemans report on the common security policy

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The Committee has adopted the own-initiative report by Leo TINDEMANS (EPP, B) on an EU defence policy. Some of the votes were extremely close - a fact which is not fully reflected in the final vote (22 in favour, 8 against, 10 abstentions). The report's first concern is to define a common defence policy and say what its objectives should be. It goes on to make a distinction between security and defence. The rapporteur stresses that enlargement of the EU will not necessarily go hand in hand with a similar enlargement of NATO and that, as the Union grows larger, there will be increasing pressure for it to develop a common defence policy. The practical measures needed fall into two categories, political measures and military policy measures. On the political front, the rapporteur calls for a set of practical steps to facilitate the integration of the WEU into the European Union at the appropriate time. In particular, closer ties will be needed between the EU and the WEU at the executive and parliamentary levels. The report also calls for an EU Council of defence ministers to be set up to consider matters such as restructuring of the European armaments industry and the issue of arms exports. On military policy, the committee emphasises the need to redirect the Member States' military spending so as to acquire a larger European capacity in the fields of strategic air mobility and space intelligence. It also calls for a Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit to be set up, which would draw up a White Paper on defence, as well as a permanent police force capable of intervening at very short notice. Lastly, the report stresses the importance of strengthening cooperation on armaments, both internally and with regard to exports, and claims that a common policy in this field would not run counter to the objective of global disarmament.