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

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In adopting the report by Mr Leo TINDEMANS (EPP, B) on a common defence policy Parliament firstly gave a clearer definition of this policy and its objectives. Its aim was: - to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter, - to strengthen the security of the Union in all ways, - to preserve peace and strengthen international security also with regard to external borders. Parliament then established a distinction between security and defence, the concept of security covering, as far as Parliament was concerned, Petersberg operations and the concept of defence including territorial defence and the protection of the vital interests of the Member States. It confirmed that until the WEU was integrated into the Union the territorial integrity of the Member States would continue to be protected under existing alliances but pointed out that the Amsterdam Treaty introduced for the first time the principles of the 'integrity of the Union' and 'mutual political solidarity' and the 'external borders' which should be taken into account on the eve of enlargement. For Parliament enlargement of the Union would not necessarily coincide with a corresponding enlargement of NATO and it considered that as the Union grew larger there could be increasing pressure for it to develop a common defence policy. Enlargement could also fundamentally contribute to the overall security of the continent. Parliament also proposed a series of practical measures with a view to the gradual development of a common defence policy for the Union. These measures could facilitate the integration of the WEU into the European Union and enable each State to take part. These measures were of a political and politico-military nature. 1) On a political level Parliament proposed forging closer relations between the European Union and the WEU at both administrative and parliamentary level through the exchange of information and documents and the establishment of an interparliamentary delegation within the European Parliament responsible for relations with the WEU Assembly. It recommended that the 'Security Aspects' Unit of DG1A of the Commission be greatly strengthened to reflect the increased importance of such matters in the Amsterdam Treaty and that it should be placed under the authority of the Commissioner responsible for the CFSP. The latter should also take part in the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit. The Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit should draw up a White Paper on defence and EU peacekeeping operations which should be approved by the European Council. Parliament also called for the establishment of a Council of Defence Ministers to consider questions such as the restructuring of the European armaments industry or the issue of arms exports. The joint meetings of Foreign Affairs Ministers and Defence Ministers should be held within the Council at European Union level at least twice a year so as to ensure greater consistency between the decisions taken at EU level and the actions implemented by the WEU. It also proposed that within its Committee on Foreign Affairs, regular meetings be organized with the Secretaries-General of NATO and the WEU in order to improve the flow of information to Parliament on these matters. It also recommended that starting from 1 January 1999, when the presidencies of the European Union and the WEU would be harmonized, the Council Presidency should report to plenary on the activities of both the European Union and the WEU. 2) On the politico-military level, Parliament stressed the need to redirect the military spending of the Member States in order to acquire a larger European capacity in the fields of strategic air mobility, space intelligence and satellite communications. It stressed that cooperation in the field of armaments must be strengthened and that the restructuring of the defence industries, the establishment of an open internal market in the armaments sector, the production of common military equipment which was as cost-effective as possible and the formulation of a unified policy on arms exports were essential to the establishment of a common defence policy. It noted that the creation of a common defence policy supported by a common armaments policy was not at odds with the objective of global disarmament. Welcoming the drafting of a Code of Conduct on arms exports, it stressed the importance of strict standards while calling for the maintenance of a strong European defence industry. It pointed out the value of creating a small police planning unit maintaining, subject to Union decisions, ongoing contacts

with the police forces of the Member States. Lastly it affirmed that the future defence policy could be used as a cooperation instrument for CFSP purposes and that the current WEU forces (FAWEU) could be essential instruments for this policy.